



**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES ON THE
LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF INFORMATION AND CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT THIRD YEAR STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY IN
DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL**

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DECLARATION

I, Thabile Ndaba declare that this dissertation is a representation of my own work both in conception and execution.



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ABSTRACT

Since 1994, South Africa has experienced major changes in tertiary education. Students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds have been given opportunities to attend historically well-resourced tertiary institutions. However, access to these institutions has brought about a number of socio-economic challenges. Hence this study was conducted by the researcher, who is a lecturer at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), in order to identify the influence of four key socio-economic challenges – namely prior schooling, and social, academic and financial challenges – on the learning experiences of DUT students. A sample of one cohort of Information and Corporate Management third-year students was selected, and the research investigated how the challenges identified appeared to affect the students' academic performance, thereby increasing the likelihood of failure or dropping out.

The literature to support this study was sourced from secondary (books and journals) as well as institutional sources. The theoretical framework underpinning this research was constructivist and interpretivist, which was understood to be appropriate for research dealing with students and their personal values, experiences and ideas which fed into the findings of the study. The descriptive research design, involving mixed methods, was based on both a quantitative approach (a questionnaire) as well as a qualitative approach (a focus group interview conducted with ten students). Data gathered from the questionnaires was analysed using Partial Least Square (PLS) as well as Excel. Cronbach's alpha was tested for the reliability of the questionnaires. Tables, graphs and structural modelling were used to analyse the findings.

The analysis of the data revealed that financial problems seemed to be the students' greatest challenge. The statistics confirmed that 67% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that finance indeed has been their greatest challenge in their three years of study. The second challenge was that of Schooling. The majority of the students from the ICM Department came from below average schools, and it could therefore be concluded that most students in the institution as a whole come from similar schooling. This entails that they are generally not well prepared for tertiary education.

The third challenge examined was social in nature including accommodation, and lifestyle issues such as partying, and alcohol and drug abuse. It was found that accommodation was an issue that needs further attention as there were still 30% of the students not in residence, and often accommodated in places that were not safe. According to the statistics the students' social life is busy for 62% of students while 65% agreed or strongly agreed that they drink alcohol or use drugs. Lastly, the academic challenge was identified and encompassed a number of academic issues (and these are issues which were seen to be more amenable to improvement). These included fear of failing, difficulty expressing themselves in English, difficulty in writing in academic English, and having English as the only medium of instruction. Most felt that if they were taught in their home language, they would do better in class.

With regards to accommodation, the study therefore recommended that (budgets permitting) the institution build more residences owned by the institution in the coming years even if they are not within close proximity of the institution. This will ensure that DUT can closely monitor those institutions and take full responsibility for the events and activities that occur within those premises. It is also recommended that the institution ideally employ at least two experienced Senior Residence Assistants with a minimum of 5 years' experience, as well as background knowledge of social work, on a full-time basis for each DUT residence. With regards to social challenges, it is recommended that the institution implement interventions that can assist the students in this matter by introducing ongoing motivational campaigns as well as alert the students as to the dangers associated with alcohol and drug abuse. With regards to academic challenges, it is recommended that lecturers should strive to create a more friendly, supportive and collegial atmosphere in class. It is also recommended that consultation periods be emphasized as this would allow students to have one-on-one contact with their lecturers. Lastly, it would be recommended that NSFAS and the institutions work hand-in-hand and, if possible, as soon as the student receives a firm offer into the first year at the institution, then it should be the responsibility of NSFAS to provide a funding acceptance letter which will allow the student to be accepted into the institution without delay.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAO	Central Applications Office
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CR	Composite Reliability
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DUT	Durban University of Technology
ECP	Extended Curriculum Programme
FGS	First Generation Students
FMF	Fees Must Fall
FRC	Faculty Research Committee
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HOD	Head of Department
ICM	Information and Corporate Management
IREC	Institutional Research Ethics Committee
ITSS	Information Technology Support Services
LPFSAHE	Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education
MIS	Management Information Systems
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OMT	Office Management and Technology
PLS	Partial Least Square
PTSD	Post -Traumatic Stress Disorder
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
UKZN	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
UNIZULU	University of Zululand

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Education is understood to be an important ingredient for any country's economic and technological development, and a common feature observed in developing countries all over the world has been the rapid growth in tertiary level enrolment in recent years (Salmi and Basset, 2014). After 1994, in South Africa the shift has been from a racially biased education system towards a more inclusive one (Mahlangu, 2010). In this context institutions of higher education are considered as pillars of knowledge, where students from diverse backgrounds converge to acquire the requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes for occupational success. Scott (2008) agrees that improving South African universities' graduate output, specifically numbers, mix and quality, is essential to meet the future needs of the country for adequate economic growth, equity and redress.

Over the past few decades, Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) have therefore experienced dramatic changes in their structuring, funding and student numbers. These have included mergers of intrinsically different institutions (Bunting and Cloete, 2013). Regarding the composition of the entire student body, Cooper and Subotzky (2001) declared that South Africa had experienced a "revolution", and by 2013, 74% of all higher education students were black (Africans). However, the educational inequality, still reflecting the socio-economic disadvantages stemming from the apartheid era, has become a challenge for South African higher education (Chetty, 2014). A drop-out rate of 45% among students undermines the access gains of universities. Financial difficulties are among the most common reasons given by poor black students for not pursuing their tertiary education to completion. According to the "student pathways" study done by Letseka and Maile (2008), "first generation" students from low income, less educated, families are the most likely to drop out.

Loans and bursaries do not cover the full costs of study, leaving students struggling to cover living and other costs. This is especially true for those students on the NSFAS loan scheme of whom 35% do not complete their studies.

In 2013 the Department of Education issued a public statement indicating that the drop-out rate was costing the National Treasury R4.5 billion in grants and subsidies to higher education institutions without a commensurate return on investment (HSRC, 2013). Hence, success in higher education from lower socio-economic groups from disadvantaged backgrounds is becoming an increasingly important policy goal in South Africa (Yorke and Thomas, 2003).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Rising from the socio-economic challenges mentioned above, a study by Letsteka and Maile (2013:2), placed South Africa's overall graduation rate amongst the lowest in the world, at 15% across all South African universities. Also the divided and unequal socio-economic distribution in South African society has a great impact on student drop-out according to Walton, Bowman and Osman (2015). The vast majority of students who drop out come from low-income or disadvantaged families (Macgregor, 2008). Many of these students face tremendous struggles when they reach higher education – financial, social and academic (Khan, 2009). O'Neill (2011) supports the above statements and states that dropout may also be associated with economic loss, lack of transferable formal qualifications and socio-economic factors, as well as causing serious dents in the self-confidence of the individual. Tertiary dropouts do not only affect the student but may ultimately result in economic loss by the institution and a resultant under-staffing and poorer quality of teaching and research (O'Neill, 2011). Soudine (2010) adds that the education system is in effect a 5% system for black students, meaning that for every 100 black student that enters the system, only five graduate.

A more recent study done by the Council on Higher Education in 2016, shows that the proportion of students accepted into contact institutions who are sufficiently prepared to complete undergraduate curricula within the intended time is small, at only 27 %, or roughly one in four. Performance is very poor for all groups across all the three qualification types (diplomas, three year and four-year degrees), with only 48 % in tertiary institutions graduating within the expected time – while 45 % will never graduate. By the end of the mandated time for all three qualification types, more students have been lost to failure and dropout than have graduated – and more than twice as many in the case of African and diploma students (Cloete,

2016). A similar study by Fisher and Scott (2011) revealed that 58 % of students attending a contact-based institution needed an extra two years to complete a three-year qualification. "It is reasonable to assume that the bulk of these students who could not proceed are from previously disadvantaged communities" (Kalla, 2015). De Jager (2006) shares the same sentiments and states that students from poorer areas in South Africa with limited financial resources and limited access to transport, library, computer and internet facilities, have a reduced chance of success in their three years of study.

Cloete and Butler-Adam (2012) state that pupils who do gain access to tertiary education often struggle to bridge the gap between school and tertiary studies. Winter and Dismore (2010) also say that much research has been done on the progression from school to university but not much has been done on the socioeconomic challenges which have a significant impact on students' learning and overall integration into university life. A smooth transition to university life from the first year and thereafter right up the final year level, is crucial for students and has an important influence on their social life and academic performance (Pike and Harrison, 2011).

The higher education sector thus remains plagued with skewed participation and a very high dropout rate, with many students exiting the system with no qualification, but having accumulated debt (DHET, 2010:144).

1.3 AIM, OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this case study was to identify the influence of socio-economic challenges on the learning experiences of Information and Corporate Management (ICM) third year students at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.3.2 Objectives

- To identify the principal socio-economic challenges experienced by third year ICM students at DUT.
- To investigate the influence these challenges appear to have on the students' achievement and potential drop-out rates.
- To identify specific issues which may be amenable to improvement.
- To recommend ways to improve the learning experiences of ICM third year students.

1.3.3 Critical questions

- What are the principal socio-economic challenges experienced by third year ICM students at DUT?
- What influence do these socio-economic challenges have that may affect their learning?
- What specific issues can be identified which may be amenable to improvement?
- How can the learning experience of third year ICM students be improved?

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for this study is to provide further insights regarding these challenges, as experienced by a group of ICM students, as these appear to affect their studies. The intake at this institution – Durban University of Technology (DUT) – is very largely from the black African community. The entry requirements are not as stringent as in some other institutions, such as the University of Cape Town, the University of KwaZulu Natal or the University of Johannesburg.

According to the questionnaires that were conducted for this research, most of these students come from disadvantaged communities with various socio-economic challenges. This case-study can therefore be seen as representative of the kinds of students who have been identified as being most affected by these challenges.

The researcher has been lecturing to third year students for almost ten (10) years. She finds that students in third year are more willing to open-up and trust the researcher than first and second year students. This relationship of trust has made the researcher more aware of the challenges that they had been facing over the years, and hence it was easier for her to obtain genuine feedback from questionnaires, and more especially from focus group interviews.

Table 1.1 below illustrates the ICM dropout rates at DUT as well as the throughput rate for the past three years. This table also demonstrates an increase in the dropout rate resulting in a decrease in the throughput rate (Department of Information Management Systems (MIS) statistics, DUT, 2015).

Cohort study of ICM students from 2014, 2015 and 2016

ICM Department	Year	Dropout rate	Throughput rate
	2014	29%	38%
	2015	30%	35%
	2016	38%	25%

Table 1.1 Information and Corporate Management Department (ITS Department)

In spite of extensive efforts to improve access to higher education, tertiary education generally remains inaccessible to students from poorer backgrounds (Salmi and Bassett, 2014). According to Berg (2014) and Piketty (2014:7) access to higher education is regarded by the “haves” as a means to maintaining privilege and by the “have-nots” as a means of getting out of poverty. But if we are to assume that finance is one of the main contributing factors in the dropout and throughput rates in South Africa, more than 70 % of students on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), did not complete their studies according to an analysis of the 2008-2013 cohorts. With this context in mind, it is important to identify other significant sets of socio-economic and academic factors that may be exacerbating what has become a ‘revolving door’ for many students who gain access to a higher institution but then fail to succeed in their studies (Fischer and Scott, 2011:2).

If higher education is to contribute to the reconstruction and development of South Africa, and its existing centres of excellence maintained, then the inequalities, imbalances and distortions that derive from its past and present structures must be addressed, and higher education transformed to meet the challenges for institutions committed to equity, justice and a better life for all (Strydom and Fourie, 2009). Hence, the need to manage university enrolments, from the point of initial student contact to the point of graduation, has become increasingly important.

The researcher hopes that findings and recommendations from this study will assist in lowering the dropout rate and improving the throughput rate in the specified department, and possibly in other departments at DUT and in other comparable tertiary institutions in South Africa.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology that the researcher conducted for this study involved “mixed methods” where both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The quantitative study involved 28 closed-ended questions and two open-ended (qualitative) questions. The questions were divided into two sections, namely A and B. Section A consisted of four questions which were biographical in nature, and Section B consisted of seven questions which spoke about the possible challenges (social, health, financial, and academic) that affect students whilst studying.

In the first section, participants were required to put a cross in the appropriate box and in the third section, participants were required to respond on a Likert scale. Focus group interviews were also conducted in a qualitative study where ten (10) third year volunteers participated. For the purpose of this study, the researcher included the whole population of 130 third-year registered ICM students of 2016. The researcher used convenience sampling because these third-year students were available and ready to participate in the study. The details of the research methodology will be explained further in Chapter 3.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study involved a particular group of third year students from the Durban University of Technology in the ICM Department, thus making it a case study. The researcher chose the case study approach because she wanted to understand the range of socio-economic problems or challenges affecting students' academic progress. Although the study was conducted at DUT, it should however, as noted above, have relevance for other similar institutions. The researcher drew on a study conducted by Pillay and Ngcobo (2010) which spoke about the challenges that University of Zululand (UniZulu) students also experienced. Hence, the findings could be useful to other institutions who are likely to be facing similar challenges.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.7.1 Socio-economic challenges:

Socio-economic issues are factors that have negative influence on an individuals' economic and social activity including lack of education, cultural and religious discrimination, overpopulation, unemployment and corruption

1.7.2 Information and Corporate Management Department

This department offers the qualification for which the students were studying intended for administrative officers at an intermediate level in all sectors of the economy. Qualifying learners are trained to provide independent and management support in the form of business and information administration, demonstrating various administrative and communication skills, as well as elementary and/or advanced skills in any two subjects from legal, personnel or financial environments (IMC Departmental Handbook, 2016).

1.7.3 Case Study

A case study is an intensive study of an individual unit of interest with a focus on the development factors (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Yin, (2014) describes a case study as a bounded system, in which the researchers set out boundaries and make clear statements about the focus and extent of the research.

1.8 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This study consists of six chapters, as follows:

1.8.1 Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter one provides the background of the study, problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, and the rationale for the study as well as a summary of the research methods and an outline of the chapters.

1.8.2 Chapter Two: Literature review

Chapter two provides a review of the literature providing an overview of the socio-economic challenges that face students in a tertiary institution, and how these challenges can ultimately lead to high dropout and low throughput rates.

1.8.3 Chapter Three: Research methodology

Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology that was used for this study. It describes the choice of data collection instruments, the distribution of questionnaires and the focus group interviews with students. The reliability and validity of the instruments used in the study and ethical issues are also discussed.

1.8.4 Chapter Four: Data analysis and findings

Chapter four presents the data in a tabular form, and provides an analysis and discussion of the results gathered from the third year students.

1.8.5 Chapter Five: Analysis of focus group interview results

Chapter five discusses the findings from the focus group interview held with ten of the students

1.8.6 Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter six discusses the conclusions and recommendations arising from the findings, and provides a brief discussion on the limitations of the study along with suggestions for further research.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a discussion on the background to the study and that was then aligned with the overall objectives of the study. This chapter also presented the rationale for the study regarding the challenges faced by third year ICM students at DUT, and finally it concluded by providing a definition of key terms as well as giving an overview of the research structure.

The following chapter focuses on the Literature Review of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter gave a brief overview of the context of the study, and discussed the problem statement and gave the objectives, the aims and the research questions of the study. In this chapter, the researcher presents a discussion of the literature based on the numerous challenges faced by students in higher education, including academic, financial, social and personal challenges, and their effects on student success.

The following topics will be discussed:

- The history of socio-economic challenges at tertiary institutions.
- The challenges that face students in South African tertiary institutions and abroad.
- The consequences of these for pass rates and drop-out rates.
- The theoretical framework of the research.

All universities are expected to keep students until graduation. It is clear that student retention has several benefits: reducing financing loss, enhancing a university's reputation, and increasing a university's effectiveness, amongst others (Simpson, 2005). Therefore, retention rates have become a focus in all universities around the globe as student drop-out rates are displaying a worrying trend (Tinto, 2012).

Various studies conducted in different parts of the world on the experiences of students' show that university students meet with challenges that often lead to them quitting their studies. These include academic, financial and accommodation problems (Braxton, 2012). These challenges and others impact seriously on learning and ultimately increase the dropout rates at tertiary institutions.

2.2 HISTORY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the days of apartheid, the National Party government privileged whites and discriminated against Indians, coloureds and Africans. The Africans were provided with the poorest quality, and least financed, education and were, and still are, the poorest racial group (Braxton, 2014).

Post-apartheid South Africa is regarded as a middle-income country but it is also one of the most unequal in the world. There are clusters of extreme wealth and a significant middle class, but the majority of the population is very poor. Africans form 78 % of the population, whites 9,6 %, coloureds 9 %, and Indians 2,6 % (Stats SA, 2010).

South Africa has the highest income inequality in the world measured by the Gini Index, which remained relatively unchanged between 1990 – 2012 (World Bank 2012). It has also experienced increased inequality which adversely impacts economic development, socio-political stability, and the progress of education (Sharma, 2012).

The Department of Education White Paper 3 of July 2013 still indicated that the Higher Education System needed to be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities (Govinder, Zondi and Makgoba, 2013). Attempting to reverse the effects of generations of racial discrimination under apartheid, the country has invested heavily over recent years to bring higher education within the reach of even the most deeply impoverished black students who perform well in school. Since 2010 South Africa has had 23 universities and public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (CHE, 2010).

Black student enrolments grew by 80% between 1993 and 2000 alone, and have continued to rise sharply. Black students made up 59% of the public higher education system in 2010 (Megan, 2010).

The following event illustrates the broad crisis of an overstretched higher education system as it struggles to extend access to disadvantaged youth, together with the desperation of poor people who view a university qualification as an escape route from poverty:

They lined up well before dawn, some driving from deep countryside, to wait for the gate of a new life to open. They hoped for a shot at a coveted spot at one of the South Africa's public universities. By morning, the line was more than a mile long. As the gates were about to open at 07:45, Tuesday morning (10 January 2012), thousands of students surged forward, desperate to win one of several hundred last chance places still open at the University of Johannesburg. Amid shoving and screams, Gloria Sekwana the mother of Kgositse, a prospective student, was trampled to death and several others were badly injured in a frantic scrum. (Polgreen, 2012).

It seems from this scenario that tertiary institutions are also faced with complex issues involved in the challenges of broadening access to higher education and changing student profile (Jordan and Weise, 2010). Student success is the responsibility of both the students and the institution, and therefore both institutions and students' own commitment to student success is necessary (Subotsky and Prinsloo, 2011).

The challenges faced by all students in South Africa are experienced most acutely amongst black students. While the challenges discussed above may seem to be pertinent specifically to South Africa, international students face similar issues (Chetty, 2014). Some of the challenges faced by learners internationally are discussed below.

2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALLY

The globe is a web of connecting cultures, values, beliefs, religions and socio-economic systems. What happens in one area of the world impacts other areas (Breueggemann, 2009).

The literature indicates that international students often experience challenges that are similar to problems experienced in South Africa, such as adapting to a new culture, English language problems, and financial problems, amongst others. For instance, some of the students in North America are facing similar socio-economic challenges because an increasing number of Native Americans are enrolling as First Generation Students (FGS) at tertiary institutions. However, the percentage of those attaining bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications remains low (at 11%) as compared with 15% for black students in South African institutions. Native Americans face not only the retention concerns felt by most FGS of family pressures, poverty, and a weak high-school education, but they also must assimilate into a campus culture very different from their own (Hoover, 2014).

Psychologists point out that lack of social integration can lead to dangerous states of mind and social isolation – a sense of being out of place. “Loss of immediate contact with significant friends or relatives would be expected to have an adverse effect” and this is known as a common factor affecting students during their three years of study in higher education (Barron, 2009:417).

However, despite the above challenges, the times are changing and individuals from different cultures are increasingly encountered in every realm of life. When students complete their studies, employers value lingual and cultural skills to facilitate the exchange of knowledge across international boundaries. For these reasons, there is a need to prepare students to be interculturally effective professionals and leaders (Chetty, 2014).

2.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

With changing student demographics, new challenges to higher education institutions are reflected in a high dropout rate and high failure rates. According to the then Minister of Higher Education, less than 40% of black and white students who begin university graduate (Nzimande, 2015). In addition, there are huge disparities between the pass rates of black and white students (Jones, Coetzee, Bailey and Wickham, 2009). Soudien (2010) confirms that the education system is an “11% system for black students and a 65% system for white students”, meaning that for every 100 black students that enter the system, only eleven graduate within the stipulated period for a diploma or degree. Also only 11% of black youth within the 18 – 24 age bracket are in university, compared with almost 65% of white youth (Chetty, 2014:89).

The idea of “cultural capital” explains the ways in which relationships of social inequality are reproduced through the education system. This theory is based on the fact that students who have previously been granted a certain familiarity with the world of high culture through their family upbringing, are at an advantage compared to those who come from different social classes and backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1991). A similar study by Letseka (2008), states that a significant proportion of students entering university come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds characterised by cultural challenges. As students enrol into tertiary institutions, one needs to acknowledge that they are not blank slates. A useful analogy used to describe such students is the cultural “baggage” they carry (Atherton, 2011). This “baggage” can be used as an overarching term, under which exists the myriad social, economic and cultural complexities which encompass an individual. Such complexities are a product of where an individual comes from. Some of the serious realities informing students’ “baggage” hinder students’ learning process (Chaparro et al, 2009).

Factors that comprise “baggage” are financial challenges, linguistic limitations, environmental factors, institutional limitations and limitations of family support, as well as negative factors caused by the previous high school attended by the student.

The schools from which culturally under-prepared students come are largely under-resourced, leading in part to the high level of under preparedness in tertiary students that precipitates the significant dropout rates experienced (Jansen, 2009). These students face tremendous challenges when they reach higher education (Khan, 2009). A case study done at the University of the Western Cape on the struggles of disadvantaged youth, confirmed that students who fall into this category lack cultural capital in numerous areas, including financial, educational and human capital (Baloyi, 2010). Such issues lead to students being preoccupied with external concerns (Atherton, 2011). Hence the vast majority of students who drop out came from low-income or disadvantaged families (Macgregor, 2008). These disadvantaged students may possess social and cultural capital, but not in the forms that are valued by higher education institutions (Barrett, 2009). Additionally, the language in which these students are taught may be second or even a third language for them.

Some specific challenges faced by students that affect their academic learning are discussed below.

2.4.1 Family income inequalities and finance

As mentioned above, in South Africa the majority of the population is very poor (Stats SA, 2010). The allocation of resources for students in the higher education sector is underpinned by the 2003 funding framework, which was built on the principle of shared costs between (mainly) government and students (DHET 2014b: 22). The Minister of Higher Education and Training is responsible for determining the division of different categories and sub-categories for funding. Universities have three sources of funding (fees, external funding and government grants). The researcher will discuss only the earmarked grants for underprivileged students and specifically the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which supports poor students by providing their upfront fee payments – as this is the most significant source of funding for poorer students.

While overall funding for universities increased in nominal terms from R24,3 billion in the 2012/13 financial year, to R30,3 billion in 2015/16, government reported that its funding per full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolled student fell by 1.1% per annum in real terms between 2000 and 2016 (DHET 2014a: 8).

For students coming from severely disadvantaged homes, the pressures to succeed are immense “you find some households take their entire income and invest it in one student” (Lindow, 2009). A study done at a University in the Western Cape, which caters for a large proportion of impoverished students, found that many students left before completing a qualification because they were too poor to stay (Breier, 2010).

When students are unable to meet their tuition fees and payment deadlines set by the university because their parents cannot afford the fees, the university may not allow them to return to further their studies (Breier 2010). This forces the students to work to supplement their financial aid while attending on a full-time basis, and this in turn prevents students from performing to their optimum capacity (Palmer and Davis, 2013). Even in a “first world” country such as the United Kingdom, four out of ten students work to fund themselves and two thirds felt this negatively affected their studies, with missed deadlines and poor attendance records (Fisher, 2011).

Parker (2009) also finds that one of the key reasons that affect learning in South Africa is the lack of financial support which means that many students have to look for part-time work (and this is often hard to find given the very high unemployment rate). Breier, (2010) also supports this and concludes, that the principal reason for dropping out of university by black African students is running out of funds.

In the United States research also found financial problems to be a significant stressor amongst tertiary students, more so those from less affluent communities. The spill-over effects on the student’s academic performance were notable (Clark, 2013).

Again, Turale (2008) found that students in rural areas who were living below the poverty line in Australia, were suffering academically and emotionally compared to those living in metropolitan areas, because they were in a state of deprivation.

In this context, given the historical, social and political factors also impacting upon students, finance must be considered a serious stressor among those from disadvantaged backgrounds all over the world.

The information below is based on Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) initiatives to support students who are facing some of the problems discussed above.

2.4.1.1 DHET initiatives in support of underprivileged students

The Government funding of higher education shifted in 2004 from the apartheid funding formula that used enrolment driven calculations, to produce an institutional funding system that was meant to address the country's new policy goals of equity and redress (MoE, 2004). The national budget for Higher Education is divided into three components, namely, block grants, earmarked funds and institutional restructuring funds. The earmarked National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is the principal source of funding accessed by disadvantaged students to gain access to Higher education (Mulaudzi, 2015).

The NSFAS grant system is informed by three main considerations – the first is the expansion of higher educational access for the poor, and secondly is the recognition that, given the high levels of poverty especially among Black South Africans, it may not be possible to have low enough tuition fees that the majority of poor people can afford. The third consideration is equity and affordability. Mechanisms for increasing access should ideally be both affordable to government and equitable (Wangenge-Ouma, 2010). However with “while twenty [now 24] years after democracy, more South Africans than ever before are qualifying to go to university, and this is something to celebrate, it has resulted in a massive headache for the tertiary institutions themselves – many of which are facing bankruptcy – as they struggle to find the money to pay for massive increases in student enrolment” (Styan, 2014:11).

The underlying challenge is therefore due to the fact that the universities have to accommodate more and more students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These students often do not have access to finance and are reliant on financial assistance – often from universities themselves – to pay for their studies. Although universities get heavily subsidised by Government, the money is no longer enough (Stayn, 2014).

