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**A Framework to Improve Social Media as a Communication Tool in Technical
Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa: A Case of Twitter**

by

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Abstract

South Africa uses social media as a communication tool. The use of Twitter as a communication tool in Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVET) in South Africa is a crucial factor for efficient and effective communication between TVET College administration and stakeholders such as prospective students, students, prospective employers, prospective employees and the Twitter community which follow various Twitter accounts. Literature has found that TVET Colleges use Twitter in a monologic manner which promotes one-way information flow. Twitter is also used in a limited fashion and within silos within TVET Colleges that have incorporated this social media platform into their communication strategy.

The main purpose of this research study was to develop a framework to improve social media as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model was used as the theoretical framework to evaluate the use of Twitter in TVET Colleges in South Africa, thus enabling the development of critical success factors to improve the use of social media as a communication tool.

The Interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research approach was chosen for this study. Netnography was used to collect the online data from Twitter that was analysed in the study. Data was collected from 36 TVET Colleges in South Africa that have a Twitter account over a one-year period (April 2019 – March 2020). After the data collection, content and thematic analysis were used to analyse the data.

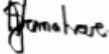
The study developed a framework from the analyses of tweets which incorporated the four constructs from the Social-Media-Integration-Theory-Model. The study also developed five critical success factors, namely, procuring and maintaining of ICT infrastructure; implementing a policy that guide the use of social networks for communication purposes in TVET Colleges; raising awareness on the use of Twitter as a tool for communication; intensive training to manage administration of Twitter accounts and appointing champions to promote Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges.

Keywords: TVET Colleges; Twitter; Social-Media-Integration-Theory-Model; netnography; Social Media; Communication Tool

Declaration of Ownership, Authorship and Ethical Clearance

I, Sangudzayi Innocent Nyamanhare, student number 201511043, hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on plagiarism and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations. I hereby declare that this Masters study report is my own original work submitted to the University of Fort Hare in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Masters: Information Systems, in the Faculty of Management and Commerce. Where other authors' works have been consulted, due acknowledgement has been given in-text and on the end reference list.

I also hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on research ethics and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations. I have obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee and my reference number is CILL011SNYA01.

Signature: 

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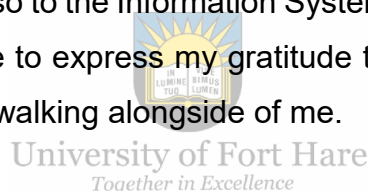


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Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Internet usage, as a means of communication, has infiltrated all aspects of life. The internet can break down geographical barriers and time constraints between two parties (Apuke & Iyendo, 2018). The internet can also be used as a communication tool for marketing, dissemination of information and feedback from various stakeholders (de Lanerolle, 2013).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges are higher educational institutions which offer 'post-school' courses, which are occupational or vocational by design (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016). Students receive education and training to secure practical type jobs or to secure entrepreneurial opportunities. South Africa has a total number of 50 registered TVET Colleges (Western Cape Government, 2018).



Educational institutions in South Africa, for example, TVET Colleges, make use of the internet and sometimes even social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, as a communication tool (Apuke & Iyendo, 2018). The social media platforms are used to share information such as details of what courses the learning institution has to offer to prospective students, lecturers and the local community. Information may include application dates and procedures, registration procedures and courses offered at various TVET Colleges (Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic & Dietrich, 2014).

According to Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 210), social media is defined generally “as websites which allow profile creation and visibility of relationships between users”. In South Africa, the biggest social media platforms are Facebook with 96.6%, Twitter with 89,7% and LinkedIn with 71.6%. This means that there are 16 million South Africans that make use of Facebook, while there are 8 million Twitter followers (Mabizela, 2019). The focus of this study is Twitter as a social media communication platform. Social media is available in South Africa, where 51% of the population of approximately 56 million people make use of the internet as a communication tool. This enables them to access various

social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Business Tech, 2018). Out of the total number of internet users in South Africa, 38.26% make use of Facebook, 8.38% make use of Twitter, and lastly, 1.78% make use of Instagram as social media communication platforms (Statcounter, 2019).