Tinto (2014: 6) during his South African visit, stated that: “Providing students’ access without support is not opportunity. Without support (academic, social, and financial) too many students do not complete their programmes of study. It is my view that once an institution admits a student, it becomes obligated to provide, as best it can, the support needed to translate the opportunity access provided into success”

A report of the ministerial committee on the review of NSFAS, according to the DHET, states that funding for South African students grew from R2.375 billion in 2008 to R6 billion in 2011 to R8.3 billion in 2014 to R9.5 billion in 2015 and to date, in the 2016/2017 year, funding has increased to R11.3 Billion (DHET, 2017). Walton, Bowman and Osman (2015) state that finance plays a pivotal role that enables students admitted to any tertiary institution to succeed in their studies.

The above debate about the adequacy of funding rages on whilst student dropout rates still continue to be a challenge in higher education as discussed below:

2.4.1.2 The impact that student dropout rates have on universities

South Africa’s higher education system is also hampered by high levels of internal inefficiencies, especially dropouts. Cosser and Letseka’s (2010:3) reported that of the 120 000 students who enrolled in higher education in 2000, 36 000 (30%) dropped out in their first year. A further 24 000 (20%) dropped out during their second year and third year of studies. Of the remaining 60 000 (50%), fewer than half (22%) graduated within the specified 3 (three) year period. Again, a report by DHET (2010), states that 48% of NSFAS beneficiaries had dropped out or had not completed their studies. Various studies have shown that drop outs affect the Black population group the most (Letseka et al 2010).

Thus, overall, Higher Education access and participation in South Africa is problematic. Of major concern is that the South African higher education system is currently losing more than half its student body before graduation (CHE 2013b; DHET 2014a).

2.4.1.3 Fees Must Fall Movement

As a culmination of all the issues mentioned above, another movement began and has been raging on since 2015 and 2016. This is the “Fees Must Fall” (FMF) campaign. This movement has become a force for social change centred on access to free tertiary education. It demands deep transformation in all sectors of the higher education landscape and involves the broader societal issues of justice and equality (Snodgrass, 2016:6). The student leaders said that the struggle for free education would continue again in 2017 until their demands are met. The FMF protests that took place across the country in tertiary institutions highlighted the increased discontent of the youth in South Africa and brought the issue of access to education to the fore (Jacobs, 2016).

After the “Fees Must Fall” campaign, in 2018 Government has undertaken to provide R2.46 billion required for grants to all students from families whose income is below R600 000 per annum, i.e. the poor and “missing middle”. These students will experience a 0% increase in 2017 (DHET, 2017). Further to this, all first-entry students who have applied for financial aid and who come from Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools (the least privileged) and / or where family income is dependent upon a South African Social Services Agency (SASSA) grant, will qualify for financial aid (DHET, 2018).

2.4.2 Language difficulties

Literature available on educational issues of students' competencies shows that perceptions and judgements of students about their own learning abilities, skills or competencies, affect their academic roles, performances and proficiencies particularly in learning in a foreign or an 'additional' language (Ormrod, 2010). Although English has been the principal medium of instruction in South African schools for many years, students from disadvantaged backgrounds have not fully acquired the skills of speaking, reading and writing it – the most important areas of language competence (Jama, Mapesela, Beyleveld, 2008).

According to Cook (2013) the schooling system requires that African-language speaking children have to drop their mother tongue, or home language, too soon, and then learn in a language they do not fully understand. They therefore struggle to learn concepts, or how to read and write and learn in English. Richards, et al (2013:4) agrees with Cook and says that learners who write an examination in a language other than their mother tongue experience difficulty in fully interpreting the questions in addition to facing challenges in phrasing their responses, as they need to first understand what the question is saying, then to translate it into their mother tongue, before interpreting it back into the English language.

Language competence may, therefore, be regarded as another factor affecting the learning ability of students and their academic performance from their first year right up to the final year, or third year, of study. Students' success or failure, more often than not, depends on their ability to listen, speak, read and write proficiently in the language of instruction.

Students in the South African context of higher education are taught through the medium of English in most institutions for most of their academic work up to their final year of study (Nel and Muller, 2010) and yet there are many students who enter university with a poor proficiency in English.

Figure 2.1 below, lists numerous factors that influence students' academic success in South Africa. These include, amongst others, their degree of urbanisation, family circumstances, parental status, black language proficiency and capabilities.

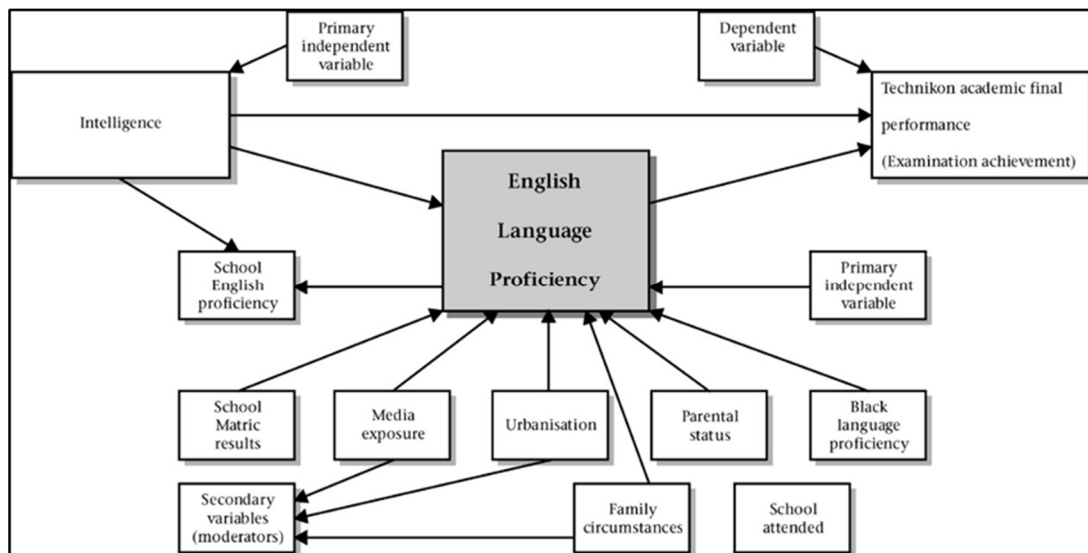


Figure 2.1: English Language Proficiency

(ELP) Model depicting factors influencing tertiary institution academic performance consequent upon English language facility (Stephen, Welman and Jordan, 2004).

The critical impact of English proficiency cannot be underestimated as most black students have problems pertaining to reading and writing ability.

This is a major problem and it is understood to be a significant factor in the high drop-out rates and the readmission of students who take five to six years to complete a three-year qualification (Anstey, 2013). It has been found that feelings of anxiety can be a hindrance to a second language acquisition and proficiency and could lead to students not completing their studies (Cope, 2011). Krashen (2012) also supported the view that anxiety impedes the path of a student's ability to operate in a targeted language.

This could lead to serious factors associated with problems of self-confidence and self-esteem as mentioned below.

2.4.3 Stress factors

There are potentially a large number of factors that may have a causative effect on the length of time it takes for a student to graduate or dropout from university-based studies. Most are linked to some form of stress or the lack of stress. "Stressors" are defined as life events and experiences that have the potential to cause adverse mental or behavioural outcomes.

Stressful situations involve harm, loss, threat or challenge (Beehr, Bowling and Bennet, 2010). Students are assaulted by numerous and constant personal, educational and social stressors.

Specific stressors or challenges include, but are not limited to, interpersonal relationships, living arrangements at student residences, personal finances, and, more frequently, experiences of failure (Adler, Conklin and Strank, 2013). Stress is a universal and unavoidable phenomenon for tertiary students and can become crippling (Welle and Graf, 2011). The difference between individuals is that stress accompanied by appropriate cultural capital allows some to thrive under pressure, while stress without the right kind of cultural capital will cause others to crumble (Burns, 2013).

Table 2 below shows a study that was done at the University of Zululand (UniZul) showing the results for the whole institution. The progress of all students was monitored from the date of their registration until they had either completed the degree or left the university because of academic exclusion or voluntary dropout.

Perceived as stressors	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Fear of failing	92,5	93,1	90,0
Financial problems	86,0	84,9	90,0
Failing tests and exams	81,6	80,4	86,0
Accommodation problems	77,4	78,8	72,0
Academic work too demanding	76,1	75,5	78,0
Death of a family member	66,7	64,4	75,5
Death of other significant person	63,0	60,6	72,0
Family member(s) ill	59,7	58,0	66,0
Transport problems	52,7	53,9	47,9
Personal illness	48,7	48,6	49,0
Difficulties with other relatives	46,2	47,3	41,7
Relationship problems	35,6	33,9	42,0
Difficulties with classmates	34,0	34,2	33,3
Difficulty with friends	30,9	30,2	34,0
Part-time job stressors	30,5	30,7	29,8
Conflict with parents	29,0	26,5	38,8
Parents in conflict with each other	27,7	26,1	34,0
Alcohol/drug use	17,3	19,0	10,4
In trouble with the law/police	15,5	15,3	16,7
Other	15,9	15,5	17,1

Table 2.1 – Reported stressors of students at the University of Zululand (Pillay and Ngcobo, 2010).

Table 2.1 above, compiled by A.L Pillay, from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and H.S.B Ngcobo, from the University of Zululand, and illustrates the percentages of participants reporting specific stressors. It will be seen that the most frequently reported stressors were those relating to academic work, especially the fear of failure (92,5 %). However financial problems were also stressful to most (86 %) of the participants, with accommodation problems at 77,4 % very frequently reported as well. The death of family members or other significant persons were reported by about two thirds of the participants. Among the least cited stressors were trouble with the law/police and alcohol/drug use.

[Note that the findings of this survey were drawn on by the researcher in compiling her list of stressors developed further for this research]

It is therefore clear that students from tertiary institutions in South Africa are faced with numerous challenges, some of which may prove more than they can cope with. As a result, their prospects of graduating are reduced, as reflected by the high drop-out rates discussed above (Pillay, 2010).

Table 2.2 below shows a study that was done in the Western Cape for students living in urban poverty who were exposed to a number of risk factors. Amongst these were unsafe neighbourhoods, parental worries about money, drugs, gangs, arrests, teenage pregnancy and violence. Many showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Turker, 2007).

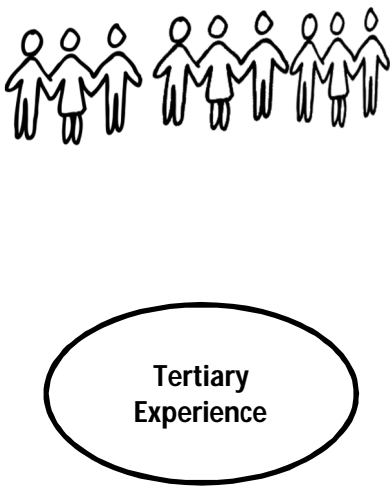
STUDENT RISK FACTORS		
Socio-economic experiences	<p>Student's Complex Lives</p> 	Academic Lives
Poverty		Experience of underperforming institutions that don't instil 21 st century professional skills.
Parental stress about finance.		Lack of residential life and peer support.
Unsafe neighbourhoods, gangs, guns.		Courses lacking relevance or that are not interesting.
Trauma, domestic abuse.		Being the first in the family to attend university.
Substance abuse, addictions.		A lack of role models and cultural understanding of higher education.
Death, illness in family.		

Table 2.2: Personal and Institutional factors affecting drop out at the University of Western Cape (Brier, 2010:667).

2.5 DROPOUT FACTORS FROM SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AND ABROAD

Dropout is defined as premature disengagement and termination from a course of study (Alexandra, 2012). According to the literature, different factors and socioeconomic challenges contribute to tertiary students' dropping out. The effects of race, age, gender and poverty, among other socio-economic variables, are among the main reasons for students dropping out of tertiary institutions. The ability to identify those students who are likely to drop out before they actually do so, can help gain insights into which trends better predict drop-out decisions and would allow admission policy makers to allocate existing retention resources more effectively (Tinto, 2012).

Other factors that may affect retention or dropout rates are a student's level of motivation to study, the academic transition from high school, and the type of living conditions that exist at the university (Murray, 2014). A similar study conducted by Carpenter and Ramirez (2007) was based in Italy where the economy is stronger than in South Africa. The Italian researchers examined the sources of the dropout gap between, and within, student racial groups and identified variables contributing to dropout rates – for instance family composition and degree of parental involvement – as discriminating factors. They found that a better cultural/family background and greater parental involvement enhances the probability that the child will continue and complete his or her studies. Parents who have also been through the tertiary system will encourage their child to continue.

It is therefore important to try to identify possible challenges that are exacerbating what has become a “revolving door” for many students who gain access to a higher education institution but then fail in their studies. Dropout risk is a serious concern for both students and educators.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The three most common paradigms that can inform research in the social sciences, are: positivism, constructivism/ interpretivism, and pragmatism (Andrew, Pedersen and McEvoy, 2011).

The positivist paradigm states that there is a single reality or truth and this can be measured by reliable and valid tools, while the constructivist or interpretive paradigm assumes that there is no single truth but rather that our understanding is formed through personal experiences and through relating new knowledge to the knowledge that we already possess, and to our activities. Lastly, the pragmatic paradigm sees that reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, and interpreted in light of its usefulness in new unpredictable situations and that therefore the best method to use in establishing the truth is the one that solves problems (Patel, 2015:3).

It is possible that the researcher could use more than one paradigm, but for this specific research she has chosen constructivism as the most appropriate as she is dealing with students and how students will be able to bring their personal values into the study and I, as the researcher, was collaborating with the students when doing focus group interviews in building and interpreting knowledge.

Also relevant to the study is Herzberg's two-factor theory of job performance. Here one set (labelled "satisfiers" or "motivators") result in satisfaction when adequately fulfilled, while the other set (labelled "dissatisfiers" or "hygiene factors") cause dissatisfaction when deficient. The motivators are typically intrinsic factors: they are part of job content and are largely administered by the employee, in this case the student. The hygiene factors are extrinsic and are under the control of someone other than the student, namely lecturers and academic work, peer pressure, the financial situation, type of accommodation, and type of tertiary life amongst others. It is argued that the students who have positive university experiences will be more satisfied than those students who do not. Thus, satisfaction will influence the student's intentions to stay or leave the institution.

The model below provides an illustration of what is happening currently in tertiary institutions in South Africa. Finances are most critically felt as they involve a lot of factors in terms of staying on for the full three years. Academic considerations are most frequently related to issues of a student's experiences in terms of his/her socio economic background in South Africa as elsewhere. *Figure 2.2* below provides an overview of most likely points of departure in an academic year, which could be applied to any higher education institution with financially stressed students. The arrows point to potential drop out points.

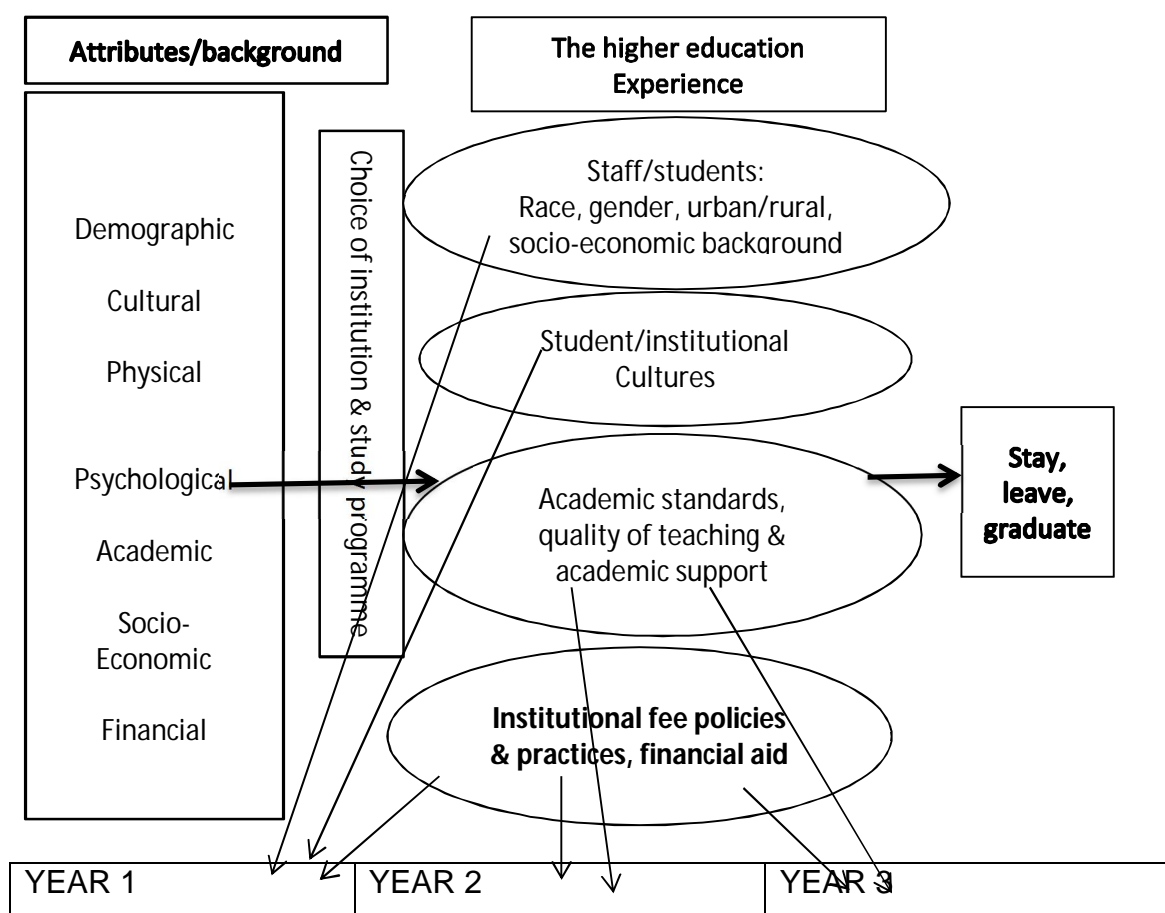


Figure 2.2: Personal and Institutional factors affecting drop out at the University of Western Cape (Breir, 2010:667).

2.7 CONCLUSION

It can therefore be concluded that the high dropout rates within higher education can be attributed to a myriad of issues including socio-economic status. High dropout rates lead to a decrease in government funding available for higher educational facilities and a decrease in the overall self-motivation of students. Low retention rates also contribute to the lack of highly trained and qualified individuals within the workforce.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, relevant literature was discussed to lay the foundation for the study. In this chapter, the research design, population, data collection, data analysis, pre-testing, limitations of the study, validity and reliability and ethical considerations will be discussed.

According to Ghauri (2011) research methodology is a systematic, focused and orderly collection of data for the purpose of obtaining information from it to solve or answer research problems or questions.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan, approach or strategy that is used to identify the population and sampling frame, then selecting the sample from which to collect the data and, finally, analysing the data and presenting the information for public consumption or scrutiny (Serfontein, 2010). Sekaran and Bougie (2013:95) add that a research design is a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data, based on the research questions of the study.

The researcher used a case study design for this research.

3.2.1 Case study

According to Maree (2012) a case study provides a setting where multiple sources of information, techniques and the qualitative and quantitative approaches to research can be used to create a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under investigation. This method assisted the researcher to achieve objectivity and to employ both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Moreover, this research method allowed the researcher to capture holistic and meaningful contextual characteristics from the real phenomenon within an intrinsically bounded system (McMillan and Schumacher, 2012).

The use of a case study discussed above allowed the researcher to gain a richer contextual understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Gray, 2009). The study looked at a particular group of third year students from the DUT in the ICM Department. The data was collected through questionnaires and focus group interviews, providing a setting where quantitative and qualitative approaches could both be used (Casey and Houghton, 2010).

Another reason for the researcher to choose a case study approach was that this is the Department in which the researcher teaches, and specifically this group of third year-students. The case was useful to further understand particular socio-economic problems or challenges critically affecting students' academic progress throughout their three years of undergraduate study.

3.3 MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Mixed methods research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study for understanding and corroboration (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). According to Wyse (2011:1) quantitative research is used to quantify problems by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics. On the other hand, qualitative research is used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of the participants. These can be in the form of words that include focus groups, individual interviews, participation and observations (Denscombe, 2012).

The researcher developed the methodology for this study, specifically using questionnaires and focus group interviews. Choosing a mixed method could improve confidence in the accuracy of findings through the use of different methods to investigate the same subject (Denscombe, 2012). Morse and Niehouse (2009) agree that a second approach is often essential because one method will generally be inadequate. Multiple sources of evidence will provide better research findings (Schwandt, 2015:29-30).

3.3 POPULATION

A population is any group of individuals that represent the whole or sum total of cases involved in a study (Fox, Bayat, 2010:52). Kotler and Armstrong (2010) further state that a population generally involves a researcher drawing conclusions about a large group of individuals by studying a smaller sample of the total population. The population of this study were all third-year students currently studying at DUT.

3.4 SAMPLING

Sampling is defined as a process of taking a portion or a smaller number of units from the population as representing the total population (De Vos, 2010). There are two types of sampling techniques that are used in research, namely, probability and non-probability sampling (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

3.5.1 Probability sampling

Probability sampling, according to Sekeran and Bougie (2013) is when all the elements that is, each individual, in that population has an equal chance of being chosen as a subject. Bless (2010) adds that it is possible to reach accurate conclusions by examining a wider group.

3.5.2 Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is when the researcher cannot guarantee that each individual in the population is represented in the sample – as each does not have an equal probability of being selected. Examples of non-probability sampling include purposive sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

For this study, the researcher used a non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling (Surbhi, 2016). The pros of a convenience sampling are its simplicity and, secondly, it is one of the cheapest methods to implement and lastly, data collection can be facilitated in a short period of time. The cons (negatives) for convenience sampling are that there is often a high level of sampling error and secondly this method is highly vulnerable to selection bias which is beyond the researcher's control (Dudovskiy, 2016).

However, in the researcher's case these negative aspects were reduced as a whole class of students was selected, and a large number of students were present for the questionnaire session.

3.6 Sampling frame

The sampling frame involves all those participants who were targeted for the study (130 students).

Role of participants	Size
Pre-test	10
Questionnaires	95
Focus Group Interviews	10
Total number of participants	115

Table 3.1: Breakdown of the participants within the frame

Thus 130 third year students registered in 2016 from the ICM Department at DUT formed the sample for this study. The population statistics were gathered from the Information Technology Support Services (ITSS) at DUT. 95 of these students completed questionnaires, whilst 10 were used for the focus group interviews and only 10 for pre-testing. The reason for choosing ICM third year students was that they had shown themselves to be capable of passing and had already spent over two years in the system, despite the challenges that they might have faced.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection is an essential component in conducting research. By and large it is also very difficult to say which is the best method of collecting data (O'Leary, 2004). Creswell (2011) further states that the basic idea of collecting data in any research study is to gather information to address the questions being asked. According to Pellissier (2007) there are two types of data collection plans, namely primary and secondary. Primary data is the type of data that is collected by the researcher for the use of the study being researched. Secondary data is the data that has already been collected although not necessarily for the purpose one is investigating, but sometimes for other purposes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

According to Denscombe (2013) surveys may include telephone, mail, face to face, observation, and web and document surveys. Primary data for this research was conducted using appropriate data collection instruments namely a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews (Ngibe, 2015:37).

3.7.1 Questionnaires

Sekaran (2010) describes questionnaires as a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers. The purpose of using questionnaires for this study is that it was cost-effective especially when investigating large groups; it is less intrusive than other forms of enquiry and questionnaires are familiar to most people (Fox and Bayat, 2007).

The researcher used a combination of closed and open-ended questions for the study. Closed questions provide for a set of responses from which the respondent has to choose one, or sometimes more than one, response. Data obtained from the administration of closed questions is easier to analyse than data obtained from open-ended questions (Bell, 2010). In addition closed questions are quick for respondents to answer, which increases the response rate. Closed questions are also easier to code and analyse (Rowley, 2014). The major disadvantage of closed questions is that they lack depth and variety (Brink, 2011).

A few open ended questions were therefore also used for this study, allowing for more flexibility and versatility (Brink, 2011). The advantages of open ended questions are that respondents can collect in-depth insights, and also they allow respondents to express their own views (Rowley, 2014). The disadvantages of open-ended questions is that the amount of detail may differ among respondents, coding of answers may be difficult and, lastly, statistical analysis is difficult (Maree, 2012). For this study, 95 students responded to the questionnaire. The procedure as to how the questionnaires were administered is explained later in this chapter.

3.7.2 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews are a special qualitative research technique in which people are interviewed in a group discussion setting (Neuman, 2011). The researcher preferred to use focus group interviews because it provided a rich and detailed set of data about perceptions, thoughts, feelings and impressions of ICM students expressed in their own words (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, 2009: 589). The researcher could gather in-depth information from a small group of participants. Denscombe, (2010) adds that this approach also allows for observation of interaction between the group members. The disadvantage of focus group interviews is that this technique is time consuming to plan and undertake. However, it allows the informant to shape the research and exposes the differences, contradictions, unique experiences, views, perceptions and attitudes expressed by different group members (Bennet, 2010).

An additional reason for choosing these students and this technique came from the recognition that youth are generally more comfortable having a discussion with their peers, rather than responding individually to interviews (Mill and Birks, 2014).

3.7.2.1 Conducting Focus Group Interviews

In focus group interviews, a minimum of eight participants will be brought together in an informal setting to discuss a topic in question (Thomas, 2013:204). The focus group interview that the researcher was conducted consisted of 9 (nine) females and 1 (one) male. The ratio in male to female was 1 in 4, which means only one male student represented the other males. This Department does not have a large number of male students as it is regarded as a female course but, having said that, the male student who participated is a student who is doing in-service training in the ICM Department and hence was very comfortable with the researcher, as we have worked together for almost a year in the Department. He was able to give the researcher a rich perspective of what male students on the whole were facing. The focus group interviews were expected to last for 30 minutes but ultimately lasted for over an hour. Students felt comfortable and free to provide whatever input was required by the researcher, and hence did not only answer briefly but wanted their input to be in great detail. The students also felt that although they were completing their studies that year (in 2016) their input on socioeconomic

challenges would be valuable and assist the students that would follow, long after they had left the institution. Students appeared to speak truthfully, enthusiastically and from the heart.

3.8 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

According to Sekeran and Bougie (2013) a questionnaire is a formulated, written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within closely defined alternatives. Graziano and Raulin (2013) advises that all instructions and questions should be clear when constructing a questionnaire and the focus of the questionnaire should be apparent and outlined by the research questions. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was divided into Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of four (4) questions which were biographical in nature and Section B consisted of seven (7) questions which asked about the possible challenges that can affect students whilst studying (See Appendix F).

Section A asked for the respondents' gender, age, race and year of registration. The purpose of including these biographical questions was to ascertain any age and gender differences and, more especially in Question 4, closely related are the age and the number of years the students have spent in the system before reaching third year. This assisted the researcher to obtain information about the challenges that they might have faced if they stayed for a long period in the system. Hence, Section A is linked to Section B. The other reason for choosing gender in the biographical data was to establish whether the majority (approximately 60%) of participants who do this course are females as it is an office-based course, therefore the analysis might reflect this statistic. The researcher also hoped to discover the different socio-economic problems that could emerge between male and female third-year students.

Section B sought to discover issues concerning the respondents' background and the support structures available to them. This section had seven (7) questions which related to the students' family background and the support that they received from their families or the institution during the three years whilst studying at DUT. This section was also designed to gather data on socio-economic issues (social, health, financial, and academic) faced by students during their years of study. The

researcher felt that these challenges were the most critical that students could face. This is supported by the socio-economic challenges which were highlighted by Flack, Mabuza and Moolman (2015:51) in a study conducted at UKZN. The questions were designed in such a way that they could reveal the most pertinent issues that students face and hence create awareness amongst their lecturers as to the challenges that they face on a daily basis. The researcher also believed, that through these questions, lecturers would see the students that they teach in a different light hence providing support for specific outcomes or recommendations of the study.

The above sections were compiled using closed-ended questions and open-ended questions involving the above issues which were selected for this study drawing partly on the findings of a related study involving another group of students from another KwaZulu Natal institution (Pillay and Ngcobo, 2010). The main aim for using open-ended questions was to enable the respondents to express themselves freely, and possibly to discover new aspects of the issues of which the researcher was previously unaware. Open ended questions provide a great deal of flexibility for the respondents, and more detailed information can be provided (Kawulich and Garner, 2013).

In closed-ended questions, the respondents ticked the appropriate alternatives given in the questionnaire. The questions were structured using a Likert and nominal scale. The length of the questionnaire was kept short thereby ensuring that it was straightforward to administer, as well as making it easy to undertake the coding of the respondents (Horn, 2012).

3.9 FOCUS GROUP DESIGN

The purpose of conducting focus group interviews was to ascertain, in a small, intimate setting, the challenges that third year student's experience. The first section of the interview involved seven questions which dealt with the participants' background and the challenges they experienced that could have affected their learning. The second section of the interview consisted of questions regarding the support structures available to them and the financial challenges that participants experienced during their three years of study.

3.10 ADMINISTERING QUESTIONNAIRES AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The table below shows the percentage of participants reporting specific stressors experienced by students at the University of Zululand (UniZul) – another of the Universities in KwaZulu-Natal. The most frequently reported stressors were those relating to academic work, especially the fear of failure (92,5 %). However financial problems were also found to be stressful to most (86 %) of participants, with accommodation problems also very frequently (77,4%) reported. Deaths of family members or other significant persons were reported by about two thirds of the participants. Among the least cited stressors were trouble with the law/police and alcohol/drug use.

The researcher drew on aspects of this research instrument as she felt that it was both convenient and appropriate considering that the institution that she is lecturing in is similar to UniZulu as students from these two institutions are from rural and urban areas within the KZN region.

Hence, it is possible that they might face similar socio-economic problems as identified in the table below:

Perceived as stressors	Total (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Fear of failing	92,5	93,1	90,0
Financial problems	86,0	84,9	90,0
Failing tests and exams	81,6	80,4	86,0
Accommodation problems	77,4	78,8	72,0
Academic work too demanding	76,1	75,5	78,0
Death of a family member	66,7	64,4	75,5
Family member(s) ill	59,7	58,0	66,0
Transport problems	52,7	53,9	47,9
Personal illness	48,7	48,6	49,0
Relationship problems	35,6	33,9	42,0
Difficulties with classmates	34,0	34,2	33,3
Difficulty with friends	30,9	30,2	34,0
Part-time job stressors	30,5	30,7	29,8
Conflict with parents	29,0	26,5	38,8
Parents in conflict with each other	27,7	26,1	34,0
Alcohol/drug use	17,3	19,0	10,4
In trouble with the law/police	15,5	15,3	16,7
Other	15,9	15,5	17,1

Table 3.2: Reported stressors of students at the University of Zululand (Pillay and Ngcobo, 2010).

3.10.1 PRE-TESTING

Pre-testing is the process involving a trial run with a few respondents, with the purpose of rectifying fundamental problems in the research instrument, and to evaluate the processes and research tools, before a large scale survey is undertaken (Zikmund, 2010 and Gray, 2009).

3.10.2 Procedure for conducting the pre-test

In order to test the measuring instrument for validity and reliability, questionnaires were distributed to ten students as a pre-test in order to determine if the data collection tools were reliable and effective (Bell, 2010). Moreover, the pre-test ensured that there was no confusion and ambiguity in the questionnaire.

The researcher administered the questionnaires herself to ten third-year students and they were collected and checked after completion. The feedback from the pre-test indicated that two of the questions were unclear and had to be changed. This was therefore effected to improve the quality of the questions and to ensure they would be understood by all of the students. The students involved in the pre-testing were not part of the group that answered the questionnaires for the main study.

3.10.3 Procedure for administering of questionnaires

Permission was sought from the ICM Head of Department to conduct the interviews during a lecture period. The questionnaires were self-administered. Before they were distributed students were informed that completing the questionnaires was voluntary but most were willing to participate. The questionnaires were distributed to 95 third year students. In general, the more data one collects, the better, but the adequacy of a smaller number of questionnaires will depend on the types of analyses that you want to conduct (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). Students were informed that the information obtained from the questionnaires was going to remain confidential and anonymous. The questionnaires were collected after completion.

3.10.4 Procedure for conducting Focus Group Interviews

Prior to conducting the focus group interviews, the ICM Head of Department granted the researcher permission to conduct the interviews with the students (see Appendix 5). The researcher's recruitment approach was to then to request third year students if they would be prepared to participate in the interview session that was being conducted. She then conducted a pre-briefing and informed them that the interviews were going to be confidential. She gave the students enough time to prepare them for the interview which took place in the Research Boardroom

at the Ritson Campus of DUT. The researcher, as recommended by Maree (2012), requested permission to record the interview so as to free herself to participate without the burden of having to take written notes during the process. As recommended by Papista and Dimitriadis (2012) she then developed a discussion outline and actively directed the discussion to cover all topics within the specified timeframe of 1 hour. As students had a lot to say, and the researcher did not want to stop the process this time limit was in fact exceeded. The students informed the researcher after the interview that the focus group questions were clear and understandable.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis and interpretation is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to collected data through the grouping of responses and identification of patterns and trends. These techniques enable the researcher to develop data displays that give an impression of the overall trends in the distribution scores (Tredoux and Durrheim, 2010).

Data gathered from the questionnaires was analysed using Partial Least Square (PLS) - Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). PLS-SEM is a modelling approach aimed at maximising the explained variance of the dependent latent constructs (Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics, 2009:319). Some researchers view PLS-SEM as a “silver bullet” that deals specifically with smaller sizes (Kahai and Piovosio 2009). The researcher does not have a problem with the above because the research is based on a case study which involves a fairly small group of third year students. Cronbach’s alpha was tested for the reliability of the questionnaires. Tables, graphs and structural modelling were used to analyse the findings.

Data was recorded from the semi structured interviews using a digital recorder. The researcher went through the transcribed raw data for coding. The coding process was used to identify themes that emerged from the data. These were compiled into categories. The data was described, interpreted and analysed for patterns that emerged during data collection (Creswell, 2012).

3.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.12.1 Validity

Validity is defined as the degree to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Yount, 2010: 482). The researcher also ensured validity by conducting a pilot study of the questionnaire before conducting the main study. Validity was also enhanced during focus group interviews as the interviews were conducted in a safe environment in one of the Research Boardrooms at DUT, which allowed the researcher to capture rich information with regards to responses without interruptions.

3.12.2 Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an instrument measures a concept the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same respondents (Kawulich and Garner, 2013). A pre-test of 10 third year participants was conducted to ensure reliability of the questionnaires before they could be distributed to the larger population. A statistician was used to analyse the questionnaire to ensure that the study was accurate and reliable.

3.13 LIMITATIONS

The case study was conducted only at the Durban University of Technology, Ritson Campus and was limited to ICM third-year students. Maree (2012:42) states that results may become distorted because of the perceived special attention given to some subjects, which in turn may influence the feed from the respondents. However, logical and financial constraints would not allow the researcher to include other tertiary institutions. It is nonetheless hoped that the findings will reflect experiences/challenges faced by many students in South African tertiary institutions, hence, while the results of the study may not be generalised to other institutions they may be of interest. The other limitation is that there is an underrepresentation of male participants due to the dynamics of the course.

3.14 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality implies that what has been discussed or written will not be repeated, or at least, not without permission (Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles, 2006).

Confidentiality of data may include the following:

- Maintaining confidentiality of records, ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals and storing the data of individual securely.
- Not disclosing what was discussed in an interview. (Smyth and Williamson, 2004).

The researcher has stored the questionnaires in a lockable place and will use a paper shredder to dispose of them after five years. The qualitative data will be transferred to a USB stick which will be locked away in a lockable place for five years.

3.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Resnik (2015) states that, as research involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards are important to promote the values that are essential to collaborative work. Ethical lapses in research can significantly harm human and animal subjects, students and the public.

In order to obtain an ethical clearance for this study, the following steps were taken:

- The research proposal was approved by Faculty Research Committee (FRC) on the 30th November 2016 (See *Appendix A*).
- The proposal was then tabled at the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) for expedited review. Subsequently, provisional approval was granted on 06 June 2016 (See appendix B) to conduct a pilot study. IREC also requested that a gatekeeper's letter should be sought from the institution.
- A pilot study was then conducted by the researcher. Feedback and changes made on the data collection instruments after the pilot study were submitted to IREC for full ethical approval, together with the requested gatekeeper's

letter (See *Appendix B*) which was approved by the Research and Postgraduate Support Office at the DUT on 26th July 2016. The minor changes that were made to the pilot study were specifically Question 7 and Question 28, which were rectified accordingly.

- On 30 August 2016 (*Appendix B*) full ethical approval was granted by the IREC to collect data for the main study.

3.16 CONCLUSION

Chapter three has outlined the research methodology that was used for this study. The research design was explained with the use of mixed methods which included focus group interviews and questionnaires. The data collection method and data analysis was also discussed for the two methods that were used by the researcher. Finally, validity, confidentiality and ethics were also discussed. The researcher observed that the use of questionnaires, but more especially focus group interviews, brought out more serious issues/challenges from students than she had anticipated.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research methodology and research design were explained. The process of designing and administering the questionnaires, as well as the focus group interviews, were also discussed. Chapter Four will present the data analysis and discuss the main findings of the quantitative data captured for the study.

The site of the study was the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Data gathered from the questionnaires was analysed using Partial Least Square (PLS) - Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), while Microsoft Excel was used for some of the graphs and correlations. The results are presented in the form of graphs and statistical modelling. Cronbach's alpha was tested for the reliability of the questionnaires. Tables, graphs and structural modelling were used to analyse the findings. An analysis of the findings from the questionnaire follows.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS FOR THIRD YEAR STUDENTS

Variable	Characteristics	Response rate	(%)
Gender	Male	20	27%
	Female	75	73%
Age	20 – 22	61	65%
	23 – 25	28	28%
	26 and above	06	06%
Race	Blacks	94	99%
	Coloureds	01	01%
	Indians	00	00%
	Whites	00	00%

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for third year students

The findings of this study show that 75 (73 %) were females and 25 (26,6 %) were males. The results indicate a higher percentage of female respondents than males currently enrolled in the programme. The reason for this finding is that, on average, the ICM course has a large female component because it is focussed on office administration which apparently still attracts more women than men.

4.3 DATE OF REGISTRATION

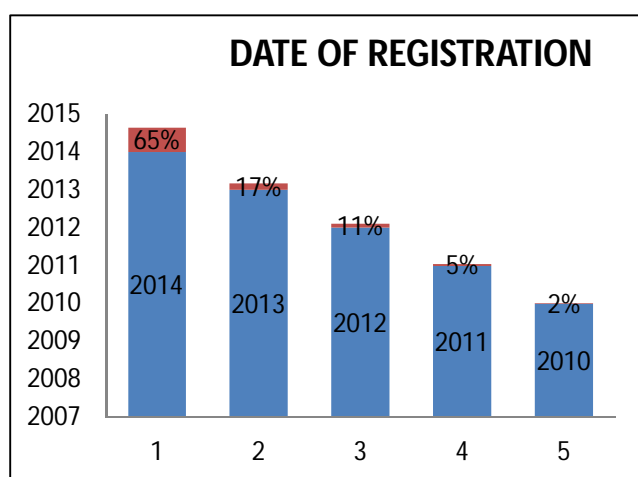


Figure 4.1: Date of Registration

The above graph indicates that 62 students (65%) registered in 2014 and completed the diploma within the minimum time required of three years. 16 (17%) having registered in 2013, completed within 4 (four) years, 10 (11%) having registered in 2012, completed within 5 (five) years, 05 (05%) having registered in 2011, completed within 6 (six) years and 02 (02%) having registered in 2010, completed within 7(seven) years.

Cohort study of first-time entering National Diploma students for 2014

Department	No of first time entering 2014	Graduates in 2016	No dropped out	Dropout rate	Throughput rate
	227	101	61	27%	44%

Table 4.2 Information and Corporate Management Department (ITS Dept)

4.4 TYPE OF SCHOOLING AND DESCRIPTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING

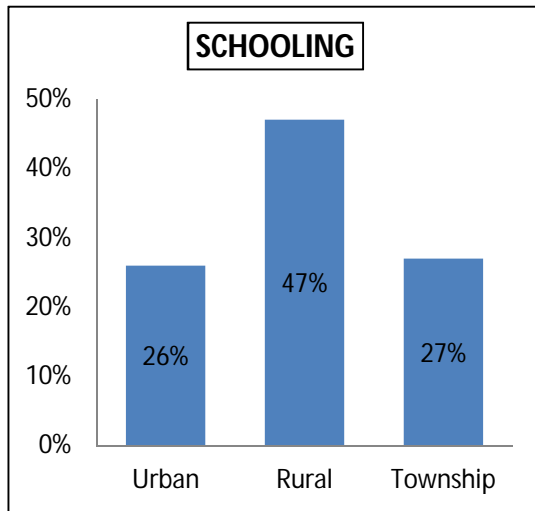


Figure 4.2 Geographical area of schooling

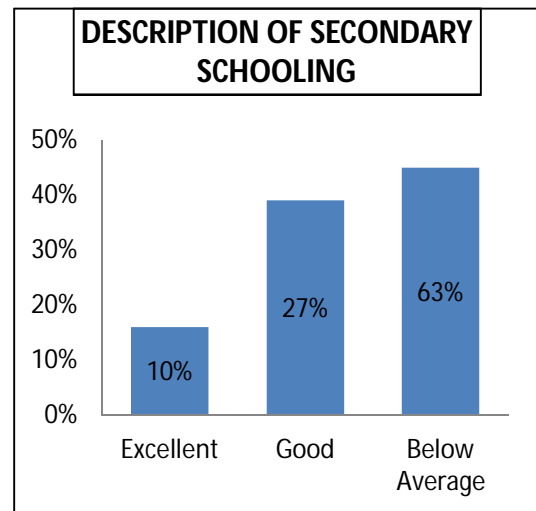


Figure 4.3 Secondary schooling

Based on the findings of the study, it is clear that the largest proportion (44 or 47%) of the respondents in the ICM Department went to rural schools while 26 (27%) went to township schools and a similar number to urban schools (25 or 26%). The graph next to it shows that 60 (63 %) of the students went to below average schools, whereas 26 (27%) of the students went to good schools and only 9 (10%) of students went to excellent schools. A study conducted by Cloete and Butler-Adam at the University of KwaZulu Natal in (2012) shows that students who gain entry into tertiary education often struggle to bridge the gap between school and university particularly those coming from below average schools.

* Below average schools - Disadvantaged schools are defined as schools in which the average socio-economic background of students is below the national average.

4.5 CORRELATION OF RURAL AND URBAN STUDENTS AND FEAR OF FAILING

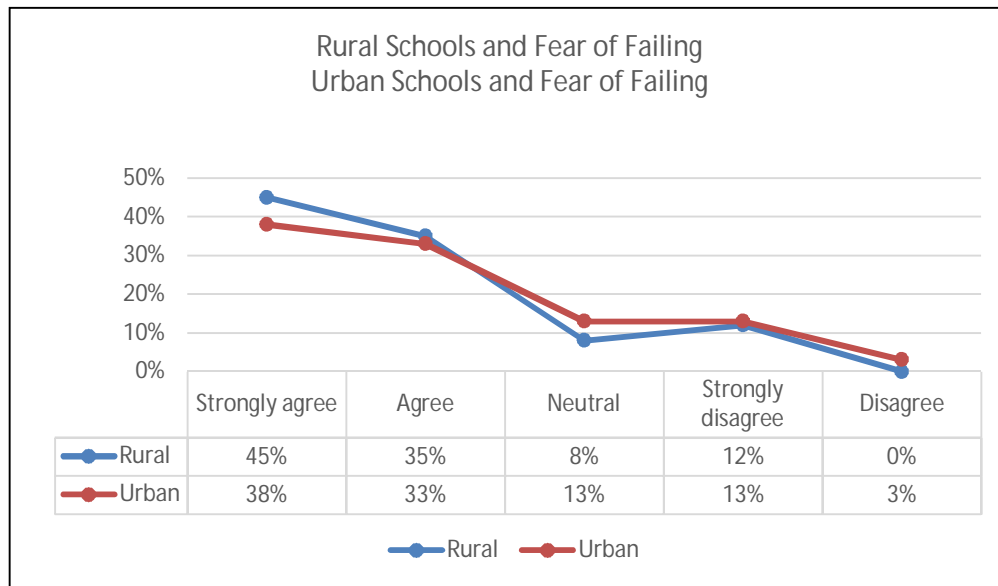


Figure 4.4 Correlation between Rural or Urban students and Fear of Failing

The above correlation highlights a positive correlation (of 0, 99319) between students from the rural and urban schools in relation to the question of Fear of Failing. The respondents from both the rural (80%) and urban schools (71%) strongly agree or agree that they have a fear of failing.

4.6 CORRELATION OF EXCELLENT SCHOOLS AND BELOW AVERAGE SCHOOLS CONCERNING FEAR OF FAILING

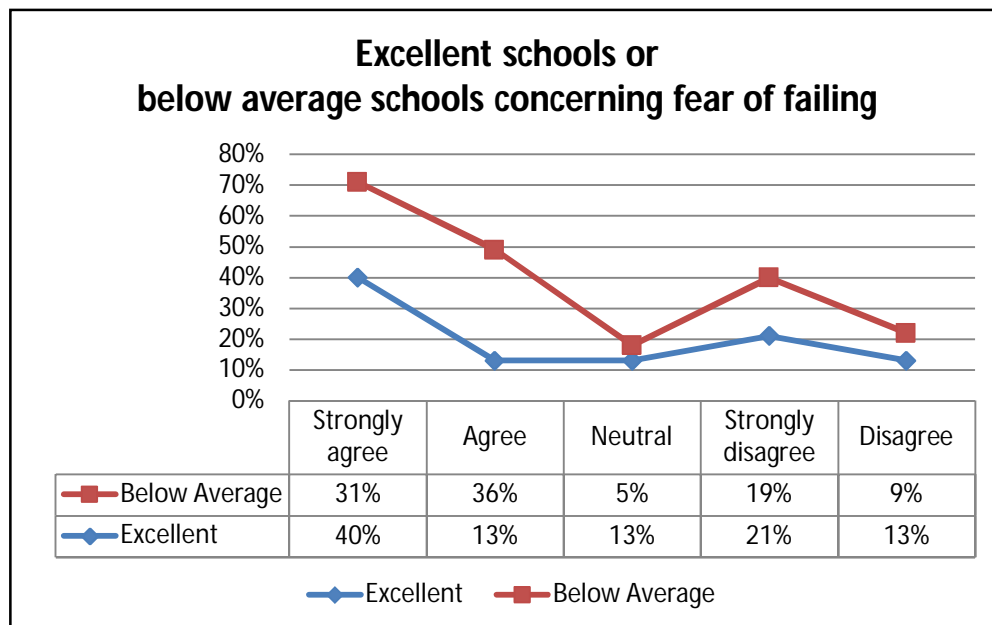


Figure 4.5 Correlation between excellent and below average schools concerning fear of failing

The above graph highlights that there is far less correlation (0,458816) between students who came from excellent schools' fear of failing (53% either agree or strongly agree) and those who came from below average schools (67% either agree or strongly agree). On the other hand, there is a percentage of 34% from excellent schools and 28% from below average schools of students who strongly disagree or disagree to fear of failing. The above graph therefore shows that while students who come from below average schools have a greater fear of failing than those from excellent schools, this is not so marked as might have been predicted.

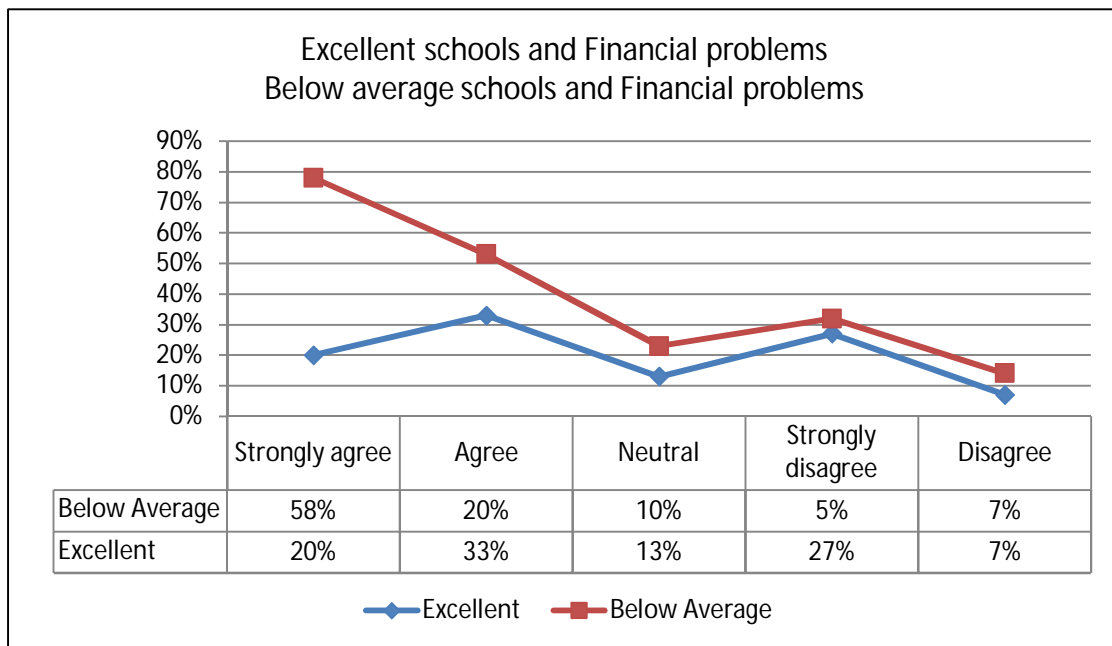


Figure 4.6 Correlation between excellent schools and below average schools and experience of financial problems

From the above diagram, it can be seen that there is no correlation (0, 145776) between excellent schools and financial problems and below average schools and financial problems. As it might be expected financial problems do not seem to be a serious issue for students from excellent schools while they pose a serious challenge for students who come from below average schools.