Twitter is often used to connect individuals with a similar interest. Twitter is referred to by many users or scholars as “a microblogging platform, where a user can post 140-character status ‘tweet’ updates, that can be viewed by any individual who has chosen to follow the user who posted the message” (Agarwal, Xie, Vovsha, Rambow & Passonneau, 2011, p. 1). Twitter has emerged as a fast communication channel for collecting and disseminating breaking news (Atefeh & Khreich, 2015). Twitter may be used for various purposes such as status updates, starting discussions, recommending tweet content and endorsing products or courses (Benevenuto, Magno, Rodrigues & Almeida, 2010). In academia, Twitter is used to get and share information in real-time as well as create connections with others. Non-student activities on Twitter include connecting with alumni, fundraising initiatives and connecting with sport team fans of the college (Kimmons, Veletsianos & Woodward, 2017). Barnes and Lescault (2013) found that colleges in the United States of America made use of social media to both recruit and research prospective students. Seventy-one percent of the institutions stated that they used Twitter to recruit prospective students, while thirteen percent admitted to researching prospective students on social media as part of the admissions process (Barnes & Lescault, 2013). Twitter offers live broadcasts, so users of Twitter can benefit from real-time and up-to-date information being shared on TVET College Twitter pages. These pages promote time efficiency, as information is shared without much delay, enabling quick decision making (Gaus, 2017). The problem is that most TVET Colleges in South Africa are not utilising Twitter to its full; there appears to be a lack of strategy on how to make use of Twitter as a communication tool (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018).

1.2 Problem Statement

TVET Colleges make use of social media, but lack a strategy on how to utilise Twitter effectively and efficiently as a social media communication tool (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Social media can be used to extend the reach of the TVET Colleges and

demonstrate the value to society, but thus far, Twitter has not reached this potential (Arya & Bhagat, 2017). Some of the notable barriers affecting TVET Colleges are the lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, lack of policy or strategy and leadership to steer the social media drive (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018).

Prior literature has suggested that Twitter in higher education is used to disseminate information and not elicit action from students as the tweets are monologic in nature. Gallagher and Ransbotham (2010) called this type of one-way information flow the 'megaphone' model of Twitter use. Twitter is also used in a limited fashion and within silos to express either neutral or positive sentiments (Kimmons, Veletsianos & Woodward, 2017; Woodward & Kimmons, 2018). Literature has suggested that many colleges do not use the most commonly accepted communication strategies, such as dialogic and two-way communication, when they make use of Twitter to build relationships with students and the community at large (Beverly, 2013). Therefore, there is a need for TVET Colleges to develop an efficient and effective strategy to make use of Twitter as a communication tool (Apuke & Iyendo, 2018; Heinonen & Medberg, 2018).

1.3 Primary Objective



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The objective of this study is to develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa.

1.3.1 Secondary Objectives

- To assess the purpose of Twitter when used by TVET Colleges in South Africa as a communication tool
- To assess how effective Twitter is as a communication tool for TVET Colleges in South Africa
- To provide strategies to improve the use of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. Twitter can be used by TVET Colleges to build relationships with students and the community at large. This also allows TVET Colleges to show their worth to the community and it allows them to increase their reach and recruitment possibilities (Beverly, 2013). However, conventional quantitative analysis methods are not appropriate for use on the Twitter streams as these contain large amounts of meaningless content; the short length of tweets are also a challenge when seeking fuller understanding; spelling and grammatical errors also abound; plus the frequent use of informal and mixed language can mislead those trying to analyse the streams. If critical success factors can be established, then Twitter can be used properly, information can be disseminated to students in a timeous manner while the students can provide feedback to the colleges, thus improving communication between the TVET College and students.

1.6 Literature Review

The next section discusses the empirical and theoretical literature of the research conducted.

1.6.1 Empirical Literature

Social media is described as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 59). Access to portable devices with internet connectivity has impacted positively on the number of individuals and organisations making use of devices such as smartphones to communicate, via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Telegraph (de Villiers, 2019). Twitter is referred to by many users or scholars as “a microblogging platform, where a user can

post 140-character status ‘tweet’ updates, that can be viewed by any individual who has chosen to follow the user who posted the message” (Agarwal, Xie, Vovsha, Rambow & Passonneau, 2011, p. 1).

The Department of Basic Education manages the South African education structure in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The TVET Colleges are part of DHET and are equipped to educate and train students once they leave school (Western Cape Government, 2018). The main drive of the introduction of TVET Colleges was to support the development of practical vocational skills in sectors such as agriculture, arts and culture, manufacturing and technology, commerce and management, education, training and development, engineering, building construction and security (Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich & Brijlal, 2007).