4.7. DESCRIBE YOUR ACCOMMODATION WHILST STUDYING AT DUT

I stay with:

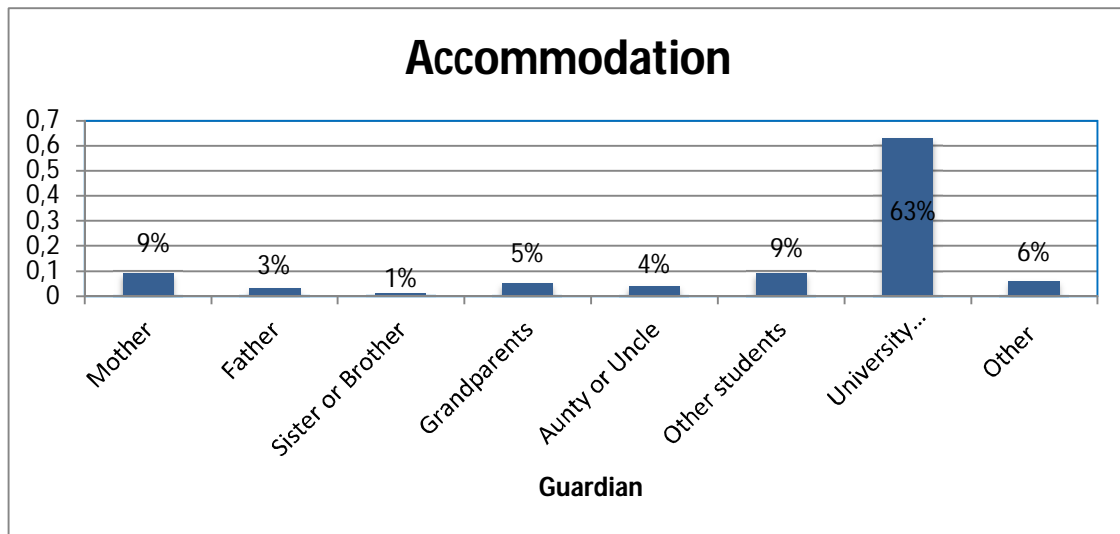


Figure 4.7 Accommodation

The above graph indicates the accommodation that the students had whilst studying at DUT. The majority of the students lived in university residences (63%) which appears to indicate that they had received NSFAS funding during their third year of studies. (However, there are other financial institutions that support students including sponsors, family, and edu-loan). Very few students lived with their mothers 8 (9%) or other students 8 (9%). Percentages of students who live in flats, or with their younger siblings or alone were 5 (6%) and lastly, grandparents 4 (5%) aunts or uncles 4 (4%), fathers 3 (3%) and sisters at 1 (1%). A graph is given below to indicate whether there is a correlation between the type of accommodation students had and how challenging they found their academic work.

4.8 CORRELATION OF ACCOMMODATION AND ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

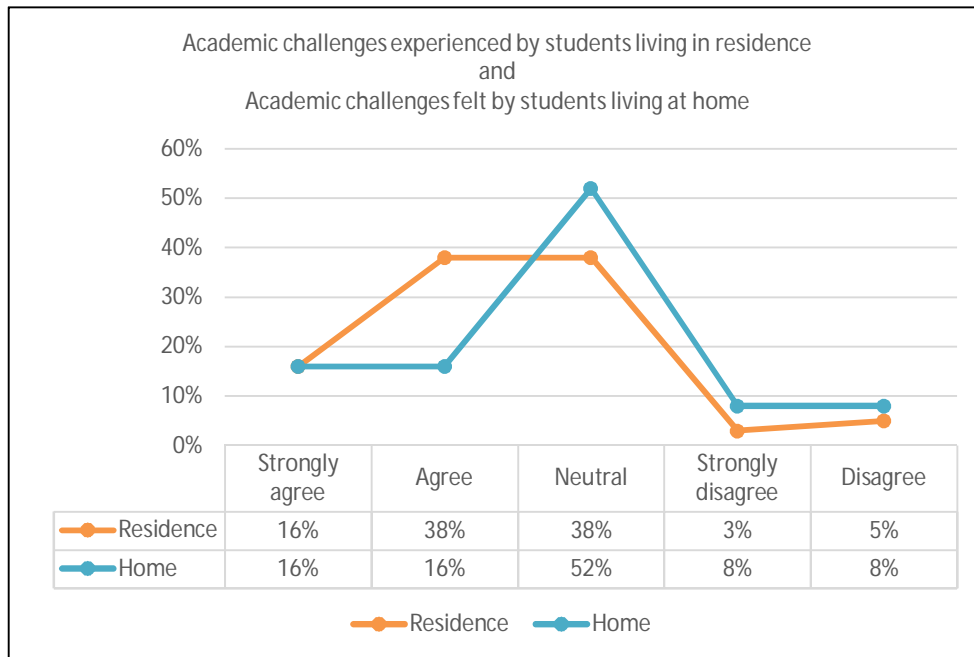


Figure 4.8 Correlation between academic challenges and accommodation

The graph above highlights that there is a negative correlation (0,718449) between the academic challenges of those who live in residence and those who live at home. This correlation reveals that students living in residences experience more academic challenges (52% either agreeing or strongly agreeing) than students living at home (38% either agreeing or strongly agreeing). However, many students living both in residence (38%) and at home (52%) are neutral as to whether academic challenges pose a problem.

4.9 Who supports your studies financially?

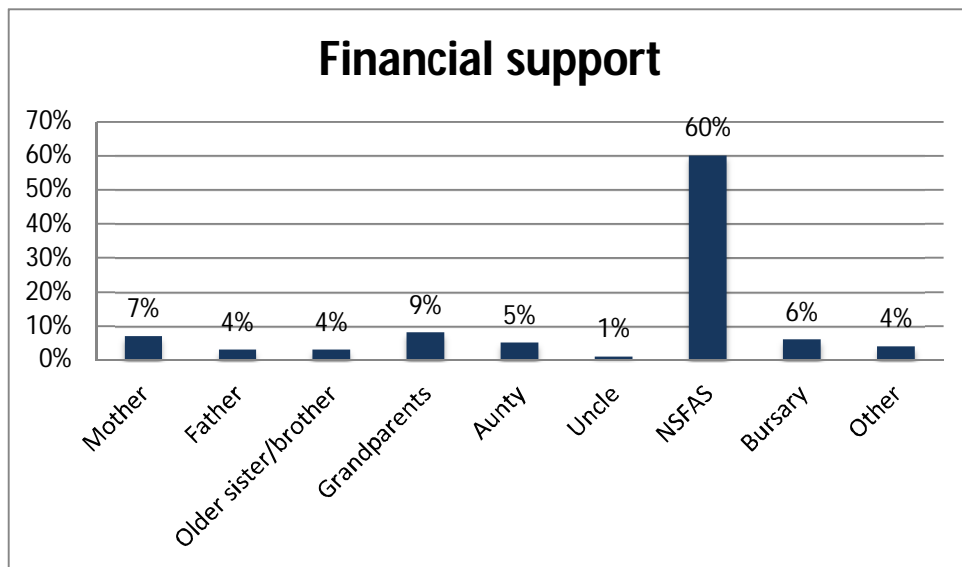


Figure 4.9: Financial support

The above diagram shows clearly that the majority of the students 59 (60%) rely on NSFAS to support their studies. This is followed by grandparents 8 (9%), mother 6 (7%), bursary 5 (6%), aunt 4 (5%), father 3 (4%) and siblings 3 (4%) respectively, with self-support by the student at 3 (4%). According to the questionnaires that the students filled in, the 3 (4%) citing the self-support were involved in doing part-time work. The least financial support came from uncles at 1 (1%). From the above statement, it can be concluded that at least 33 (36%) of students do not receive NSFAS or bursary funding. This is quite a substantial percentage which could lead to student dropout as the majority of these students stated that they come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4.10 How do you travel to the university?

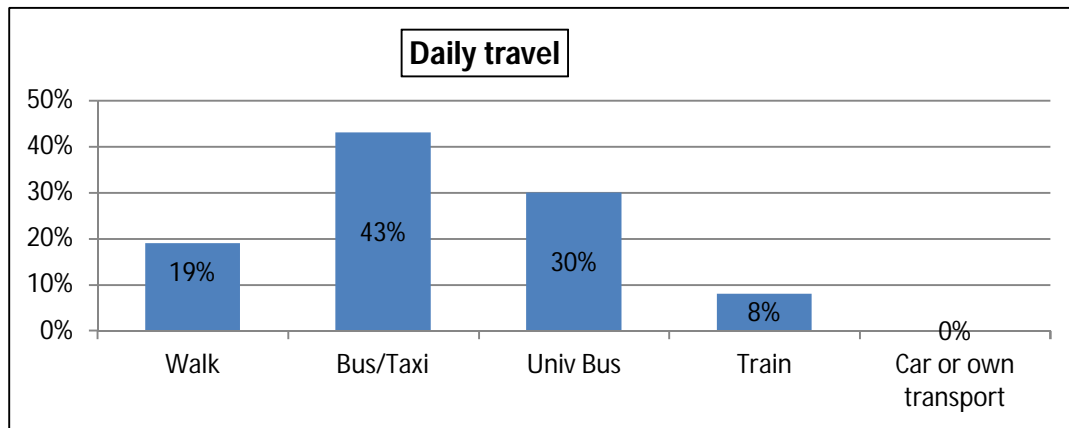


Figure 4.10 Daily travel

The above diagram shows that the majority of the students indicated that they travel by university bus: 39 (43%), or other bus or taxi: 31 (30%).

From this one can see the importance of mass bus transport in the lives of the students. 17 (19%) however, indicated that they walk to university and just 8 (8%) use the train. From the interviews it appeared that students who walk to university do so because of financial challenges and this could impact on their academic studies. Interestingly, one of the students who took part in the focus group interviews said that she walked from Pinetown to the campus and back (21 km, which is approximately a 3-hour walk) on a daily basis. These students may not be punctual for their lectures, making the lecturers angry, thus having an adverse effect on their academic studies.

4.11 CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT STUDENTS

4.11.1 I have accommodation problems

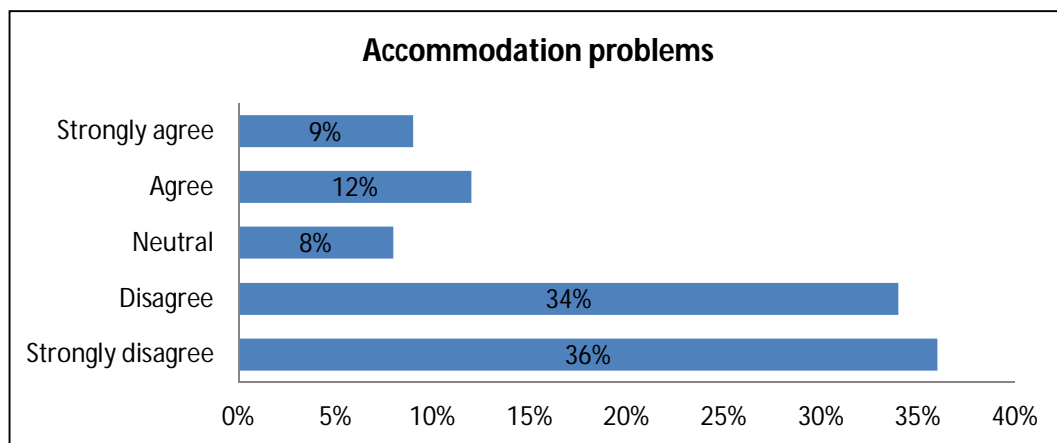


Figure 4.11 Accommodation

The above graph shows that most of the students do not have accommodation problems. 67 (70%) of the students disagree or strongly disagree that they experienced this problem. 20 (22%) agreed that they do have an accommodation problem although they managed to go through first and second year.

4.11.2 I have transportation problems

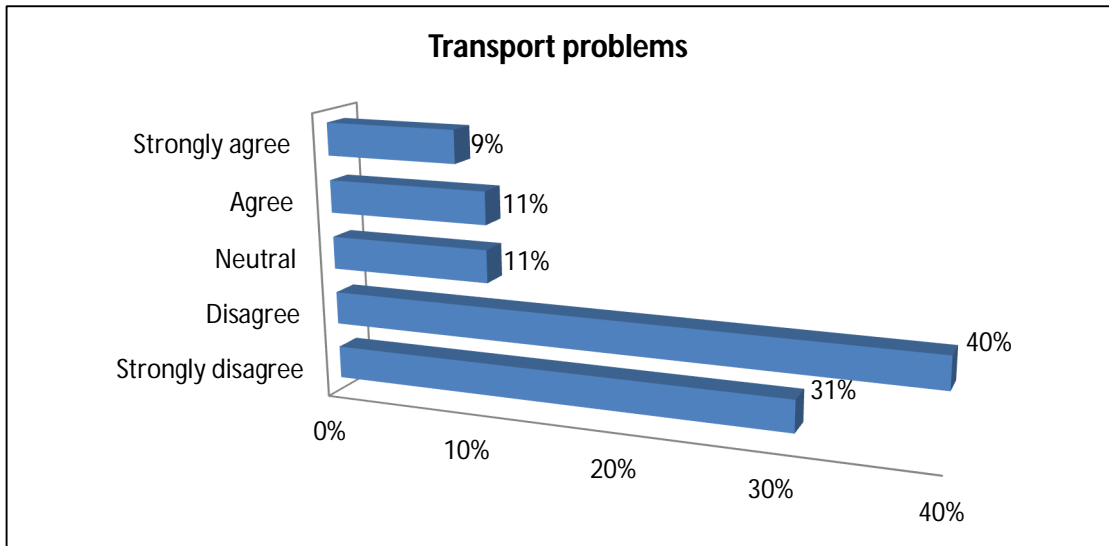


Figure 4.12: Transport problems

The graph above is in agreement with an earlier finding about respondents' travel where the majority 69 (71%) indicated that they travel by mass transport systems to the university and therefore have no problem. A great majority of students also indicated that they have no transportation problems. The percentages who agree to have transport problems are 18 (20%). Likewise, those who decided to remain neutral are small, at 10 (11%). This is a good indication that the University is seen to be doing its best to transport students to and from its campuses.

4.11.3 I have difficulty communicating with classmates

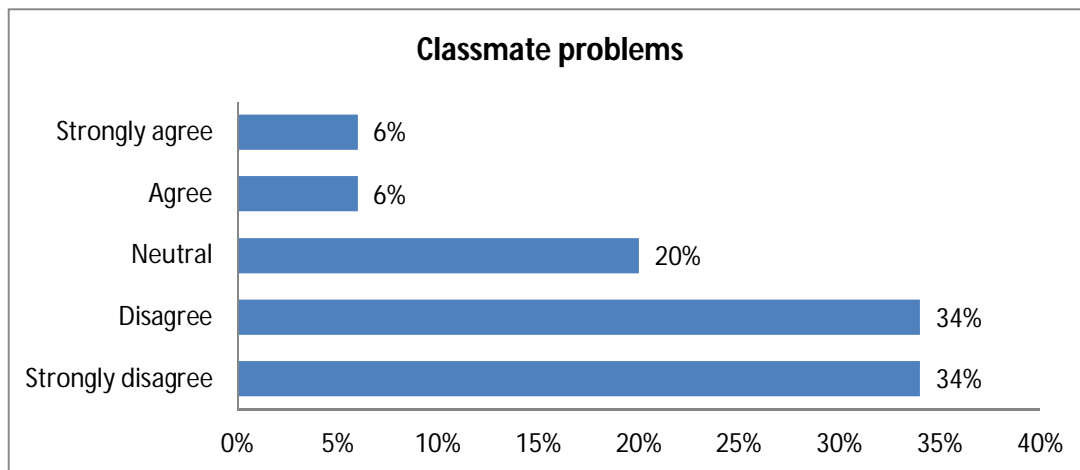


Figure 4.13: Classmate problems

The above graph indicates that most students 66 (68%) have no problem communicating with their classmates. Only 12 (13%) said they do have problems which could be those coming from rural schools who also indicated, during the interviews, that their schooling background affected their tertiary education.

4.11.4 I have conflict with parents

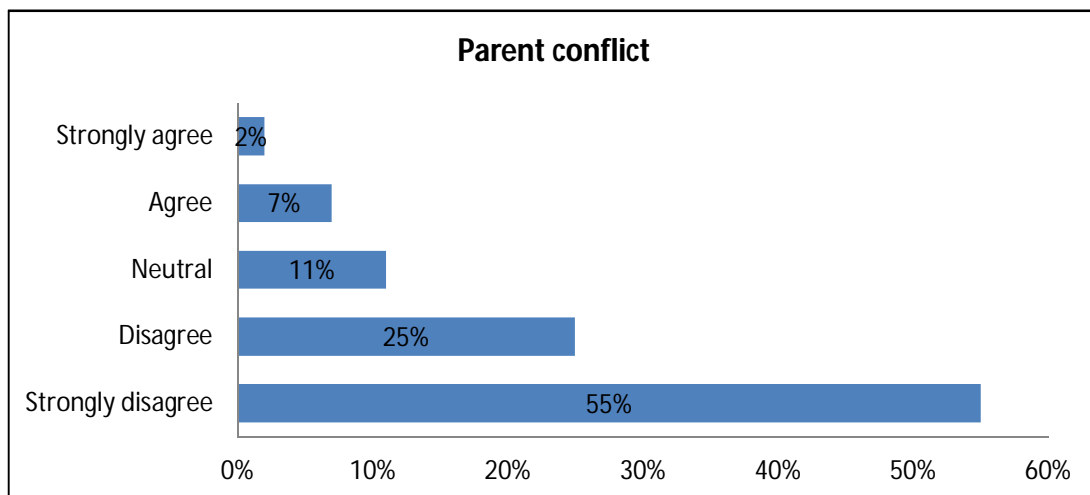


Figure 4.14: Parent conflict

The above graph depicts that parental conflicts have very little effect on the students. The majority of the students 77 (80%) disagree or strongly disagreed that they have conflicts with their parents. However, 10 (11%) of the students decided not to disclose their situation regarding this issue with less than 8 (9%) saying they agree or strongly agree respectively. This could be as a result of most students staying in residence and therefore not having to worry their parents for transportation, food or money for books, all of which are provided by NSFAS.

4.11.5 My social life is busy.

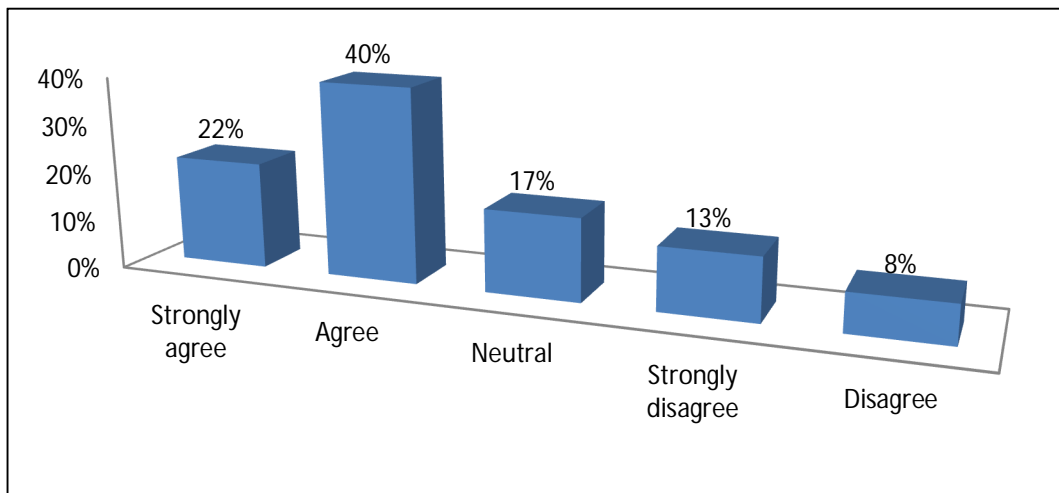


Figure 4.15: Social life

The above graph shows that most of the students have a busy social life. 60 (62%) students agree or strongly agree that their social life is busy. This could have psychological effects on students' throughput rates as too much socializing can conflict with the forming of a good scholar (Rienties *et al.*, 2012).

4.11.6 I drink alcohol and /or use drugs.

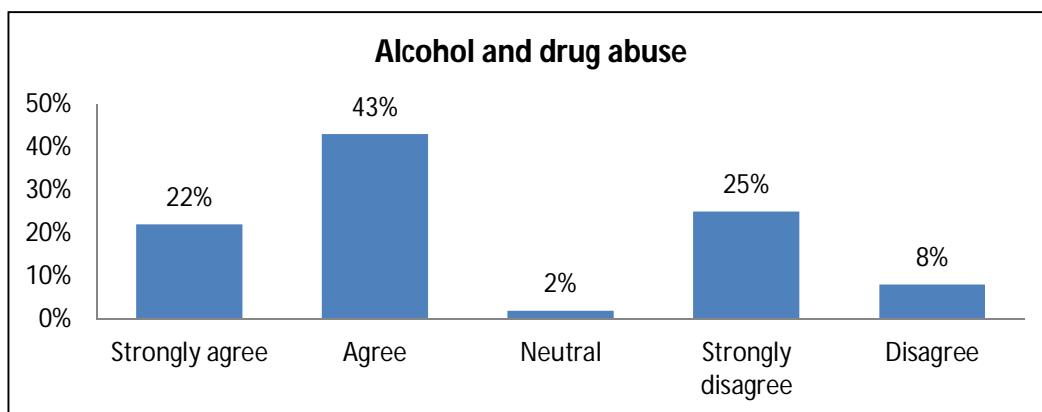


Figure 4.16: Alcohol and drug abuse

The above graph indicates that alcohol and drug abuse may be another reason why students do not complete tertiary education. 63 (65%) of the students strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. This means, as the diagram above also shows, that 60% of students are involved in drinking and partying which can also negatively affect their academic performance. Only 23 (25%) strongly disagreed with 7 (8%) simply disagreeing.

4.11.7 I have trouble with the law

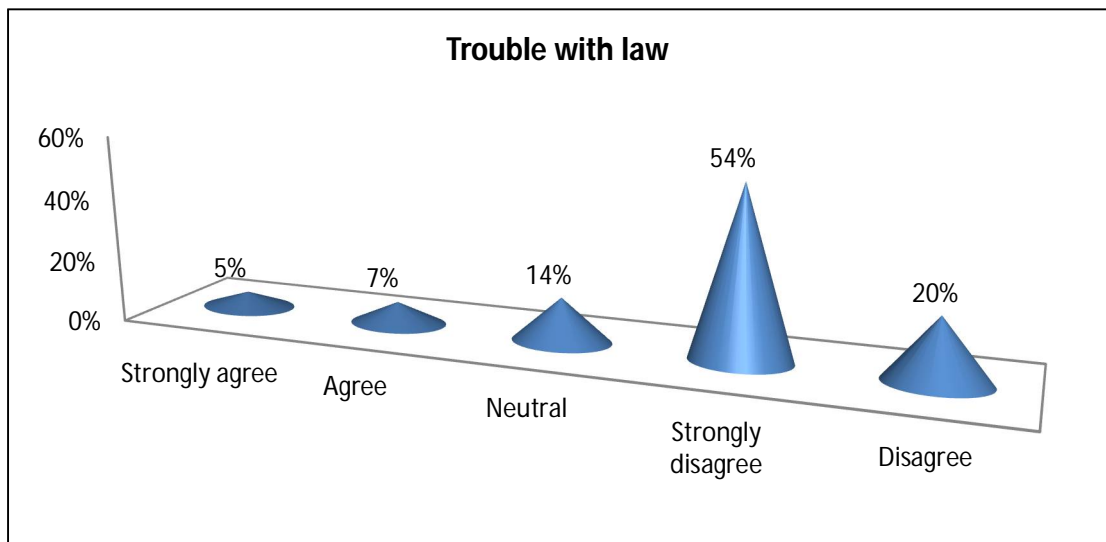


Figure 4.17: Trouble with the law

The diagram above depicts that the majority of the students disagreed (73 or 74%) and a only a small number of 10 (11%) either agreed or strongly agreed. This issue is then likely to be only a minor cause of student dropout

4.12 HEALTH CHALLENGES

4.12.1I have a personal illness.

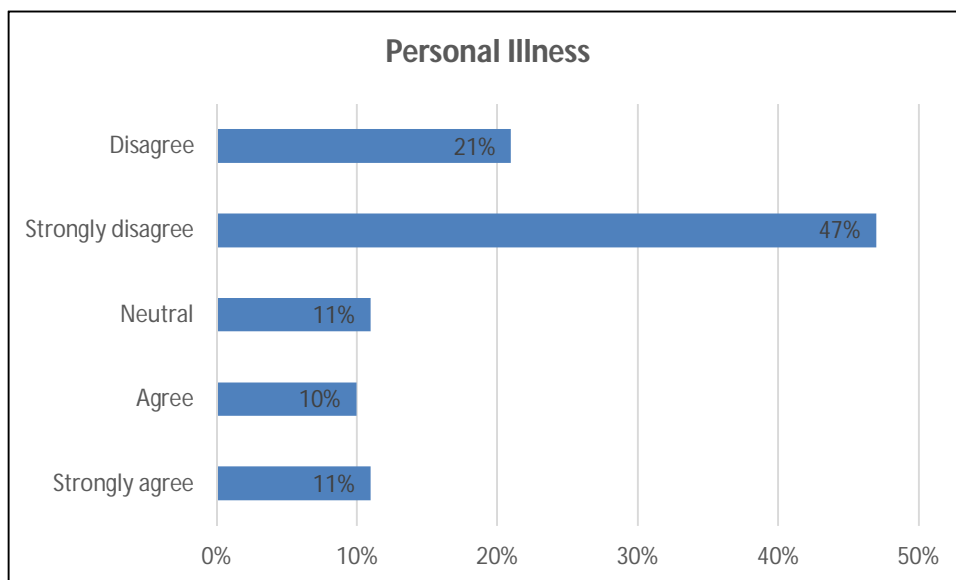


Figure 4.18: Personal illness

The above diagram indicates that illness is not a major cause for alarm as 65 (68%) of students disagreed or strongly disagreed to having personal illness problems. 10 (11%) were neutral, and 20 (21%) agreed or strongly agreed to this statement.

4.12.2I have a family member/s that is ill.

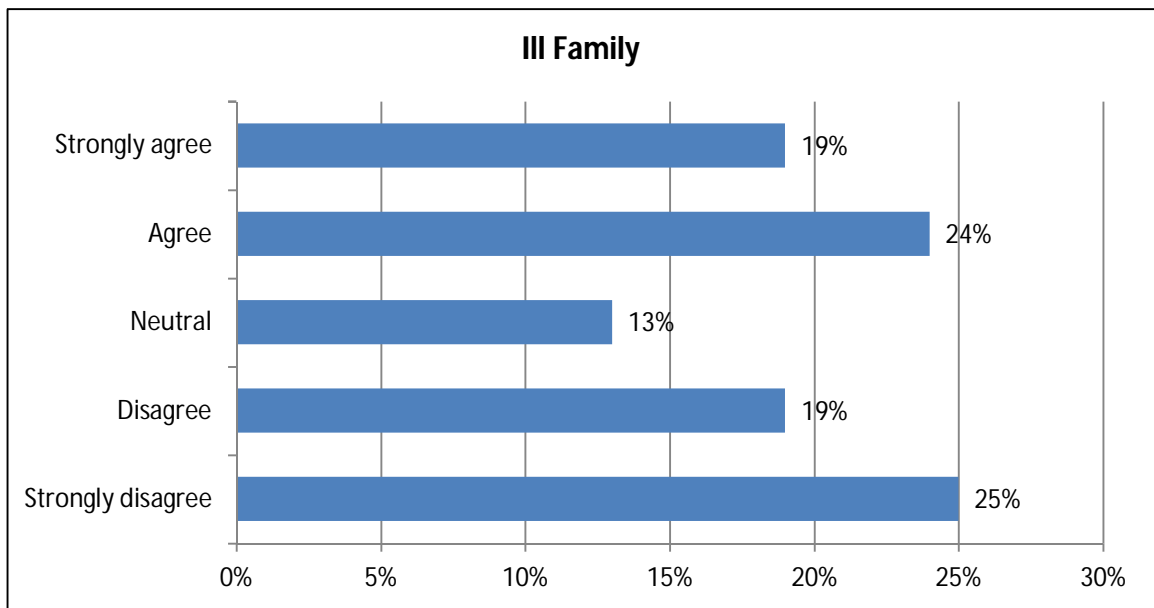


Figure 4.19: Ill Family

The above diagram indicates that the experience of having sick family members was split fairly evenly between 42 (44%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that there was a family member who was ill, while 41 (43%) of students (almost totaling half of the student body of third years) stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that there was a sick family member, meaning that it is a worrying factor for students which could affect their concentration and study and therefore increase their chances of not doing well at university. 13% of the students were neutral.

4.12.3 I am aware and use the services of the clinic.

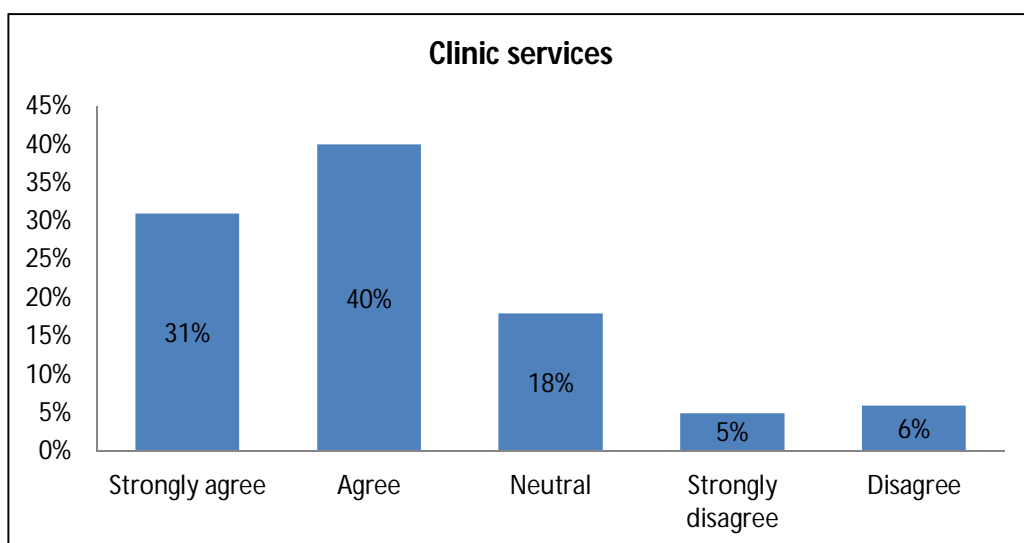


Figure 4.20: Clinic services

From the findings of the above graph, it can be inferred that students are aware of, and will use, these services of the University. This is a good indication that the majority of students (69 or 71%) should not miss lectures because they were sick, with as many as 40% and 31% respectively agreeing or strongly agreeing to this question, it appears that health should not be a major issue for dropout. 17.5% were nevertheless neutral. Only 5% strongly disagreed with 6% simply disagreeing.

4.12.4 I am aware of and use the Counseling Department for emotional problems.

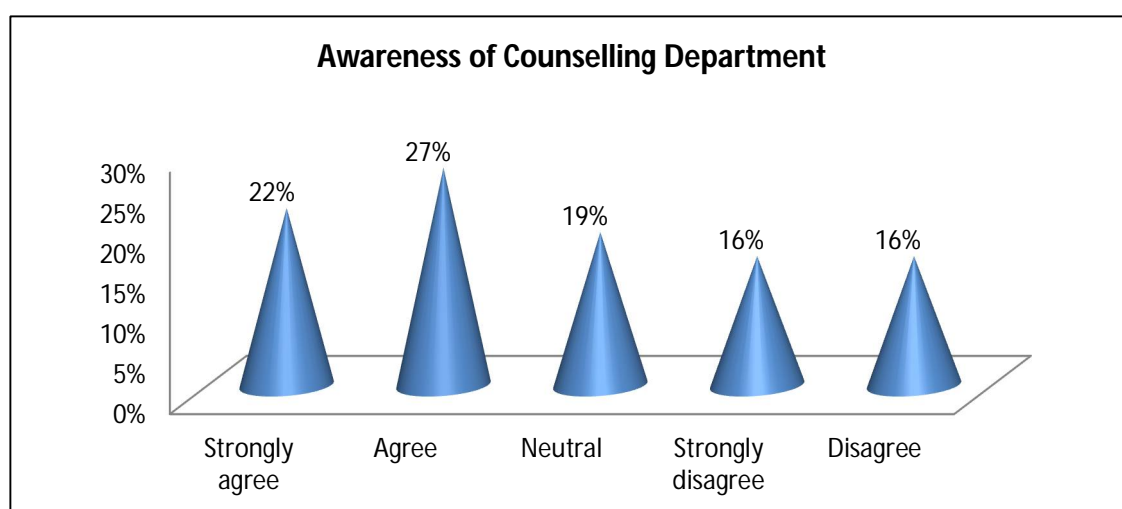


Figure 4.21: Counselling services

The diagram above indicates that around half the students are also aware of the counselling department of the university and could have attended for any emotional problems. 32% were not aware of, or did not use, the Counselling Centre with 16% remaining neutral. The interview session indicated that it was respected.

4.13 FINANCE

4.13.1 Finance has been one of my greatest challenges during the three years of study

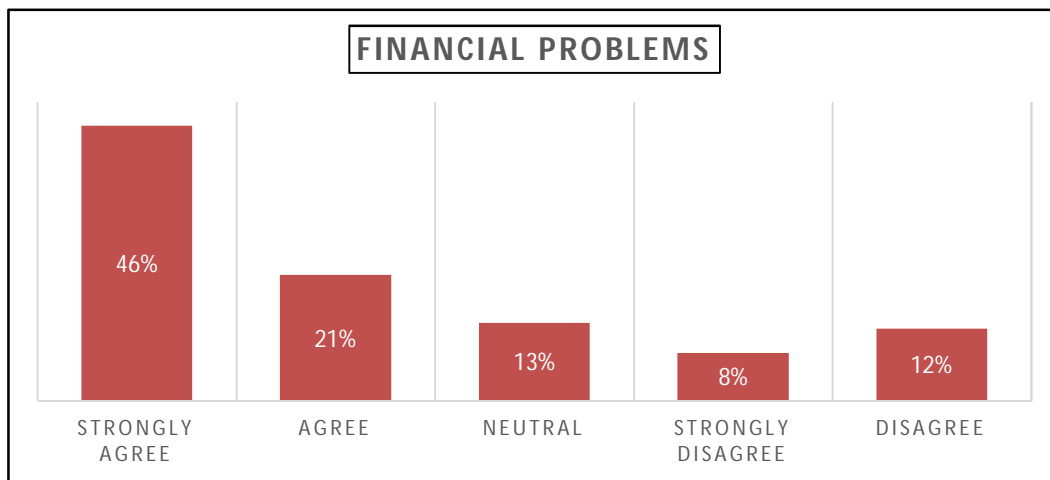


Figure 4.22: Relationship between financial problem and 3rd Year.

The above variable captured among the research model was not confirmed by the CFA of the PLS-SEM statistical modelling. Due to its importance however, it was then decided to show this in the form of a bar chart to give an understanding of this factor and to see to what an extent it impacts on the 3rd Year education of ICM students. From the above it can be seen that as many as 44 (46%) students strongly agreed that financial problems are a challenge in their efforts to finish their course, while twenty students (21%) agreed and 12 (13%) were simply neutral. Only eight (8, 8%) of the students strongly disagreed and 11 (12%) of them simply disagreed. Looking at the sensitive nature of the variable regarding this issue, and the degree of mixed reaction among the students, the study sought to analyse it with the help of the PLS-SEM technique graphical. The outcome confirms that approximately 67 % of the students experience finance as one of their biggest challenges.

4.14 ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

4.14.1 This diploma was my first choice.

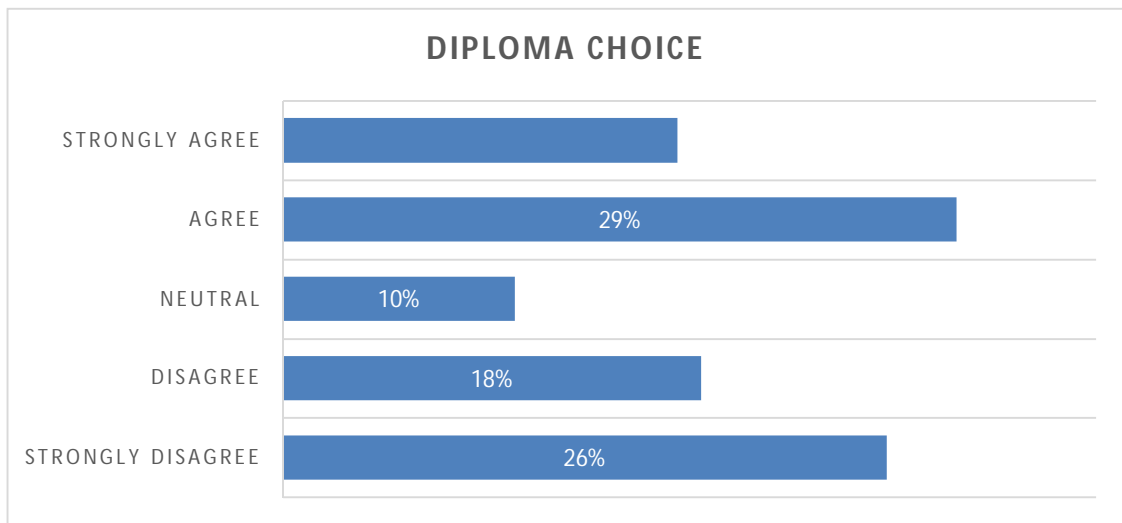


Figure 4.23: Diploma choice

Here, 44 students (46%) agree or strongly agree that their course was the first diploma choice. 42 (44%) of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that this diploma was their first choice, and 9 (10%) were neutral. From the above results it can be concluded that almost half of the students did not choose this diploma as their first choice which could be a worrying issue of student dropout.

4.14.2 I have fear of failing.

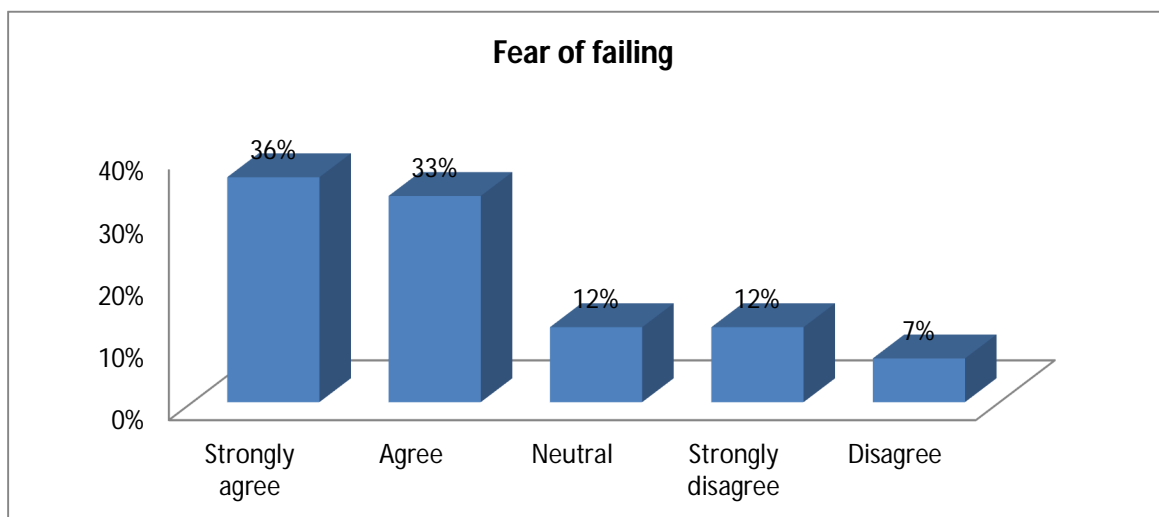


Figure 4.24: Fear of failing

The above graph depicts that as many as 65 (69%) strongly agreed or agreed to being afraid of failing, followed by 12 (12%) remaining neutral and 12 (12%)

strongly disagreeing and 6 (7%) disagreeing. With this level of fear, it is not surprising that the students will drop out before the final year results are released.

4.14.3 Academic work too demanding.

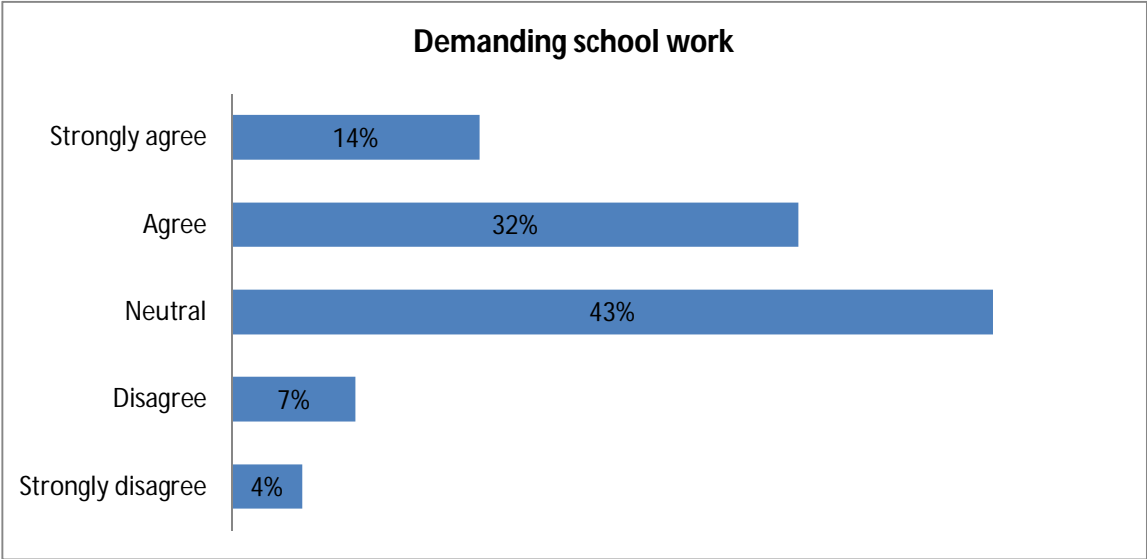


Figure 4.25: Demanding academic work

The above diagram indicates an unusual response, where 41 (43%) of the respondents were neutral, and 43 (46%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they found school work demanding. However only 11(11%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that the work was difficult, indicating that very few students find the work really manageable.

4.14.4 I have difficulty expressing myself verbally in English.

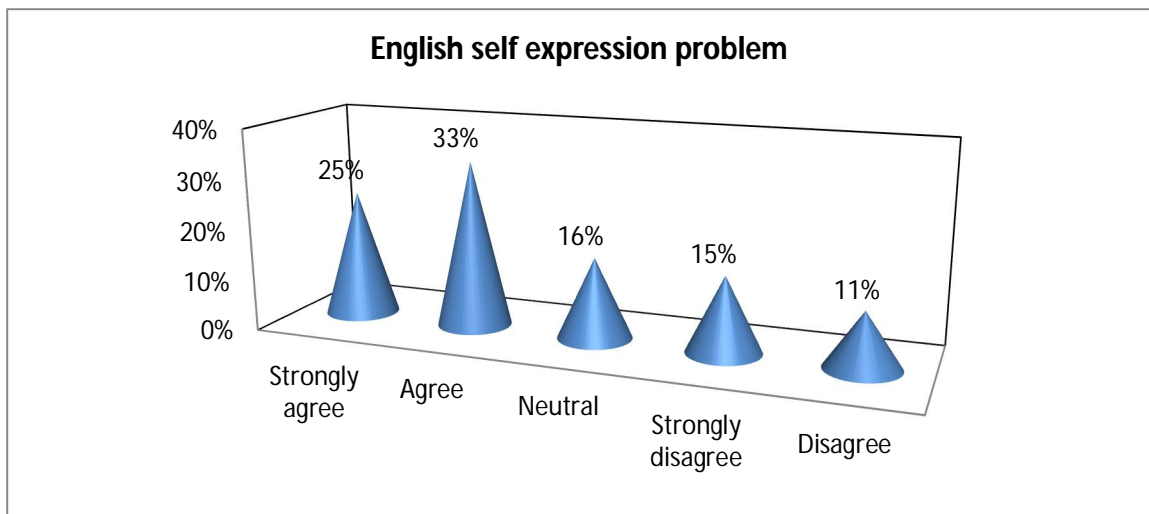


Figure 4.26: English language problem

The above graph indicates that academic challenge was also compounded by the medium of expression. 56 (58%) strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that communicating in academic English was a challenge for them, and only 15 (16%) were neutral, with 14 (15%) strongly disagreeing and 10 (11%) simply disagreeing. As noted above, when discussing the reasons for the performance gap in education, although English is the primary language in both commerce and higher education, it is the home language of only 8.2% of the population of South Africa (De Wet *et al*, 2009:34).

4.14.5 I have difficulty writing academic English.

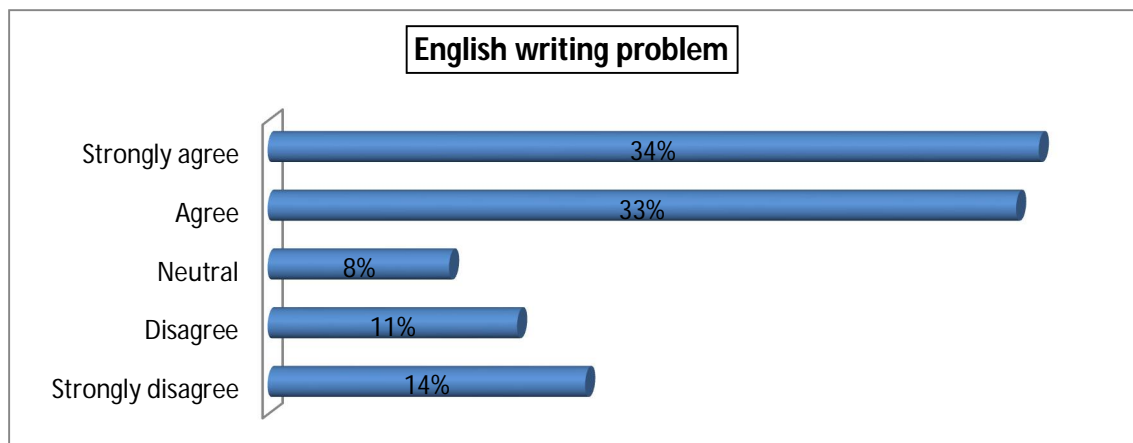


Figure 4.27: Academic writing problem

The above graph indicates that most students said they had difficulty in writing academic English. Findings from the statistics indicated that 65 (67%) strongly agreed or agreed to this statement and only 25 (25%) disagreed. 7 (8%) were however neutral.

4.14.6 If I was taught in my home language I would do better in class.

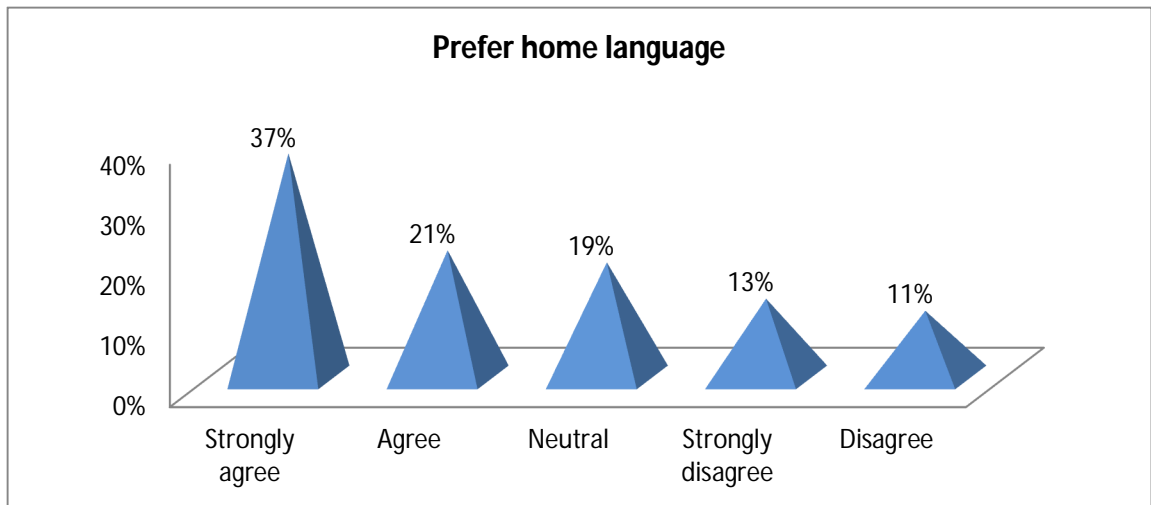


Figure 4.28: Home language

The above graph indicates that this challenge to academic work was again highlighted when 55 (58%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they believed they would do better if they were taught in their home language. This was followed by 18 (19%) neutral, 12 (13%) strongly disagreeing and finally 10 (11%) simply disagreeing. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (DUT's neighbouring university) language policy of 2006 capitalizes on the use of isiZulu as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT), and the aim of the programme has been to promote isiZulu proficiency (Mashiya, 2010:93). Moodley (2009:94) confirms that UKZN has a majority (57%) of African Language speakers and she also states that the majority are isiZulu speakers. The hope is to produce teachers who can interact professionally in both languages (isiZulu and English). DUT's proportion of isiZulu speakers is higher, as noted above.

4.15 EFFECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Research shows that each of the socio-economic problems listed above can negatively affect a student's learning. Please consider the issues you have listed as affecting you personally, and tick if you feel that any of them affected you as regards:

Your ability to concentrate	
Your self esteem	
Your time available for study	
Other	

Table 4.3: Effects of socio-economic challenges

4.16 Relationships between socio-economic problems and third year students

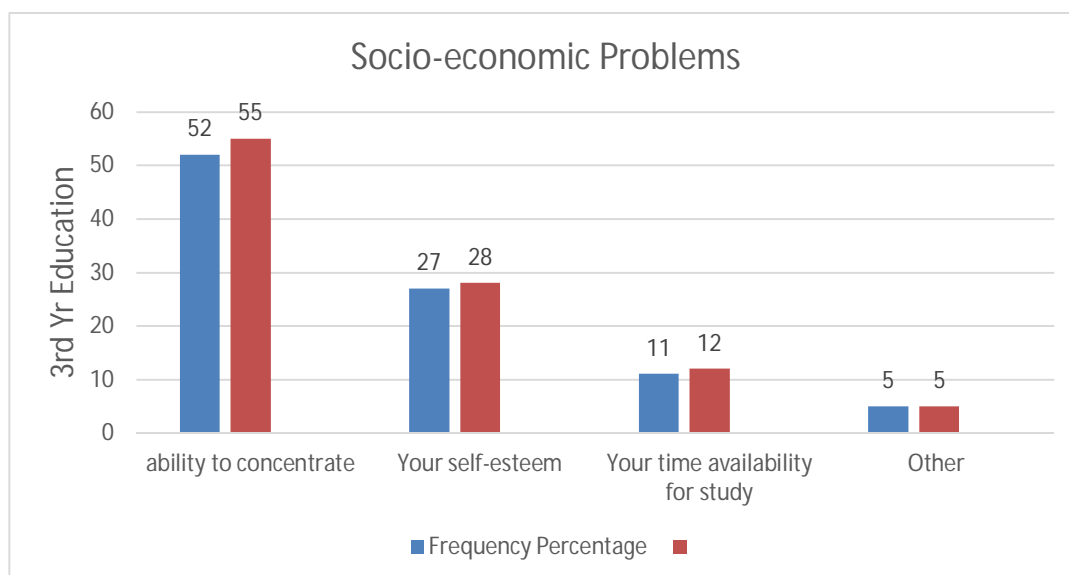


Figure 4.29: Relationships between socio-economic problem and 3rd Year.

Evidence from graph indicates that 52 respondents (55%) have socio-economic problem to concentrate on their 3rd Year education, 27 (28%) have problem with self-esteem that affects their studies, 11 (12%) have problem making time available for study and 5 (5%) attributed their socio-economic problems to other matters. It is notable that their problems affect the ability to concentrate of more than half of the respondents.