The use of Twitter in educational institutions has many benefits, which include, enhanced communications amongst students and lecturers, improved teamwork and improved networking amongst students and lecturers (Kumar & Nanda, 2018). Other notable benefits include lecturers being able to share resources faster and provide students with better access to study materials. This creates a substitute platform to the traditional learning management system (de Villiers, 2019). The most important benefit of using Twitter in educational institutions is that Twitter is not limited by time and space. This means that one can access a Twitter page of a specific TVET College and possibly acquire crucial information at any given time and from any given location (Dwayi, 2015).

Social media, in general, enables educational institutions to provide stakeholders with information such as new programs being offered by TVET Colleges, changes to policies, events, job vacancies, alumni engagement and institutional news (Bucher, 2015). Higher educational institutions in developed countries, such as the United States of America, make use of social media as a tool for recruiting students (Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic & Dietrich, 2014). Other higher educational institutions have made use of social media to enhance active and informal learning by exploring the teaching practice of Twitter as an active, informal, outside-of-class learning tool (Kassens-Noor, 2012).

1.6.2 Theoretical Literature

Theories are created to for many purposes including to predict, explain and understand various phenomena in order to create new knowledge (Gabriel, 2008). This study will use the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model as the theoretical framework as it is a total engagement method.

1.6.2.1 Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model

Social media integration is demonstrated “when a software is used to handle social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram under a single platform and it allows a user to post the same post to a set of selected social media accounts” (Ngai, Moon, Lam, Chin & Tao, 2015, p. 769). The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model was used in Garcia’s study to investigate how interactive social media pages such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have transformed the communication paradigm. The findings were that the social media phenomena profoundly influenced various consumers. The study established that 67% of the consumers were likely to purchase from brands they monitored or followed on Twitter, and 51% more likely to purchase from a brand they followed on Facebook (Garcia, 2011).

Caramela (2018) explains in a study on marketing practices how significant social media integration is in promoting products and services. The study found that the use of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model to promote products and services often resulted in more frequent purchases. If an institution does not make use of social media platforms or the policies guiding these actions are not developed and implemented, the institution's reputation may be viewed poorly. Figure 1 below, is an illustration of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model.

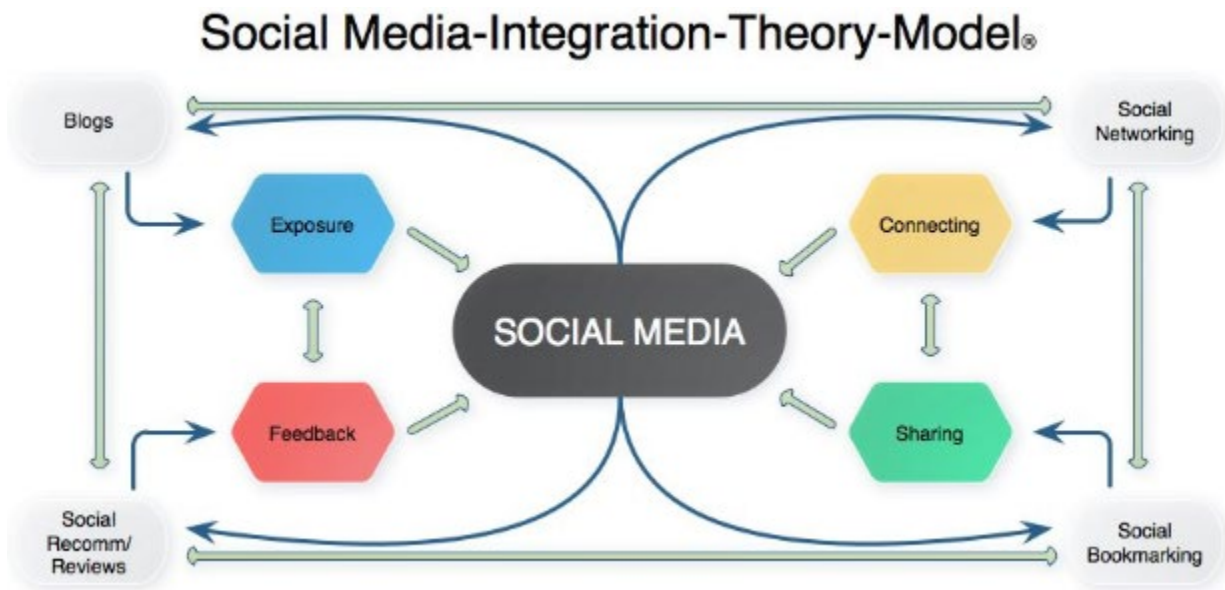


Figure 1. Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model (Garcia, 2011)