4.16 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the results of the study were captured and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) – Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results indicated that students are undergoing a great many socio-economic challenges. This clearly indicates that the institutions still have a major role to play in ensuring that these challenges are addressed wherever possible. There are however some good aspects that could be drawn from the study which indicated that the institution is assisting the students effectively and to which the students responded positively, among them being accommodation and transportation.

Conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the study will be drawn in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the findings of the quantitative study were analyzed and discussed. This chapter will outline the qualitative findings from the focus group interviews only.

The focus group interviews were conducted with 10 (ten) participants who volunteered to take part. There were nine female participants and one male participant. The participants were all members of the ICM third year group but were not part of the 95 students who completed the questionnaires.

The interviews were held in the Research Boardroom in the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics at DUT. The Research Boardroom was private and hence there were no disturbances from the outside. This environment created a safe place where the participants could relax and could also feel at ease when interviewed.

The researcher conducted the interview which was structured around six open-ended questions. The interview was recorded.

5.2 Question 1 – Tell us briefly about your family background and how it has had an impact on your academic progress.

(The responses to this question were subsequently divided by the researcher into two – good family background and below-average background):

5.2.1 *Below average family background*

The researcher discovered that seven of the participants were from a below-average background, this being defined as a family with an annual income below established low-income thresholds. Only three students came from a better family background and only one from a good background and had been to a private school. One participant explained: “I took a gap year because I didn’t have funding and the following year, I came to university with the hope that I would receive NSFAS funding, but I only received NSFAS funding in my third year.

The toy-toying of students at the beginning of the year to allow us to study without paying fees from the previous years, allowed me to study up to the third-year level. I only paid for registration fees.” The researcher also went on to discover that seven of the participants came from single parent households where either the father had passed away, or was never present. Individual cases follow:

- One of the participants did not have a mother or a father and had been raised by her 17-year-old sister after her mother died. This was when she was still in primary school.
- One was raised by a father who had 21 children, all from different mothers. He was able to support only nine of them, one of these being the participant.
- One was raised by a single parent and it was slightly different in her case because the single parent is usually a mother but in this case they were raised by her father. The participant stated the following:

“My father raised us as a single parent and he became both our mother and father. He wanted the best education for all our siblings and had a belief that he was going to work very hard to take us all through school and wanted the best education for us because he did not have that privilege. Unfortunately, I did not get NSFAS funding until year three, but my Dad struggled day and night to ensure that I completed my third year”.

- A third participant highlighted a scenario where she was raised by both parents but before reaching her tertiary education, sadly her father passed away and her mother was not working. She said the following: “I am not sure where my mother obtained the registration fee from but she managed to register me for first year. The money for eating and transport came from my grandfather’s grant money, and if grandpa was not around, I would have registered but would not have had money for transportation, breakfast and supper. During the day, I did not have anything to eat unless someone shared a sandwich or their residence food with me. Life was tough at varsity because I had to study on an empty stomach the whole day and it was difficult to concentrate, especially after lunch”.

5.2.2 Good family background

Only one of the students came from good middle-class background. This student was living with both parents and the parents encouraged their children to pursue their tertiary studies.

5.3 Question 2 – “Tell me briefly about your school background”.

The responses were divided by the researcher into three sections: below average; middle and good.

5.3.1 Below average schooling:

- Seven (7) of the participants had attended below average schools and reported that they had large numbers in the classroom, often nearly 90 students in a 50-seater venue. This resulted in them not receiving individual attention because there were too many in the class.
- Although some of the schools were equipped with computers, unfortunately the educators lacked the knowledge or were not provided with training to teach computer subjects. The computers that were generally donated by sponsors therefore lay dormant in the principal's office and were not being used as the educators were not equipped to use them, and/or the lack of electricity in these areas made them unusable.
- Participants explained that most of their educators had a minimum level of education and hence often taught English subjects in Zulu.
- Corporal punishment in some of the schools was rife. One of the participants went further as to say the following:

“I still have physical scars on my body resulting from being beaten with shambok that were inflicted on me when I did not know the correct answers, and the teachers use to say to us that this was a boarding school and that our parents had sent here here to “sort us out”. Teachers indicated that this was because we were troublesome at home and our parents had given up on us. And when I arrived at tertiary I wanted to join beauty contests and wear shorts like other students, but I couldn't because I had scars on my legs, arms and body”.

Six (6) participants also commented that even in their day-school corporal punishment was the order of the day and nobody questioned a teacher as to why they were inflicting pain on them even though corporal punishment was banned many years ago from schools.

From the above, it is evident that the majority of the students had attended disadvantaged schools and this type of environment had resulted in matric pass rates of between 30% - 50 % in these schools. These participants all felt that they would have obtained a better pass rate had they been given an opportunity to attend better schools.

5.3.2 Middle level schooling

Two (2) of the participants came from average schools. One of these was a Roman Catholic School where the teachers (nuns), who were from Germany, instilled strong discipline and high moral values. The other participant went to a school in the location – where again the educators were strict and dedicated, and even went the extra mile by teaching pupils after hours and on weekends and sometimes during the holidays in their final year. These schools also encouraged pupils to further their studies after matriculation. This type of school allowed the pupils to obtain an 80 % pass rate in matric.

5.3.3 Good schooling

Only one of the participants went to one of the best schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The school was also disciplined, and parental participation was a pre-requisite. In their high school years, through the IQ tests, pupils were encouraged to take subjects where it was felt that they would cope well. They also had career guidance mentors who gave talks and assisted them in choosing the right course considering their capabilities and characteristics, their strengths and their weaknesses. Pupils were also encouraged to visit different universities during 'career fare' to assist them to make the correct career choice. Arising from the undivided attention provided by the educators, the pupils at this school obtained a 100% pass rate in matric.

5.4 Question 3 - Were you told to come to University by your parents/ guardian or were you motivated to come on your own?

The responses are divided by the researcher into three (3) categories: motivation came firstly from the participants themselves and their friends; secondly, through teachers and principals in the school they attended and, lastly, through family members.

5.4.1 Participants and friends

Five (5) of the participants had no funds to go to university and therefore worked for two up to five years before they were able to obtain registration fees to go to university and thereafter obtain NSFAS funding. This made these participants mature at a very young age and when they came to tertiary, they knew exactly what they wanted and hence they took their studies seriously, although they found the English language difficult as some had been away from school for many years. The other five participants were motivated by their high school friends to pursue part time jobs and to continue with their studies.

5.4.2 Family and close friends

Three (3) of the participants were encouraged by family members and close friends. Family members who assisted were mostly mothers, while the fathers were reluctant because they believed that their daughters should only study till the age of 16 and thereafter look for a husband.

The male participant commented that he was motivated because of the situation at home with a father who had 21 children and (as mentioned above) he had money to pay for schooling for only nine of his children. The participant was chosen as one these nine children, and that motivated him to give of his best at university and to pass so that he could assist his siblings to also pursue their studies with the money that he will obtain once he starts working.

One participant was looked after by an older sister who had to stop studying in high school to look after her siblings. The older sister ensured that they received registration money by finding piecework jobs from the age of 17 after both parents passed away. She added that “the neighbors also motivated us in a negative way because they were constantly saying that we will get pregnant, but they were not doing anything to help us financially or with food or accommodation. My sister motivated me to study until high school and she told me that if I passed my matric pass with two As, she would get me a Blackberry phone and I completed my matric and passed well”. When it was time to go to tertiary her sister had saved up R3 400 registration fee. She added that “unfortunately I did not obtain NSFAS funding so it was not going to be possible for me to return to 2nd year, so my sister took a loan of R18 000 and paid for my fees in year one and year two, and I was only able to obtain NSFAS funding in my final year of study”.

5.4.3 Teachers and principals

One of participants was encouraged by her teachers and the school principal. Two other participants said that their teachers played a great role in ensuring that they furthered their studies by going as far as obtaining CAO forms for them, encouraging them to fill them in and then even going as far as to pay their CAO registration fee.

Thus it is evident that the majority of the participants put themselves through university as their parents had either passed away, were unemployed, or saw no need for their daughters to pursue their studies. Hence you could see the perseverance in some of the students as they knew what they wanted and they were not here to play games.

5.5 Question 4 – Please tell me about the challenges that you have come across during your university life.

Seven (7) of the participants gave financial and social challenges as their biggest concerns experienced during their university life.

5.5.1 Financial challenges

The father who was the bread winner in Question One had started paying for the respondent's fees in first year, but in her second year the father struggled to pay her fees because he became ill and could not work. However, her aunts were there to assist and paid for the rest of the fees. In second year she really had challenges because her father became seriously ill, so sometimes she had to stay home and look after him, and at times she had no money to go to university and this seriously affected her studies, but the final challenge was when her father eventually passed away and that seemed like the end of her life journey. In this third year she has had to "hustle and look for jobs" to make sure that she completes her third year.

One (1) participant did not have money to travel daily to university and explained that she used to walk from Pinetown to DUT and was always late for her 08:00 lecture. This got her into trouble from her lecturers which made her frightened, and her academic marks started to drop. She "almost dropped out of varsity". She was always stressed because her lecturers use to "shout at her". Another participant told of how she came into the institution in first year and had never seen or touched a computer before, but was told to apply for NSFAS funding online. She did not receive funding because of this technological challenge.

Six participants could only afford the registration fee in the first year and waited for NSFAS funding. All of these only obtained the funding in their final year of study. "The toy toying that we did at the beginning of each year really helped us because the institution let us return though we had not paid the fees for the previous years until NSFAS met our demands in the final year of study".

5.5.2 Social challenges

One of the students commented as follows: "I am a wild child by nature and a party animal, I love people and entertainment and hence when I came to varsity there was plenty of that". She described wild parties that had a lot of alcohol and drugs and said that she joined the entertainment industry by becoming a varsity Radio DJ and partying all the time and "eventually this led me not to attend lectures

because I used to sleep at 4am on Monday morning and almost forgot what I came here for. I also had friends who had a bad influence on me who told me that you don't have to be educated to have money, there are a lot of rich uneducated people. This almost made me to quit tertiary”.

Another participant supported the DJ and said: “I was also a party animal and I became hooked on ecstasy - they call it a happy pill and you can party all night without getting tired. When you overdose that drug on Friday night you can party all night till Sunday without sleeping but by Sunday night you start to have nightmares and you start to see animals, and you can become paranoid”. She said that one of her friends overdosed and when she started to see funny things she ran to the window and threw herself from the 10th floor building and passed away. The participants explained that students who come from wealthier backgrounds use cocaine because it is an expensive drug. One participant said “On Monday and Tuesday, they don't come to class and eventually some of them end up dropping out because of addictions and not being able to obtain DP marks.”

The one male student had a problem with peer pressure. This is his story:

When I got to DUT I was funded by my father and in the second year I tried my luck and applied for NSFAS funding and was fortunate to get it although my father was a teacher by profession and I only told him later that I was going to live in residence and he must not worry about fees anymore.

When I got to residence, I met bad friends and started partying. At the end of the month, we use to receive R500 for food from NSFAS and we would contribute R300 each with the other friends until we had R1 200,00 to buy alcohol, drugs, etc. and we use to party from Friday until early hours of Monday morning. Unfortunately, we were too intoxicated to attend on Monday so we never attended those lectures and we only had R200 for food for the whole month and we use to convince each other not to go to school for the rest of the week and just finish this money. This made me to fail the subjects that I use to attend on Mondays and ended up repeating a whole year for that reason. As a result of the pressure that I had placed myself under and the fear of what my father would say if I failed again, I often ended up copying during tests and exams with the hope that no one will

catch me. This student also believed that most male students were more affected by this wild life style than the females.

Other challenges which most of the participants were familiar with, and which they had participated in, involved getting involved in intimate relationships. One of the participants went even further to say “once you get a boyfriend you are so in love you don’t even want to go for lectures anymore you just wish to stay with this person all day and all night, and day feels like an hour, a week feels like a day when you are in love for the first time”. The researcher then asked, from her previous knowledge of the residence that there are usually only two single beds in one room so what happens to the other roommate, the participants went further to say that they all stay in these tiny single beds for months on end, they call it “keepiting” (moving in with your boyfriend or girlfriend). Wake up, bath, eat and go to bed and you do this until you end up failing at tertiary.

One of the participants whose father had passed away, had a problem in that she had no one to buy her clothes anymore in second and third year. Her clothes from first year were over-worn until they became old. Hence the challenge was clothing, hairdo and food and accommodation and she did not have transport money anymore and she had to squat at the residence with one of her friends. This placed her in a difficult situation which made her almost leave the institution before she could complete her final year of studies.

5.5.3 Academic challenges

Communication issues – three (3) of the participants said that they end up not attending lectures because they can’t understand what the lecturer is saying, or they sleep in class or talk during lectures and hence end up failing that subject.

Two (2) of the participants also said the lecturers used to “shout at them too much” and then they end up not able to concentrate.

Others pointed out that coming to university on an empty stomach, meant that “you cannot concentrate or study”.

5.6 Question 5 – Please can you describe some of the challenges that your friends, who dropped out in the first or second year, experienced.

According to the participants financial issues were the main reason that students they knew had dropped out of university. They discover that they cannot get NSFAS funding and most of their families could never afford to pay for their studies after the registration fee.

Accommodation was a major problem with students from the rural areas. One of the students said this about her friend: “My friend was from the rural areas and did not have any relatives in Durban. When she could not get accommodation in residence; she was forced to drop out because she did not have money for rent. My other friend’s mother worked as a domestic worker, she did manage to get a place, but it was the cheapest and hence it was next to a noisy and unsafe area, and in order to reduce the rent money, she lived in overcrowded rooms where they are expected to cook, study, bath and sleep in one room, and so many end up failing the course”.

Two of the students commented about “blessers” and this is what they said: “These are the rich older men, and sometimes married men, who prey on vulnerable young poor students like us and sometimes students, who ‘love the life of luxury’ at university also fall into the hands of these blessers”. These men shower them with special gifts, money, expensive clothing, expensive weaves from overseas, alcohol, etc., for sexual favours. These students end up not attending because of high life parties, trips overseas and they eventually drop out of school, not realizing that once the “blesser” spots another prey they will leave them with nothing. These students often end up with no qualification and maybe with a child that is HIV positive. “The students who fall for “blessers” don’t realize that this just for a short period of time”.

Other students who dropped out had found part time jobs whilst studying and then became excited about the money they were earning at the time and decided to stop studying. These only realize some years down the line, when they lose that job, that they need a formal qualification in order to find a proper job.

One of the parents, specifically the father, did not see the importance of his daughter studying but was pressured by his wife to pay for the child's fees. "In second year of study, my father decided that he was just wasting money and requested I rather concentrate on a female role, i.e. to get married so that he could get Lobola".

Some of the "rich kids" were given money to study but utilized the money on socializing. They failed their exams and ended up not achieving the diploma in the three years. Unfortunately the parents did not keep abreast with their children's progress.

Pregnancy – parents want the best for their children. Participants explained that students' falling pregnant was a great disappointment to the parents: "They make their children to stop studying and in some instances, abandon them and ask them to leave their homes".

Some students also became "G17" candidates and could not continue with their studies. (G17 is a system that was implemented by the University and it arises when students are unable to complete their studies within six years (Student General handbook, 2016)).

5.7 Question 6 – How did you manage to overcome the challenges that you experienced?

- *Prayer* – Most of the participants came from a Christian background where prayer was the order of the day and so when they arrived at university some of the participants got involved with like-minded students and organizations that believed in God and encouraged them to pursue their studies.

- *Supportive friends and family, and a very few lecturers* who became their mentors. Participants said that words of wisdom and reprimand from parents kept on ringing in their ears whenever they thought of giving up or socializing too much. One of the participants who came from a rich family went further to say that “My parents said that I must not think that the wealth they have accumulated is mine, they said I need to study and make sure that I pass, get a job and create my own success, and they went further to state that failure was not an option so I was forced to do my best”
- *Self-motivation* and knowing why they were here and what they wanted to achieve. Some participants left unemployed mothers and siblings at home, so their goal was to complete their studies, find employment, and give back to their parents, communities and even the schools and churches that assisted them.
- *Counselling* at DUT helped at great deal for those who had personal and academic issues and could not cope. Approximately seven (7) of the students were very grateful for the Counselling Department.
- *Refraining from partying* - some of the participants claimed that they had become more mature over the years and hence the level of partying and socializing either dropped or was reduced considerably.
- *Students, neighbors in their communities* that are in their age group who were studying before them, and who had done well in the business world had motivated them to persevere even when they wanted to quit.
- *A participant whose father had passed away benefitted from the money from her father’s company* which was released to his children, and she receives a small amount every month and uses it wisely because she knows the sadness of being without anything, and she would not want to be in that situation ever again.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The findings gathered from the interviews indicate that students are indeed experiencing a number of serious socio-economic challenges and that finance seems to be at the top of the list of challenges. The seriousness of the issues was further indicated by the length of the focus group interviews which were initially scheduled for 30 minutes but ended up taking 1½ hours. At the end of the 1½ hours the students had become so passionate to speak about their plight and the challenges they face, that they did not want the interviews to stop, but unfortunately it had to end. However the researcher really had a good and informative session.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the qualitative findings of the study were discussed with analysis of the focus group interviews. This chapter outlines the recommendations, draws conclusions and makes suggestions for further research as well indicating the limitations of the study.

The focus of this study was on the four research objectives which were as follows:

1. To identify the principal socio-economic challenges experienced by third-year ICM students at DUT.
2. To investigate the influence these challenges appear to have on the students' learning achievement and potential drop-out rates.
3. To identify specific issues which may be amenable to improvement.
4. To recommend ways to improve the learning experiences of ICM third year students.

The chapter will outline in greater depth the achievement of the four objectives and formulate recommendations based on the objectives, as well as noting the limitations of the study and making suggestions for further research.

6.2 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 Objective 1

To identify the principal socio-economic challenges experienced by third-year ICM students at DUT

As explained in Chapter 2, Ngcobo and Pillay (2010) formulated 21 stressors to use for their study towards understanding students' socio-economic challenges at the University of Zululand (UniZulu). The researcher chose 12 of the challenges/stressors from that study which she felt would be relevant for her study, and added 11 drawn from the literature.

The selection of the added challenges/stressors was also based on and the researcher's experience as a lecturer. She then went further and separated the challenges/stressors into 4 principal categories namely: **Schooling, Social, Financial and Academic challenges**. The identification of these stressors/challenges provided a useful overview of the issues that 3rd year students appear to be facing during their academic endeavors. Therefore, the identification of these stressors/challenges through literature and primary data was fundamental to this research study. Questionnaires and Focus group Interviews were the two methods used in analyzing these challenges/stressors. These stressors have been applied in this chapter in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations from the findings discussed in the previous chapters.

6.2.2 Objective 2

To investigate the influence these challenges appear to have on the students' learning achievement and potential drop-out rates.

6.2.2.1 Schooling challenge

The findings reveal that students' high-school learning had an impact in preparing them for tertiary schooling. The majority of the respondents came from below average schools (63%), followed by those who went to good schools at 27% and, lastly, those who went to excellent schools (10%). From this it can be concluded that the majority of third year students come from below average schools and are not adequately prepared for tertiary education. The CHE (2013:60) investigated the poor performance of students in tertiary institutions and it was widely accepted that student under-preparedness from high school is the dominant learning-related cause of poor performance in first year.

6.2.2.2 Social Challenges

The following social challenges that appear to have an effect on third years' learning achievement were chosen from the highest percentages noted in the findings and comprised the following:

- *Accommodation*
- *Busy social life*
- *Drinking alcohol and/ or using drugs*
- *Accommodation:*

From the study it was discovered that 63% of students lived in the university residences. However, those who were not fortunate enough to acquire NSFAS funding complained that the places that they rented were not in safe areas. Makhanya (2017) agrees that students who do not have university accommodation are generally insecure, unsafe, victimized and are prone to all sorts of crime-related incidences. Also the rooms that students rent for themselves are not conducive to studying and they have no one to take care of them. Those renting outside the campus lack basic learning support facilities such library and WIFI or peers with whom they can discuss their learning experiences.

- *My social life is busy*

The social life aspect elicited one of the highest percentages of agreement as to the challenges experienced by third year students. 62% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their social life was busy. In this regard it is interesting to note that Walsh et al find that on average students spend nearly 12 hours a day using media, which could be social networking, texting or talking on the phone and at times, watching television (see also Walsh, Fielder, Carey and Carey, 2013).

Freedom in tertiary institutions can be perceived to be a two-sided issue, as it can be considered to be either constructive or destructive. It can be considered positive where students can choose the course they like; and they are allowed to work in comfortable spaces without feeling pressurized. However it can also be negative in that students can lose control, can do whatever they wish to do, and they tend to be lazy because there is no one to push them. This results in poor academic performance because of poor time management skills.

- *I drink alcohol and/ or use drugs*

The majority of the respondents (65%) agreed that they drink alcohol or use drugs. Consumption of alcohol is widespread in South Africa, particularly in tertiary institutions (Johnson 2014). Approximately 85% of university students have consumed alcohol beverages in the past year and with nearly 78% getting intoxicated during the time (Johnson, 2014). A study done at the University of Limpopo by lecturers in the Department of Psychology revealed that alcohol usage amongst tertiary students has led to a number of alcohol related problems such as poor academic performance, property damage, problematic peer relationships, physical injuries, date rape, and suicide and it is a catalyst for high dropout rates in South Africa (Govender, Nel and Sibuyi 2017:2). Some of the findings from this study revealed that students drink for the following reasons: curiosity and experimentation, fun and enjoyment, peer pressure influence, low self-esteem and to reduce stress and anxiety, also as self-medication, and on account of a lack of support.

The above challenges clearly show that the students, although they are technically adults when they reach tertiary institutions, still need some type of mentor, or a mother or father figure, at the residence.

6.2.3 Academic challenges

The following academic challenges that appear to have an effect on third years' learning achievement were chosen from the highest percentages noted in the findings and comprise the following:

- Fear of failing
- Difficulty in expressing myself verbally in English
- Difficulty in writing academic English
- Home language is not English

In South African institutions, the CHE noted that there is not only a significant increase in enrolment of students but there has been a major increase in the diversity of the student body in terms of educational and linguistic background (CHE, 2013).

- *Fear of failing*

The majority of the respondents (69%) agreed that they were afraid of failing the course. This is one of the highest percentages in this section. A correlation also went further to reveal that it is not only the students who come from rural schools who have fear of failure but also those from excellent schools often share the same sentiments.

A study conducted by Mudhovozi (2012) at the University of Venda revealed that fear of failure is the main academic concern amongst students, stating challenges such as being anxious to pass semester exams, lack of courage to ask questions in class, teaching methods that were different from high school, and the shifting of venues by a class several times a day sometimes to different campuses.

- *Difficulty in expressing myself verbally in English*

The findings revealed that 58% of the students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that they have difficulty expressing themselves verbally in English. The English language has been the language of instruction at all tertiary institutions in South Africa for decades, but unfortunately also being the second, or sometimes third, language for black South Africans (Sikhwari, Maphosa, Masehela and Ndebele, 2015). This therefore is one of the main reasons that students struggle with expressing themselves in English. One of the students in another university stated that “English language proficiency is connected to a great deal to academic achievement because it acts as the engine in the whole process of teaching and learning as well as testing” (Wilson and Komba, 2012:7).

- *Difficulty in writing academic English*

The majority of the respondents (67%) agreed that they have difficulty in writing academic English and that this put them at risk of failing. University studies involve a lot of writing activities requiring relevant academic writing skills. Most courses require students to, for instance, write introductory paragraphs and topic sentences, develop written arguments or organise text (Komba, Kafanabo, Njabili, and Kira, 2012:9).

Although English has also been a medium of instruction in South African schools for many years, students from disadvantaged backgrounds have not fully acquired the skills of speaking, reading and writing it, which are the key areas of language competence (Jama et al., 2008). Language competence must, therefore, be regarded as another factor affecting the learning ability of students and their academic performance.

- *Home language*

The study found that 58% of students agreed that they would do better if they were taught in their home language. It is argued by many researchers that “the twin challenge of academic language and language of instruction (English) remain one of the most significant barriers to success and one which universities must address in a systematic and sustained manner” (CHE, 2010: 182). Van Rooy (2015) agrees that many learners are disadvantaged by the fact that they have to learn through a second language rather than their home language. African students are firstly disadvantaged because they are often taught in a second language in a poor-quality school environment, and secondly because they are expected to study in a second language at a university that has neglected to incorporate cross-cultural teaching practice (Sartorious, 2014). This researcher went further to say that cross-cultural teaching practices are only achievable when English speaking teachers are trained in historical, theoretical, methodological and socio-psychological perspective of learning a second language rather than the previous Eurocentric teaching approaches.

6.2.4 Financial challenges

Financial challenge recorded the highest percentages of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' compared to all the other challenges. The findings revealed that 67% of the students had serious financial issues which posed one of the greatest challenges in their three years of study. In South African tertiary institutions, there are approximately 94% of the students who require funding from student loans, bursaries, NSFAS and/or scholarships to support their academic studies and if there is a delay in funding, students' days are consumed by worry about finance (Pather, 2015).

6.3 OBJECTIVE 3

To identify specific issues which may be amenable to improvement.

6.3.1 Recommendations for social challenges

- **Accommodation**

The DUT has instituted extensive measures to ensure that students are taken care of and the above challenges are addressed. For instance, there is a 18-page Policy document (*See Appendix I*) that describes the requirements and standards of behavior required in the admission, residence life and disciplinary issues of students living in DUT-owned or leased residential facilities. In addition, students are required to attend an orientation session each year on a 30-page Residence Code of Conduct booklet that ensures that students are aware of how they should conduct themselves whilst living in the residence. However, the resources are not always available to ensure that codes of conduct are adhered to.