Garcia (2011) states that this model is a total engagement method, which was developed through interactive procedures that permit information exchange on a similar level between the consumer (student) and the brand (TVET College). Similar level information is enabled for consumers and brands, meaning that they can communicate together while making use of the same platform, such as Twitter. The model has four functions of social media, namely; feedback, exposure, sharing and connecting. These four functions of the model will be discussed in detail in the following section.

6.2.1.1 Exposure

Social media platforms introduce changes from the traditional methods of communicating. Social media has transformed traditional communication to real-time exposure, feedback, engagement (connection) and exchange of information (Garcia, 2011). Social media is a platform which enables TVET Colleges, local communities and students to market and share products and services on offer. A TVET College can make use of Twitter to advertise the next enrolment dates to prospective students. A particular TVET College can also advertise vacancies on its Twitter page to recruit new staff members. The exposure of the social media platforms provides consumers with a way to post or tweet about different products, services, brands or information that provide exposure to the college (Di Gangi and Wasko, 2016).

6.2.1.2 Feedback

Social media integration is viewed as an interactive process which allows the same level information exchange between the TVET College and students. This creates long-term feedback communication procedures which provide an overall engagement approach between TVET Colleges and students (Garcia, 2011). A TVET College can post a tweet or poll on its Twitter page to get feedback from stakeholders, such as students, on the services the institute offers. In this way, the TVET College can make an informed decision based on the feedback received. Social bookmarking on social media makes way for consumers to create reviews, make recommendations on a product or service and give valuable feedback. Feedback promotes interaction amongst users (Lau, 2017).

6.2.1.3 Connecting

The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model's function of connecting refers to connecting students and TVET Colleges with common interests. An example of connecting prospective TVET College students with the TVET College is achieved through Twitter and the respective Twitter pages. The connection through social media removes the geographical location barriers which exist in the traditional means of communication (Tess, 2013). Through the connection or the move from the traditional communication channels, connections are created for users with similar interests. The traditional means of communication, limited the timely connection of students and TVET Colleges, for individuals with similar interests. (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

6.2.1.4 Sharing

Garcia (2011) suggests that social bookmarking sites can place information on the web with the capability of sharing with various social media platforms. There is a provocation engagement from individuals within similar groups, which then spreads into the social networking system. A student or TVET College can share a topic that interests them with their peers on their Twitter page. Using the example of a TVET College sharing changes in policy introduced by the DHET, this information can be shared with other TVET Colleges and students so that they can be informed about the changes (Leung, Bai & Stahura, 2015).

In public universities in Canada, researchers have found that Twitter is used for instructional and learning purposes, to raise funds, communicate with sporting fans and coordinating recruitment and admission activities. Further uses of Twitter include supporting learners' adjustment to higher education as well as the marketing of the university and courses (Kimmons, Veletsianos & Woodward, 2017; Woodward & Kimmons, 2018). Ahmed (2016) conducted a study in Pakistan to investigate the adequacy of social media implementation in secondary education in Pakistan. It examined the perceptions that teachers have regarding the integration of social media tools in secondary education. The findings indicated that teachers were of the view that it was essential to spread awareness among parents and school management concerning social media's implementation and its benefits in the classroom. A majority of the teachers were in favour of introducing social media forums in their classrooms and some of them were already integrating it. One of the findings was that almost every teacher who had participated in the study had integrated social media in their classroom settings to a certain extent, which helped them to conduct their teaching more effectively.

1.7 Research Methodology

Research methodology relates to the systematic process which a researcher embarks on to come to an informed decision regarding a research problem (ten Ham-Baloyi & Jordan, 2016). The research process consists of procedures which involve defining methods for gathering information, managing the acquired information gathering process, analysis and understanding of the results and then communication of outcomes to decision-makers to maximise performance (Soiferman, 2010). The research methodology section will start by discussing the research paradigm, followed by the research approach, research design, research population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, data trustworthiness, delimitation of the study and then will conclude with a section on ethical considerations.

1.7.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a "perspective that explains the patterns of beliefs and practices that standardise inquiry within a speciality area, by providing lenses, frames and procedures through which investigation is fulfilled" (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug,

2001, p. 1). The research paradigm is a set of shared beliefs among members of a speciality area that guides the researchers' investigation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In Information Systems research, two main paradigms are used, namely, Positivism and Interpretivism.

The Positivist paradigm, under objectivism epistemology is “a methodological philosophy in quantitative research where researchers apply the methods of natural sciences to discover the study of social science” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 26). Positivists strongly believe that anything that cannot be observed or measured scientifically is unknown; thus, understanding of phenomena needs to be measured and supported by evidence (Pham, 2018).

Interpretivism believes a single occurrence may be interpreted in various ways rather than one truth that can be objectively measured by numbers (Goldkuhl, 2012). Methods used to comprehend knowledge associated with human and social sciences cannot be similar to their usage in physical sciences. Individuals are involved, each individual's experience, interpretation, and understanding of the same 'objective reality' varies among individuals (Chowdhury, 2014). It is, therefore, inappropriate to measure individuals' experiences scientifically.

This research study adopted the Interpretivist paradigm. This approach was deemed appropriate for the study as the empirical model of the study was derived from various individuals' posts on Twitter. The findings generated revealed the use of Twitter as a tool used for communication on the respective TVET College's Twitter page. The themes outlined from the findings is more of a qualitative nature; hence, no inferential statistical analysis was performed (Gaus, 2017).

1.7.2 Research Approach

A research approach can be described as different techniques that is used to explain a phenomenon under study (Gaus, 2017, p. 1). Research approaches can be qualitative, quantitative or make use of a mixed method, which is a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Snelson, 2016).

Quantitative researchers use a deductive approach and test the validity of assumptions, theories or hypotheses at hand. The quantitative research approach focuses on quantifying and analysing variables to acquire results (Stumpfegger, 2017). The quantitative research approach includes the utilisation and examination of numerical information, using specific statistical methods to answer questions such as how, who, why, where and when (Apuke, 2017).

Qualitative researchers use an inductive approach and develop a theory for a pattern of meaning based on the information collected. The qualitative research approach seeks to understand and interpret social interactions (Stumpfegger, 2017). Qualitative research approaches involve tools such as interviews, focus groups and qualitative content analysis. The value of this approach is in discovering how researchers can develop their studies to gain an understanding of how and why people use social media platforms such as Twitter; furthermore, it highlights the significance that is attached to TVET Colleges and student posts on social media (Snelson, 2016).

The use of a mixed-methods research approach has value in social media research. The researcher can gather both quantitative and qualitative data, integrate the two methods and then draw interpretations based on the joint strengths of both data collection methods to comprehend research problems (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted a qualitative research approach. The qualitative data collection consisted of data collected on Twitter which were analysed thematically, after which the frequency of these themes was determined which is discussed below.

1.7.2.1 Qualitative Strand

The data was collected from the various tweets on the respective TVET Colleges Twitter pages. The tweets were categorised based on the context of each tweet. The various tweets were then put into various themes, based on the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model, which was discussed in Section 1.6.2.1.

1.7.2.2 Quantitative Strand

The Quantitative strand classifies responses depicted on the TVET College Twitter pages. The data was collected from the various tweets on the respective TVET Colleges

Twitter pages. Each tweet was categorised into a theme and the researcher counted the number of times a particular theme appeared. Additional data collected included metadata such as the profile information of the TVET Colleges (the date the page was created and the number of followers) (Appendix 4 – List of TVET Colleges that use Twitter).

1.7.3 Research Design

A research design provides researchers with a roadmap that integrates the various aspects of a study that are essential to successfully address the study problem. The research design is carefully chosen by the researcher to answer the research questions' validly, objectively and accurately for the intended research solution (Smeeton & Goda, 2003). The research design plays a vital role in the gathering, analysis and documentation of data obtained from the research, according to its relevance. The typical research design used by researchers is exploratory, causal and descriptive and these designs are discussed below (de Lanerolle, 2013).

Exploratory research “explores the research problem as it investigates and gathers more detail about the problem, which is not clearly defined” (Reiter, 2017, p. 129). Exploratory research is an appropriate research design for a study that is addressing a topic which has high levels of ambiguity and ignorance about the topic, and when the problem is not very well understood (Dudovskiy, 2018).