An interview, which the researcher set up with Mr Shabane, (who is a Residence Administration Assistance during office hours, and also assists after hours) revealed that currently (in 2018) an estimated 5 500 students require accommodation. Fortunately, this year all students managed to obtain residence places either in the main residences or in the additional outsourced residences. DUT, he says, has undertaken to ensure that students do not remain without accommodation. The institution also wants to ensure that residences are within close proximity to the institution. However, there is not enough vacant land to build these residences at present although the budget is in place. Hence they have

decided to build two more residences on the Steve Biko campus and another two are currently being renovated nearby. To date, there are four residences that are owned by DUT and 49 outsourced residences.

It is therefore recommended that for as long as it remains necessary to have students in outsourced accommodation, the landlords need to have meetings with the institution at least twice a term to report back and to ensure that the students' wellbeing and safety in these residences is managed effectively. This periodic check will enable the management to assess and monitor whether landlords attend promptly to repairing any reported faulty facilities/equipment such as lifts, stoves and geysers. This will also ensure that outsourced residences that are currently not conducive to students' safety and wellbeing are dealt with speedily.

A recent incident has left the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) students both angry and shocked. This was the death of one of their first-year quantity surveying students, who was allegedly shot dead by an ex-student/boyfriend at one of the outsourced (MUT) student residences in Lonsdale in the Durban CBD (Jagmohan and Nene, 2018). The Mercury newspaper reported in relation to this incident "As students, we feel very bad. We feel unsafe in our own residences" (*Sunday Tribune*, 2018:1).

In terms of staffing at the DUT residences, there is only one Resident Assistant (RA) in a resident which accommodates 300 – 400 students at any one time. The RA is not employed on a full-time basis and only comes after work; hence there are also Residence Student Assistants (RSAs) who are chosen from amongst B-tech 4th-year students to assist during the day, as well as House Committee members that are chosen by the resident students themselves and who assist as well. In these circumstances it is recommended that the institution employ at least two experienced Senior Resident Assistants with a minimum of 5 years' experience as well as background knowledge of social work on a full-time basis for all the residences at DUT. The residences that are outsourced at present should also have experienced and qualified SRAs to look after the students.

- **Alcohol and drug abuse**

In terms of alcohol and drug abuse, the institution has put in place measures to ensure that students are assisted in this regard. When a Residence Advisor (RA) suspects that a student has an alcohol or drug problem, he or she writes a report and sends it to the Senior Resident Officer (SRO) who usually has a social work background and more than 10 years' experience in this field. Then, if the SRO is unable to assist, they refer the matter to the Counselling Department where Mr Mbanjwa, who is the Senior Psychologist, usually takes over and ensures that the student is assisted. When these abuses are found to escalate, programmes are set in place that create awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse.

It is further recommended that the institution introduce ongoing campaigns from experts, along with, ideally, South African celebrities such as famous DJs who can motivate students as well as alerting them to the dangers associated with alcohol and drug abuse.

Cases of misbehaving students involving, for instance, those who break-in and steal from other students' rooms; students who sexually harass others; and students who display violent behavior, are already seen in a very serious light. When a student is involved in any of these cases of misconduct, the process is that the RA writes a report. Secondly, someone from the protection services is called in to write a report as well. The matter is then referred to the Legal Department under Mr Gops Chetty, where a student is called for a disciplinary hearing and, if the student is found guilty, he or she is expelled immediately. This is a good initiative as it creates awareness for those who are guilty, and also allows freedom for the other students who can generally live comfortably and without fear at the residences. It is also reassuring for their parents.

The institution has also taken strong, practical measures to ensure that the students are physically secure. There are usually two security guards responsible for guarding the residence gates 24 hours a day. At the door of each residence there are also security guards who are responsible for ensuring that no one enters the buildings illegally, and that visitors (if possible) are out by 23:00 with no sleepovers.

6.3.2 Recommendations for financial challenges

As discussed above, the government is clearly doing a great deal in ensuring that disadvantaged students obtain NSFAS funding. However it is clearly still not sufficient since most of the third year students indicated that they only obtained this funding in their last year of study. It could therefore be recommended that NSFAS and the institutions work hand-in-hand and as soon as the student receives a firm offer into the first year at the institution, then it is the responsibility of NSFAS to provide a student with a NSFAS funding acceptance letter. This letter would become null and void two months after the registration date. This system would eliminate all the unnecessary and costly delays that students experience when they do not receive the funding timeously.

This year (2018) the Government has introduced a policy that students from Quantum 1 and 2 schools (the least advantaged), will be included in a “free education” fund. It is recommended that during open days and school visits the pupils in schools are informed about this free education as most students who registered this year were not aware that it was implemented at the beginning of 2018.

6.4 To recommend ways to improve the learning experiences of ICM third year students.

6.4.1 Recommendations for academic challenges

Miss Mbatha, who is both the co-ordinator and a lecturer of the extended curriculum, explained to the researcher (2018) that in South Africa, the government has made special provision for students who do not meet the minimum requirement for that particular course in the form of funding for Extended Curriculum Programmes. The purpose of this programme is to assist in widening student access to higher education and to build a pivotal foundation for first year students (Leibowitz, 2014). Students who have been identified as being underprepared for higher education are therefore placed on these programmes to build their academic abilities (Department of Higher Education and Training 2012:1).

In view of the schooling challenges faced by students, it is recommended that ideally all students be taught literacy and numeracy skills, including academic writing, currently only taught in the Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) designed for students who enter university with below the minimum points required for that particular course.

6.4.1.1 Fear of failing

Gardner, Jewler and Barefoot (2011) state that the success of students may depend on the relationship that lecturers build with them and the support they give them. It is therefore recommended that lecturers should strive always to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere in class since students who feel they are being treated as adults will be motivated to perform better. One of the measures that can assist in encouraging students to perform well is to provide support and rewards. The researcher has noticed over the years that a simple act such as rewarding a student who does well in a test or assignment with a slab of chocolate, shaking their hands and acknowledging their good performance, not only encourages those who receive the rewards, boosting their confidence and making them feel supported, but is also an incentive for their peers. Over the years the ICM Department has introduced a system in the third year where students are awarded a certificate for being the best performing student for first, second and third year results and this year the Dean, together with the Faculty Office, has gone further and is now awarding the best students free education at B-tech level.

The researcher therefore recommends that the awarding of certificates should begin from the first-year level so as to encourage students to perform well throughout their three years at the institution, and secondly, more emphasis on lecturer and tutor support should be given in the learning environment. Tutors have been assisting the students for a number of years now, but there needs to be a clear understanding of what is required of them in the classroom as this is not often the case currently. Tutors and students are in the same age group and hence it is always easier for students who have fear of failing to obtain assistance from their peers. Thirdly, consultation periods exist, but are generally not used effectively by either staff or students. Therefore, it is recommended that consultation periods be emphasized as this would allow students who are shy, or have a fear of failing, to

have one-on-one contact with their lecturers during these consultation hours. Consultation periods between students and lecturers should be written into the learner guides and emphasized to students as a reminder every term.

6.4.1.2 Home language

Neville Alexander, as long ago as 2003, argued that the Department of Education needs to formulate a framework for a language policy in which every university will have appropriate strategies for promoting the development of the African language of that region, as a language of tuition and as a language of high status. At the DUT, and specifically in the ICM Department, this is not the case currently. When considering the demographics of the Faculty, there is a rationale for such an initiative to begin in the near future. The Higher Education Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education (LPFSAHE) emphasizes the need to transform and promote the use of African languages in Higher Education Institutions. This policy stipulates the use of isiZulu as one of the Languages, as it is widely spoken in the Kwa-Zulu Natal and this has been implemented at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on their Edgewood Campus (Mashiya, 2014). It is understood that Zulu instruction has already been introduced to the University of Johannesburg as well.

6.4.1.3 I have difficulty writing academic English

At the Durban University of Technology's Ritson Campus, Professor Green, the then Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics, was instrumental in initiating a writing center for the Faculty which is still in its initial stages. This center is there to assist students with language and writing skills (Faculty Board, 2018). It is recommended that lecturers should motivate students who have difficulty in this regard to attend this center often, as it will assist them with their academic writing for assignments, projects and essays.

Although this is beyond the scope of this research, ideally a culture of reading should be introduced to students from primary school level and throughout high school, so that when they come to a tertiary institution that culture is embedded – hence language would not be a barrier to a student's pass rate.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This was case study-based research and the study was limited to only third-year students in one department at the Durban University of Technology and therefore generalisations may not be made. However, the study on socio-economic challenges at UniZulu by Pillay and Ngcobo in 2010 discussed earlier, does indicate that challenges in similar institutions are comparable. This study can therefore be used to assist universities to establish ways in which they can manage student dropout rates that are often caused by the socio-economic challenges they face.

6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are therefore several socio-economic challenges that students face on a daily basis that institutions need to consider, which could be leading to increased student dropout rates and a decrease in throughput rates. Further research could include the following:

- The amount of time students spend on socialising, whether on social media or partying, which negatively affects their studies needs to be further investigated. Studies have shown that the time students spend on studying over the past five decades has declined sharply with only 07% of their time spent on studying and 71% on socialising and recreation (Aruma and Roksa, 2011; Babcock and Marks 2010) and this impacts on their academic achievement and personal well-being in powerful ways (Pluut, Curseu and Ilies, 2015:20).
- The practicalities of introducing viable ways in which students could have the opportunity to be taught in both their own language and in English at tertiary institutions should be explored.
- The importance of finding optimum types of accommodation whilst studying also needs further investigation.

6.7 CONCLUSION

It is apparent that DUT has played a big role in ensuring that most of the student's socio-economic challenges are addressed as far as possible. However, the researcher believes that there is still a lot that needs to be done to ensure that all the challenges are addressed as they negatively affect the students' learning and, ultimately increase the dropout rates and lower throughput rates. The above conclusions have been drawn in line with the objectives of the study and the critical socio economic challenges identified as currently faced by students during their academic life.

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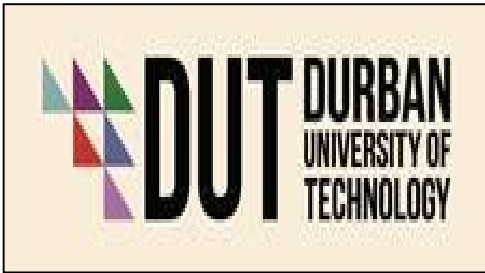
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APPENDIX E



Durban University of Technology
Department of Information & Corporate
Management
Ritson Campus
Durban
4001

Dear Student

My name is Ms TE Ndaba and I am conducting research for my Masters in Management Studies in Administration and Information Management at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The title of my research project is 'The challenges that Office Management and Technology students experience that affect their learning at DUT'.

To assist me in undertaking the research, I would appreciate your co-operation in completing the attached questionnaire.

The completion of the questionnaire should not take longer than 15 minutes of your time. I wish to thank you in advance for your time. Please be assured that your identity will remain anonymous and your response will be kept confidential.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reasons. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the people listed below.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

T E Ndaba (Ms)

APPENDIX F

Please contact the researcher (031) 373 5650, my Supervisor, Dr Skinner (083 658 5951) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administer (031) 373 2900 if you have further queries.

Please answer all questions.

Section A: Please put a cross (X) in the appropriate box in the spaces provided.

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Age

20 - 22	
23 - 25	
26 +	

3. Race

Black	
Indian	
Coloured	
White	

4. When did you register at DUT?

2014	
2013	
2012	
2011	
2010	

Section B

Background/Support/Financial challenges

5. My secondary schooling was in a school that would be described as:

Urban	
Rural	
Township	
Other (Please specify)	

6. How well did your secondary school prepare you for tertiary level education?

Excellent – I would recommend others to go there.	
Good – but needs some improvement.	
Average – a lot needs to be changed.	

7. Describe your accommodation whilst studying at DUT.

I stay with:

Mother	
Father	
Older Sister/brother	
Grandparents	
Aunt or Uncle	
Other students	
University residence	
Other (please specify)	
Is the accommodation satisfactory? Please state 'yes' or 'no'.	

8. Who supports your studies financially?

Mother	
Father	
Older Sister/brother	
Grandparents	
Aunty	
Uncle	
NSFAS	
Bursary from another source	
Other (Please specify)	

9. In your opinion how much do you think the individuals mentioned in question 8 above receives monthly:

R0 – R500	
R550 – R1000	
R1050 – R5000	
R5550 – R10 000	
R10 000 – R15 000	
R15 050 – R20 200	
R21 000 and above	
I support myself. (Please state amount)	

10. If you support yourself financially, how do you obtain funds?

.....
11. How do you travel to the university?

Walk	
Bus/Taxi	
University bus	
Train	
Car or own transport	

Challenges that affect students:

From each of the statements presented below, please indicate whether you:
Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D)

Please put a cross (X) in the appropriate box in the spaces provided.

	SA	A	N	SD	D
Social Challenges					
12. I have accommodation problems.					
13. I have transport problems.					
14. I have difficulty communicating with classmates.					
15. I have conflict with parents.					
16. My social life is busy.					
17. I drink alcohol and/or use drugs.					
18. I have trouble with the law.					
Health Challenges					
19. I have a personal illness.					
20. I have a family member/s that is ill.					
21. I am aware and use the services of the clinic.					
22. I am aware and use the counselling department for emotional problems.					
Financial Challenges					
23. Finance has been one of my greatest challenges during the three years of study.					
Academic Challenges					
24. This Diploma was my first choice.					
25. I have fear of failing.					
26. Academic work too demanding.					
27. I have difficulty expressing myself verbally in English.					
28. I have difficulty in writing academic English.					
29. If I was taught in my home language I would do better in class.					

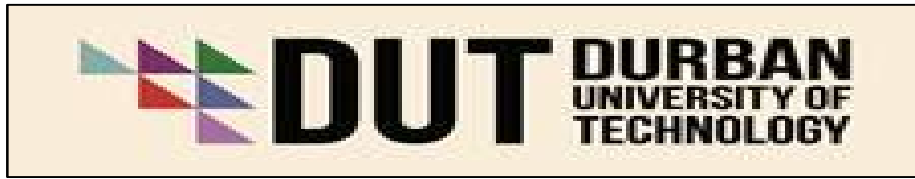
30. Research shows that each of the socio-economic problems listed above can negatively affect a student's learning. Please consider the issues you have listed as affecting you personally, and tick if you feel that any of them affected:

Your ability to concentrate.	
Your self-esteem.	
Your time available for study.	
Other	

If you have ticked other, please state a reason

.....

APPENDIX G



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THIRD YEAR INFORMATION AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Interview schedule for Third Year Office Management students

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to see me for this interview. I won't take more than half an hour of your time. As I explained I am interested to hear your personal feelings about the challenges that you have met as you have progressed with your studies at DUT. The information you give will be confidential. Would you mind if I use a voice recorder?

Question 1

Tell me briefly about your family background and how it has had an impact on your academic progress. How would you describe the type of family that you come from?

Question 2

Tell me briefly about your school background.

Question 3

Were you told to come to University by your parents/guardian or were you motivated to come on your own? What motivated you to come to University?

Question 4

Provide me with some challenges that you have come across during your university life.

Question 5

Provide me with the reasons for the challenges that your friends who dropped out in the first or second years experienced.

Question 6

How did you manage to overcome the challenges that you experienced?

APPENDIX I

Detailed descriptive statistics of all the factors related to 3rd year education

The SmartPLS data view provides information about the excess kurtosis and skewness of every variable in the dataset. "Skewness assesses the extent to which a variable's distribution is symmetrical. If the distribution of responses for a variable stretches toward the right or left tail of the distribution, then the distribution is referred to as skewed. Kurtosis is a measure of whether the distribution is too peaked (a very narrow distribution with most of the responses in the centre) (Hair et al., 2014, p. 54).

"When both skewness and kurtosis are zero (a situation that researchers are very unlikely to ever encounter), the pattern of responses is considered a normal distribution. A general guideline is that if the number is greater than +1 or lower than -1, this is an indication of a substantially skewed distribution. For kurtosis, the general guideline is that if the number is greater than +1, the distribution is too peaked. Likewise, a kurtosis of less than -1 indicates a distribution that is too flat. Distributions exhibiting skewness and/or kurtosis that exceed these guidelines are considered normal (Hair et al., 2014, p. 54).

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of the data

Constructs	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Std. Dev	Exc. Kurtosis	Skewness
Background							
Gender	1.800	2	1	2	0.400	0.330	-1.524
Age	1.421	1	1	3	0.608	0.335	1.164
Race	1.021	1	1	3	0.204	95.000	9.747
Date of registrat.	1.516	1	1	5	0.905	3.080	1.903
Sec school prep	2.021	2	1	3	0.754	-1.241	-0.035
Prep for tertiary	2.337	2	1	7	0.866	7.358	1.259
Fin. Support							
Accommodation	5.884	7	1	8	1.999	1.143	-1.581
Fin support	6.053	7	1	9	2.012	1.042	-1.435
Income supporter	1.989	1	1	8	1.685	3.388	2.063
Self-support	1.053	1	1	2	0.223	14.890	4.072
Varsity travel	2.389	2	1	4	0.862	-0.751	-0.125
Social challenge							
Accommodation problem	3.716	4	1	5	1.270	-0.451	-0.793
Transport problem	3.800	4	1	5	1.319	-0.377	0.910

Classmate problem	3.830	4	1	5	1.154	0.191	-0.925
Parents conflict	3.945	4	1	5	0.922	1.365	-1.123
Busy social life	2.453	2	1	5	1.203	-0.438	0.684
Drug abuse	2.600	2	1	5	1.293	-1.136	0.429
Law trouble	3.758	4	1	5	1.043	1.152	-1.191
Health challenge							
Personal illness	3.579	4	1	5	1.228	-0.220	-0.879
Ill family	3.011	3	1	5	1.418	-1.387	-0.019
Clinic service	2.168	2	1	5	1.111	0.573	1.016
Counselling dept.	2.758	3	1	5	1.374	-1.156	0.299
Financial challenge	2.179	2	1	5	1.392	-0.507	0.912
Academic challenge							
Diploma choice	3.011	3	1	5	1.395	-1.395	-0.043
Fear of failing	2.200	2	1	5	1.253	-0.295	0.884
Demand of sch. work	2.600	3	1	5	1.020	0.369	0.511
Spoken Eng. problem	2.505	2	1	5	1.305	-0.844	0.552
Written Eng. problem	2.326	2	1	5	1.349	-0.694	0.769
Home lang.	2.389	2	1	5	1.363	-0.918	0.578
Socio-economic problem							
Ability to concentrate	-46.358	1	-99	2	49.941	-2.032	-0.107
Self-esteem	-71.358	-99	-99	2	45.031	-0.956	1.032
Time avail for study	6.021	7	1	5	0.754	-1.241	-2.035

The detailed items captured under the five major variables shown in the questionnaire is presented. The researcher undertook an explorative analysis to bring to the fore how these variables may impact negatively on students' learning activities. It is hoped that this will contribute to the investigation at stake and enhance the possibility of creating a more conducive environment for students' learning.

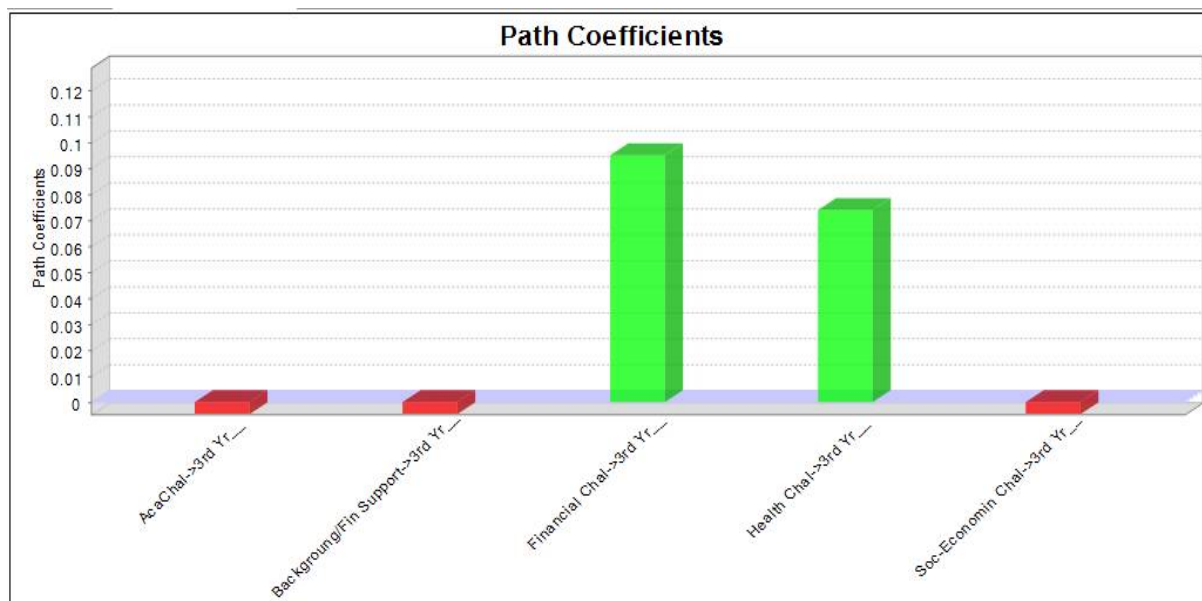
Measurement model

Cross correlation of the 5 main socioeconomic factors that could have an impact on the third-year students' studies.

Note: the value in brackets along the diagonal is the square root of AVE for each factor.

Factor	Background	FinSup	Socpro	Health	AcaChal	3 rd Year	
Background	(0.542)						54%
Financial	0.012	(0.938)					94%
Social	0.114	0.115	(0.870)				87%
Health	0.123	0.034	0.129	(0.679)			68%
Academic	0.012	0.047	0.218	0.016	(0.848)		85%
3 rd Yr	0.021	0.826	0.130	0.011	0.053	(1.000)	

Factors cross tabulation and their significant levels



Combined diagram of the challenges and their relationship to 3rd year education

The correlation in the above table clearly indicates that out of the four challenges faced by students, financial challenges are at the top the list at 94%, followed by social challenges at 87%, academic challenges at 84%, and health challenges at 67%. The reason why finance has been one of their greatest challenges appears to be because

most of these third year students only received funding in their third year of study hence they had to struggle in their first and second year of study.

The academic challenges, background challenges and socio-economic challenges which are faced by the students all together make it difficult for them to complete their 3rd Year education. As seen from the diagram above, these challenges are so substantial that, it does not even cross 0.01 significant levels. Details of what constitutes these three challenges and how they converge into theses diagrams are shown section 4.4. The regression analysis was performed on personal and other factors affecting potential drop out rates of third year students. The research model was operationalised as reflective, and therefore evaluated in terms of reliability and validity with PLS 4.0 software.

Firstly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to establish whether the widely accepted criteria for reliability and validity were met: reliability, being the extent to which factors, measured with a multiple item scale, reflect the true scores on the factors relative to the error (Hulland 1999, Aibinu and Al-Lawati, 2010). This was measured by the estimate of internal consistency and composite reliability.

To estimate how consistent an individual response to items within a scale was, composite reliability was used (Shin 2009). Composite reliability (CR) offers a more retrospective approach of overall reliability measure of a factor in the measurement model and estimates consistency of the factor itself, including stability and equivalence of the factor (Roca et al. 2009, Suki 2011). The initial performance of CFA saw some factors not meeting the recommended cut-off of 70. These were then removed since such actions do not affect any content validity (highlighted cells). A second round analysis was performed and as shown in the last two rows of Table 2, all values of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were above 0.7, which indicates that all factors have good reliability (Fornell and Larcker 1981, Henseler et al. 2009, Bagozzi and Yi 2012) with the exception of the gray coloured sections.

APPENDIX I



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

DUT STUDENT HOUSING & RESIDENCE LIFE POLICY

Document Number	
Document Name: DUT STUDENT HOUSING and RESIDENCE LIFE POLICIES	DUT STUDENT HOUSING and RESIDENCE LIFE POLICIES
Coordinating Executive Manager/Document owner	Dean/ Director: Student Services
Operational Manager/s	Director/ Manager: Student Housing and Residence Life
Contact and Telephone number for support	Mr. Doc Nhassengo: docn@dut.ac.za 031 373 2495 Mr. Khetha Mngadi: mngadi@dut.ac.za 033 845 9011
Status	
Approved by:	
Date approved	
Date last amended	11 September 2015
Date for review/next review	
Title of Manager responsible for monitoring Policy implementation	Director/ Manager: Student Housing & Residence Life
Title of Manager responsible for Policy review	Director/ Manager: Student Housing & Residence Life
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Gazette Policy on Student Residences at Public Universities and the Minimum Norms and Standards (2013) • Policy on Institutional Code of Ethics (2008) • Disciplinary Policy and Procedures • Smoking Policy • Health and Safety Policy (2005) • DUT Strategic Plan 2015-2019 • General Handbook for Students (2015) • DUT Sexual Harassment Policy

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1. Preamble

The provision of student accommodation is critical in building sustainable living and learning student communities that contribute to the success of the academic project of the Institution. It is against this background that the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life, with limited accommodation at its disposal, sets out an equitable policy that ensures that each application is treated fairly but also sets standards by which each individual student has to live in harmony with other students as a residence community.

The policies outlined in this document attempt to ensure that the residence experience is an enjoyable one whilst emphasising academic excellence.

2. Purpose of the policy

- The purpose of this document is to describe minimum requirements and standards of behaviour in the admission, residence life and disciplinary issues of students living in DUT-owned or leased residential areas.

2.1 Vision

- To provide opportunities for all our residence students to have a healthy, living, learning, listening and conducive environment that enhances the quality of students life and experiences, and improves the academic success in line with the vision of the institution of developing productive citizens.

2.2 Mission

- To ensure that the quality of living conditions are constantly improved.
- To initiate educational and social programs that support the academic, social and intellectual development of students in order to fulfil their potential.

2.3 Core Values

- Respect, Recognition, Opportunity and Access
- Loyalty, Dignity, and Trust
- Transparency, Openness, Honesty and Shared Governance
- Responsibility, Accountability, Collegiality and Professionalism.

3. Applicability

This policy applies to all DUT – registered students and relevant staff.

4. DEFINITIONS

Department – refers to Student Housing and Residence Life Department.

DUT Leased Residences – residences leased by DUT for the accommodation of DUT students.

DUT-owned residences – on-campus and off-campus residences which are DUT property.

House Committee – resident representatives elected annually by students to represent them in the management of residence life.

On-campus residence – residences situated within campuses in which student attend lectures.

Off-campus residence – DUT – run residences that are situated outside the campus where students attend their lectures.

Resident – a registered residence student at DUT – owned or leased residences.

Residence Advisor – DUT Staff and Postgraduate students appointed on part-time basis to manage residence activities, co-ordinate and implement residence life programmes, as well as assist students in their personal and residential needs.

Vacations – University holidays as prescribed in the academic calendar.

University – refers to Durban University of Technology (DUT).

5. Policy on Admissions and Placement into Residence

5.1 Policy Statement

5.1.1 In line with the Strategic Plan of DUT, Student Housing and Residence Life shall provide accommodation to students in a manner that meets the focus area of building a student community of living and learning, thus creating an atmosphere that enriches both the academic and social experience.

5.1.2 In meeting the strategic goals of the University the department adopts an approach that ensures that the limited accommodation available is offered to students who perform academically and such admission processes are done in a fair and equitable manner that does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or physical disability.

5.1.3 In line with the Higher Education Ministerial directive the Department shall strive to increase the percentage of first time entrance into University and give more preference in the placement of students in residences.

5.1.4 Accommodation shall be offered to students who are registered on a full-time basis for DUT formal diplomas, degrees in undergraduate studies and on a limited scale those that are pursuing post-graduate studies.

5.1.5 University residence accommodation is provided in a calendar year from the day of academic and residence registration to not more than two days (48 hours) after the last day of the semester and or the last day of the examinations for undergraduate and B -Tech students. Post – graduate students (masters, doctoral and post-doctoral students) may remain in residence for the duration of their program and are charged for the whole duration of their stay.

5.2 Who can be admitted in residence?

5.2.1 First time entrants into the University from Grade 12 schooling are admitted into residence on the basis of their admission into the academic program and shall be placed in a residence designated as a first-year student residence, or in a case where such residences are full shall be placed at any available accommodation.

5.2.2 New students to DUT, but have previously attended at other university (ies) or who are of mature age (+2 years of age) shall be regarded as senior students regardless of the level of their program and shall not be placed in a designated first-year student residence. Such a student must have met the same requirements as a returning student in residence, that is, has obtained an average of not less than sixty five percent (65 %) aggregate or of mature age and have not attended another university, may be exempt from this requirement.

5.2.3 All returning students who have applied for student accommodation must meet an average of not less than sixty five percent (65%) aggregate in the academic subjects he/she is registered for in each year, failure which would result in refusal for admission in the following semester/ year. The minimum shall not guarantee a placement in residence as consideration for placement shall be done on ranking

system. That is first consideration shall be those that have attained higher marks than the set minimum.

5.2.4 All students to be considered for admission into the university residence must be coming from outside the 50 km radius. A student who resides within the 50 km radius may be admitted into the residence in exceptional circumstances through the Appeals process with the approval of the Head of the Department provided spaces are still available.

5.2.5 Accommodation required outside the above term periods is not covered by the semester/ annual fees. Students whose academic curricula requires their presence on campus outside of these periods must consult their Residence/ Accommodation Office at their earliest regarding their personal circumstances and the associated additional fees. (Continuous assessments, academic projects, supplementary examinations, except the day before and on examination day that is exempted from payment of a fee, in-service where it is an academic requirement and such in-service has been obtained closer to the university).

5.2.6 The maximum period of staying in residence shall not exceed the period of the academic qualification plus an additional year. No consideration shall be made beyond this period, except under exceptional circumstances that shall be considered by the Appeal Panel and approved by the Head of Department.

5.2.7 For admission into residence a student shall be registered for three (3) or more subjects that are part of their academic qualification with an exception where they are less, such subjects must be the last subject(s) to earn a qualification. Cancellation of a subject(s) after admission into residence and the remaining subjects registered for do not meet the minimum threshold shall cause the Department of Student Housing and Res. Life to deregister such a student in the residences.

5.2.8 A semester student who cancels the residence at the beginning of April in the first semester or at the beginning of September in the second semester shall be liable for the full fees. An annual student who cancels the residence at the beginning of August shall be liable for the full fees. This shall apply also when a student is expelled from the residences and or the university.

5.2.9 Admission into Residence requires that the student discloses any pre-existing medical or psychological conditions for which treatment and or medication has been prescribed in the last 12 months for emergency purposes, which information shall be held in the strictest confidence by university officials and can only be accessed in the event of a medical or other emergency.

5.2.10 Self paying students, irrelevant of their academic programme shall be registered as semester students in the residence and must pay all fees for the semester not later than 30 June and not later than 30 September for second semester. Failing to meet the above requirements shall cause the Department not to consider such a student for readmission in the following semester or year.

5.2.11A student who constantly breaches residence rules shall be refused readmission into the residence the following semester/year.

6. Policy on Residence Accommodation Appeals

6.1 Policy Statement

6.1.1 Although there are limited spaces in the residences, the Department strives to provide access to residential life for students who are seeking University accommodation.

6.1.2 On first access to the residential accommodation the Department does not set stringent entry requirements, but it expects that once the student is accepted into the residence that such a student shall excel academically and meet the minimum requirements to remain in the residence as set out in the policy. The Department shall endeavour to provide the necessary facilities and interventions that will assist students to succeed in their studies, for example, the tutorial programs in the academic and social programs for integration into residence community and be useful citizens.

6.1.3 Students with special conditions in relation to academic and geographical reasons may appeal to be accommodated. Students who have been excluded from the residence for disciplinary reasons may only appeal after a year of the incident and sanction(s).

7. Policy on Unauthorized Occupation of the Residence

7.1 Policy Statement

7.1.1 DUT officially allocates students into the residences who have followed the Admissions and Placement Policy and have Finance approved sponsorship or have paid the fees as determined from time to time and have been academically registered.

7.2. Unauthorised Occupation

7.2.1 Following the allocation stated above no student who shall have been so allocated sub-let the room to another student or any other person Sub-letting is an unlawful arrangement whereby a registered residence student assigns his/ her privileges to another student or any other person in return for monetary payment or payment in kind.

7.2.2 No student or any other person shall occupy and make use of university residence without being officially allocated into the residence. Such act shall be regarded as squatting and such act is defined as illegal occupation and use of university residence and related facilities without the necessary authorization.

7.2.3 No student may live with another student in a room when such a student is not authorized to do so. Such act is regarded as cohabitation and known as unauthorized living with a partner in a university residence including being a couple, lovers and or friends in a residence space allocated to one individual or where there is vacant space in a shared facility.

8. Policy on Vacation Period

8.1 Policy Statement

8.1.1 Residences for Undergraduate and B-Tech students close during the June/ July and December vacation period and students are required to vacate their residences within 48 hours and not later than 10:00 am after the examination which includes any re-evaluation, project submission, which shall be supported by an official letter from the department.

8.1.2 This policy does not apply to post-graduate (masters, doctoral and post-doctoral student). But the above category of students (masters, doctoral and post-doctoral) are required to inform the department when they vacate the residence for vacation purposes and the date they would return at the residence (earliest date in January or any period in between).

8.1.3 Students are not required to vacate their residences during the short-term vacations (March/ April and September/ October short-term vacations).

8.1.4 Students who participate in official academic programs or official academic activities or Universities sports competitions, activities etc. during the June/ July or November / December / January vacation periods must provide an official letter from their department that states the purpose and the responsible person for the payment of the vacation fee.

8.1.5 Students in Leadership, in the case of the Student Representative Council, must be approved by the Manager: Student Governance and Development and the Dean of Students/ Director Student Services authorizing their stay with the necessary entity to be debited for the duration of their stay.

8.1.6 In the case of the residence student leadership this shall be approved by the Head of Department (Student Housing) and the appropriate entity be debited with the required fee.

8.1.7 Other student formations (like the Orientation helpers referred by Student Governance, the University Choir, University Sport Representatives, etc.) must provide an official letter of the department concerned indicating the necessary entity to be debited for the duration of their stay.

8.1.8 Stay during the vacation must be authorised by the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life at least two weeks prior to their stay. A student who fails to make these prior arrangements and stays without authorisation from the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life may face both disciplinary and financial consequences and may be permanently excluded from the residence thereafter.

9. Policy on compulsory vacating of Residences

9.1 Policy Statement

9.1.1 It is compulsory to vacate the residence, without remission of fees, within 24 hours if:

- a student is found guilty of a criminal offence by a court of law;
- a student is found guilty of an offence justifying expulsion by a DUT Student Disciplinary Tribunal or Residence Disciplinary Tribunal;
- a student does not obtain the required DP and is not eligible to write examinations.
- a student has committed a serious offence e.g. assault, attempted rape, theft of students property/ university property and or a student is under investigation for a serious offence until he/she appeared before the University Disciplinary Tribunal and then found guilty or when he/she receives a suspended sentence from such a Tribunal may he/she be allowed to return but may not be compensated for the period he/she was away from residence and may be placed under certain conditions.

10. Policy on Unoccupied Rooms

10.1 Policy Statement

10.1.1 The demand for University accommodation by far exceeds the availability of space, and therefore space is offered to students who are registered for a full-time academic programme, and are not in full-time (contract or permanent) employment.

10.1.2 Occupation of a room is considered as such when a student has taken occupation of the room on residence registration whether done online or manually on campus and within 2 hrs or when residence registration is done online and off-campus not later than the first (1st) day of the commencement of lectures. If such is not adhered to it would be taken that a student no longer requires accommodation and shall be forfeited and given to the next student who requires accommodation, unless the student reports in writing to the Head of Student Housing and Residence Life notifying the department his/her absence and the reasons thereof.

10.1.3 A student planning to spend or is caused to spend more than 48hrs away from the residence, whether for academic or personal purposes, are required to notify their Residence Coordinator/ Residence Advisors /Residence Student Assistants. Any unreported absence may result in the Department notifying the parent/ guardian/ next of kin and may result in the forfeiture of the room.

11. Policy on visitors

11.1 Policy Statement

11.1.1 Student Accommodation is provided for bona-fide registered residence students in the first instance, and no one else has the right of access into that residence.

11.1.2 The Department of Student Housing and Residence Life whilst acknowledging that residence students may have visitors for academic as well as social purposes limits the access to non-resident person(s) to the following:

- a) **No overnight visitors/ guests are allowed;**
- b) Visitors are not allowed during registration period and the Department shall issue a directive when such visits may begin.
- c) Visiting hours are between 08:00 – 23:30 in DUT-owned residences. No visitors are to be signed in from 22:30. In the leased residences, the times of visits are subject to negotiation and agreement with the landlord and are therefore, not according to the stipulated University Hours;
- d) Family members such as children, siblings, parents, spouses, cousins, etc. are not allowed to cohabitate in university residences or to visit on an overnight basis;
- e) No visitors of the opposite gender are permitted in residence rooms of male or female residences; and shall such visits be limited to common areas designated as visitors' lounge.
- f) All visitors are required to provide proof of identification and **must** be signed in at the residence reception desk/ security entrance by their host (residence student);
- g) Unaccompanied visitors will not be admitted in the residences.
- h) **It is not permissible to sign in a visitor for another student.**
- i) **A residence student who signs in a visitor is held accountable for any misconduct on the part of his/her visitor(s).**

11.1.3 The number of visitors per day and per building are to be based on the building capacity in terms of the Building Regulation by-laws and Acts of Parliament. **It is therefore not mandatory that visitors have a right at any given moment.**

12. Policy on accessing of student rooms

12.1 Policy Statement

12.1.1 The Department of Student Housing and Residence Life is responsible for the management of the University residences and students are subject to all the general University Residence Rules and to specific rules applying to their residence.

12.1.2 Whilst observing the students' rights in the residences, the University reserves the right to enter a student's room or flat for health, safety, administrative purposes or when there is strong evidence or suspicion of an emergency that warrants immediate entry or there could be criminal activity. Such entry into the student's room may be entered with the consent of the resident student or without obtaining prior consent to conduct a search. If a resident student is not present, a note will be left indicating the name(s) or person(s) entering and the reasons for doing so.

13. Policy on Residence/ Room Keys

13.1. Policy Statement

13.1.1 Security of students in the residences is the primary responsibility of the University, and therefore all stakeholders (students, housing personnel, security and cleaning staff, outside service providers) have to ensure that security breaches are minimized and or prevented at all times.

13.1.2 The University does not provide and issue keys to residence students on admission. Once a student has been admitted into residence, he/she is expected to provide their own locks for entry into the room, for the built-in cupboards, and grocery cupboards in the kitchenettes.

13.1.3 The University has the master keys for the purpose of official access into the rooms, for inspection of rooms, cleaning and any other matter related to the running of the residences and as such may have to break locks where such are no longer authorised. For example, at the end of the semester and instead of vacating the student leaves the room locked, or in instances where there is suspicion of unlawful conduct taking place in the room or cupboards, in which case the university officials may have to break the locks. **(A student may not be given or allowed to handle the master key for whatever purpose).**

13.2. Issuing and return of keys

13.2.1 In instances where the University or the private accommodation establishment provides keys, these remain the property of the University or the landlord and shall not be duplicated and must be returned to the University officials or landlord management when vacating at the end of the semester or on vacating a residence for violation of Residence/University Rules or own volition. Any losses or damages must be reported to the officials for repairs or replacement than causing damage to gain access into the room where applicable.

13.2.2 All keys that are issued to a student on admission into Residence are University or landlords property and become a responsibility of that student and shall not be handed over to any other student or any person (whether a friend, relative, etc.)

13.2.3 No fraudulent use of another student's key or access card is permissible and this is viewed as a serious offence.

13.2.4 Loss of keys or any damage to the lock and key system through a student's negligence shall be paid for by the student.

13.2.5 No student may duplicate any key, if lost or broken and must report such loss or breakage to the Housing Officials or landlord Management immediately and any replacement shall be at a student's cost.

14. Policy on fraudulent use of Student Cards/ Letters

14.1 Policy Statement

14.1.1 The University adopts a zero-tolerance on any fraudulent activity by any member of staff or students.

14.1.2 Use of a student card / e-wallet card or any document of another student other than an authorised student shall be viewed as fraud, and as such strong disciplinary steps shall be taken against any individual concerned.

14.1.3 No person other than an authorised student may use the card(s) to gain access into the residence, room, meals and or bank facilities. Serious disciplinary steps which may result in the expulsion and or refusal of admission into residence in future.

14.1.4 Students who produce fraudulent documents or provide information from a medical practitioner and subject to verification by the university medical practitioner is found to be fraudulent or letters from departments signed by a person who is not authorised to do so (only Heads of Departments are authorised to sign) shall face disciplinary measures and or may be refused admission into residence or acceding to the request. Any suspicious document is subject to verification and a student/staff may be referred to the University Tribunal.

15. Policy on Married Spouses/ Partners or Children

15.1 Policy Statement

15.1.1 The Durban University of Technology admits all types of students into its under- and post - graduate academic programs without any discrimination, both unmarried and married students.

15.1.2 The Durban University of Technology however does not have residences to cater for students who want to bring spouses, partners and or children to stay in the residences.

15.1.3 Students wishing to bring their spouses, partners and or children to live with them have to find alternative private accommodation.

15.1.4 Students wishing their spouses, partners and or children to visit them and staying overnight, have to find alternative private accommodation for the duration of the visit.

16. Policy on Pregnancy in Residence

16.1 Policy Statement

16.1.1 The Durban University of Technology is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and pleasant campus and residence environment, which supports the health and well-being of students.

16.1.2 The University cannot take responsibility for the potential health risks to the pregnant student particularly in the final weeks prior to the birth of the child, nor to the unborn baby, and cannot assume any financial responsibility whatsoever, the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life shall only support such a pregnant student as outlined in the policy below.

16.2 Student Support

16.2.1 A student who is pregnant on entry into residence must within a week inform the Residence Advisor of her own residence and must provide records from her health clinic confirming her gestation period or if she falls pregnant during the course of the academic year must inform the Residence Advisor of her own residence immediately on discovering her pregnancy and provide records from the University Health Clinic confirming her gestation period.

16.2.2 The Residence Advisor shall then refer the student to the Office of Residence Life, which shall provide a pregnant student with information so as to enable her to make an informed decision about her pregnancy and information about health care options, alternative accommodation and any related issues.

16.2.3 The Residence Life Office shall provide the student with emotional support and refer the student to the University Health Clinic and where necessary to the professional counselling service on campus, all services which are free of charge to the student.

16.3 Accommodation

16.3.1 The DUT Residences do not have the necessary and appropriate personnel and facilities for pregnant students, and therefore the pregnant student is required to take the necessary precautions, and in the event of the current ambulance contractual arrangements, the ambulance service charges that are not covered shall be at the student cost.

16.3.2 Pregnant students are allowed to remain in residence at their own risk until 24 weeks (6 months) of pregnancy, and may not remain in residence beyond that period.

16.3.3 In an event of any complications within this period or an increased level of risk including the possibility of a premature birth, the Head of Student Housing and Residence Life may at his/her discretion require a student to leave the residence and seek alternative accommodation at an earlier date. It is the responsibility of a pregnant student to keep the Residence Advisor informed about her health status during the first 24 weeks of her pregnancy.

16.3.4 The student has to arrange for alternative accommodation prior to week 24, as Residence Management cannot accept any responsibility relating to her final weeks of pregnancy nor the birth of any baby.

16.3.5 If the student wishes to have her room kept vacant so that she may return after the birth of the baby, it could be arranged at the normal accommodation fees until her return and should complete the prescribed form before her departure. In the case where a pregnant student leaves the residence towards the end of the academic year, she will not automatically be allowed to resume residence at the beginning of the following year, but will have to apply for residence accommodation in the normal manner. Such an application will be considered in terms of the University's Residence Admissions and Placement Policy.

16.3.6 The student may return to the residence after the birth of the baby, however the newly born baby shall not be permitted to live there nor to make visits to the student's room.

16.3.7 Any transgression of the above policy shall be dealt with in accordance with the Residence Code of Conduct.

17. Policy on Sexual Harassment

17.1. Policy Statement

17.1.1 The Durban University of Technology as an academic and educational institution is committed to providing a non-sexist, non-discriminatory working, living and learning environment for both staff and students in which every person is able to achieve his/her potential.

17.1.2 The University acknowledges that sexual harassment is an unacceptable infringement and affront to the core values of integrity, human dignity, privacy, equity and mutual respect and is a form of unfair discrimination.

17.1.3 The Durban University of Technology Student Housing and Residence Life seeks to preserve the rights, dignity, integrity and privacy of all residence students and staff and shall, therefore, not tolerate any act or threat that directly or indirectly interferes with such dignity and rights of each residence students and staff.

17.1.4 This policy shall be read in conjunction with the University Policy on Sexual Harassment.

17.2. What is Sexual Harassment?

17.2.1 Sexual harassment is any unwanted conduct, whether isolated or repeated, of a sexual nature.

This is judged by the recipient to result in one or more of the following:

- Mental, physical or social discomfort;
- Interference with an individual's work and/or academic performance or application/ admission/ placement into residence;
- Creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for an individual;
- The misuse or abuse of authority in extricating favours of a sexual nature;
- Harassment accompanied by threats to continued employment and possible benefits;
- The complaint must have indicated to the suspect that he or she regards such conduct as sexual harassment.

17.3. Prohibited grounds on Sexual Harassment

17.3.1 Verbal conduct (e.g. sexist or suggestive remarks regarding a person's clothing, body or private life, sex-related teasing, jokes or insults, continued pressure for dates and/or sexual favour, unwelcome whistling, telephone calls of a sexual nature, sexual demands or requests or propositions in return for hiring or as a condition of employment or admissions/ readmissions into residence).

17.3.2 Non-verbal conduct (e.g. unwelcome and/or obscene gestures, display of sexually offensive material, indecent exposure, leering, suggestive looks)

17.3.3 Physical conduct (e.g. physical sexual assaults), or

17.3.4 Electronic mail messages (e-mails, facebook, whatsapp, twitter and any other social network).

18. Policy on Indecent Conduct

18.1. Policy Statement

18.1.1 In the provision of student accommodation DUT seeks to promote an understanding and respect of the rights of all residence students regardless of whether they are sharing or are in a single room.

18.1.2 Each student shall treat each other with dignity and respect and shall allow one another free access to one's room, refrain from actions that may be intimidating and or cause physical and emotional harm and respect for the right of a fellow student to live and study in a conducive environment.

18.2. Indecency Conduct

18.2.1 Indecent conduct may refer to any acts of intimacy of a sexual nature and or indecent exposure in the presence of a fellow roommate or neighbours, and or to cause or deprive the roommate access to the room at any given time whilst you are engaged in one of the above-mentioned acts.

19. Policy on Sexual Misconduct or Sexual Violence

19.1 Policy Statement

19.1.1 The University strives to provide a conducive environment for students to live and learn in the residences and therefore, safety and security of residence students is of paramount to the department and the University.

19.1.2 It is imperative that no person creates an environment that is intimidating and that disrespects and violates one's rights to dignity, physical integrity and causes harm, emotionally, physically and otherwise.

19.1.3 Any act that is forceful or deceitful that results in sexual engagement without the knowledge or consent of the other or any attempt shall be viewed in a serious light and may lead to expulsion from the residences. Acts such as attempted rape, rape, date rape, drug-induced drinks, party rape and showing of pornographic materials that may result in or force one to engage in a sexual act not consensually.

20. Policy on alcohol consumption or sale in the residences

20.1. Policy statement

20.1.1 The University residences or leased/ private residences, as part of the University are alcohol free zones, and therefore no alcohol may be brought, sold and or consumed within the residence facilities/ property/ rooms.

20.1.2 The University supports the current legislation on the minimum age of 18 (eighteen) and if this would change to 21 (twenty one) in future as the minimum legal age, and therefore no one can sell or allow the consumption of alcohol by a person who has not reached the minimum legal age.

20.1.3 The University Residences further prohibit any student from coming into the residence drunk and cause any disturbance or misconduct. Being drunk would not be considered as an excuse in any misconduct hearing.

20.1.4 No alcohol consumption at any Residence Life functions or activities, on-or off-campus.

21. Policy on Violent Conduct or Use of Violence

21.1. Policy Statement

21.1.1 The Durban University of Technology seeks to promote an understanding and respect of the rights of all students and staff.

21.1.2 The University therefore implores both staff and students to work towards the preservation of human dignity and discouragement of offensive behaviour as an integral part of a safe, secure and healthy environment.

21.2. Unacceptable Behaviour

21.2.1 No student or staff member may assault, use force, intimidate, threaten, and or insult another student, staff member, service provider and or a member of the public.

21.2.2 No person may bring into the residences, whether it is parents/ guardians, relatives, friends and or criminal elements with an intention to fight, attack, assault or cause harm of whatsoever nature to any student or staff in order to resolve any kind of dispute that may have arisen.

22. Policy on Substance Abuse in the Residences

22.1 Policy Statement

22.1.1 The University has a zero-tolerance on sale and or use of any drugs, other than prescribed medicines, as regulated by Government Legislation.

22.1.2 A student experiencing problems with drugs may approach the Residence Advisor or may be referred to the Residence Life Office who shall assist in the appropriate referral agencies for rehabilitation purposes.

22.1.3 A student found in possession of any illegal drugs shall be referred to the Protection Services of the University and or the South African Police Services, and shall be immediately expelled from the residences pending the University disciplinary Tribunal or criminal case, and the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life reserves the right to refuse readmission of such a student in future.

23. Policy on smoking

23.1. Policy Statement

23.1.1 The University residences, as public facilities, are non-smoking zones, whether in rooms, passages, common areas, except in an area designated as a smoking area.

23.1.2 Failure to adhere to this policy and smoke in areas where it may trigger a fire alarm system, the offending student shall bear the costs related to any response to the fire alarm, for example, the fire department responding to that alarm, and may face disciplinary action by the University.

24. Policy on Residence Transport

24.1 Policy Statement

24.1.1 The University provides transport to Residence students in off-campus residences that are owned by the University or leased to the University at the cost of the resident student. The number of trips are, therefore, determined by the department in relation to the costs and are made available throughout the day, and in some cases up to midnight.

24.1.2 The Residence Transport therefore is not available to non-residents.

24.1.3 Resident students are required to produce Residence Cards at all times when boarding the buses, and may be refused boarding if such a student fails to produce his/her residence card.

24.1.4 On the basis of the above, the contracted service provider for transport is required by law and the University Service Level Agreement to provide at all times current Insurance for Public Liability in case of accidents where they may be injuries or fatalities. A non-resident student may not be covered by this insurance, hence the prohibition of a non-resident student boarding a contracted residence transport.

25. Policy on Health, Religious and Culturally-related Practices

25.1 Policy Statement

25.1.1 The Department of Student Housing and Residence Life recognises and respects each individual student's religious and cultural practices, and because of the limited accommodation it provides, it cannot be able to provide accommodation facilities to cater for the needs of individual or group of students who want to practice certain acts or actions for religious or cultural purposes.

25.1.2 Whilst the department also recognises that students may have health conditions or challenges at some time, it would only consider such requests if accommodation is available and if such condition(s) has been declared in the application form for residence at each instance.

25.1.3 **Medical certificates that are produced at registration shall not be considered unless verified by the University Medical Practitioner.**