Causal research is also known as explanatory research. This type of research analyses a problem by comparing the cause-and-effect relationships between two variables (Dudovskiy, 2018). The primary method used for casual research is an experiment. One of the variables of explanatory research must be known. A causal research design is one in which independent variables are manipulated as much as possible to check whether they ultimately have an effect on the other independent variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Note though that a correlation does not imply causation even if it can be generalised.

Descriptive research is “a type of conclusive research that has as its major objective in the description of something - usually market characteristics or functions” (Kim, Sefcik &

Bradway, 2017, p. 25). Descriptive research involves either classifying the characteristics of an identified phenomenon or discovering possible associations amounting to two or more phenomena (Apuke, 2017).

Considering the nature of this study, the descriptive research was most suitable for this study because the study sought to provide answers on how Twitter as a social media platform can be used as a communication tool in TVET Colleges. The lack of efficient and effective use of social media in general by DHET has a negative influence on how TVET Colleges can effectively make use of social media (Chowdhury, 2014).

1.7.4 Population and Sampling

The term population refers to a large group of people who share common characteristics (Dudovskiy, 2018). The population for this study is the students enrolled at 50 TVET Colleges in South Africa, and the sample of the study is the 36 TVET Colleges that have Twitter pages. The data collection period will be a year starting April 2019 to March 2020.

1.7.5 Data Collection

Data collection can be defined as “a process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest that allow for research questions to be answered, hypotheses to be tested and allow outcomes to be evaluated” (Apuke, 2017, p. 40). The purpose of the study is to examine a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. There are also primary and secondary data which will be briefly described below. The following section will discuss primary data, secondary data, ethnography and netnography as data collection methods.

Primary data has been collected for the first time by the researcher for a specific research problem. It is also known as first hand or raw data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Primary data collection is relatively costly, and requires a fair amount of time, resources and manpower. The data collection is under the control and observation of the researcher (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016).

Secondary data has been collected and recorded by someone else for a purpose other than the research problem at hand (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Secondary data is a readily accessible form of data gathered from different sources such as censuses,

reports, books, journal articles and websites. Secondary data offers numerous advantages as it is readily available, saves time and associated costs of the researcher (Arya & Bhagat, 2017).

"Netnography is participant-observational research-based in online fieldwork. It uses computer-mediated communications as a source of data to arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a culture of the common phenomenon" (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018, p. 657). Netnography is the method of collecting online data that was used in this study. Netnography is a qualitative method explicitly created to examine consumer behaviour of cultures and communities on the Internet (Weijo, Hietanen & Mattila, 2014). Twitter is one of the social media platforms utilised by students, prospective students, parents and community members of TVET Colleges.

1.7.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis makes use of statistical and logical techniques to evaluate the data that was collected by the researcher (Thorne, 2000). Data analysis entails description, interpretation, conclusions and theorisation as the four stages of data analysis.

The qualitative data was analysed, making use of content and thematic analysis. The use of thematic coding and analysis assisted the author to retrieve themes with similar meaning from the Tweets that were collected from the TVET College Twitter pages. Since the study sought to explore the use of Twitter as a communication tool, similar ideas or patterns were identified and categorised to derive meaning that shed light and assisted in the answering of the research question. In addition, relevance of the subject matter was tested so that the findings of the study were relevant and usable (Agarwal, Xie, Vovsha, Rambow & Passonneau, 2011).

The quantitative data analysis made use of descriptive statistics, which include the mean, median, maximum and minimum instances of a particular theme. Graphical representation in the form of graphs and tables was used to represent the data.

1.7.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused only on a single social media platform, Twitter, and the relevant Twitter pages for the 36 TVET Colleges in South Africa. The focus was on "tweets" or posts on the Twitter page for the period of one year.

1.7.9 Ethical Approval

Ethics in Internet research is a vastly discussed subject among researchers and a clear agreement on this subject has not been reached to date. However, it is essential to be mindful of guidelines and to acknowledge ethics when selecting a sample to be included in the study and the methodology to use (Ben-Jacob, 2017).

This research study was conducted in accordance with the principles, practices, procedures and structures as set out in the document of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) which applies in the research studies carried out in the University of Fort Hare. Thus, for this study, ethical clearance was sought successfully from UREC (Appendix 3 – Ethical clearance certificate). These ethical guidelines related to honesty, accountability, and professional courtesy and fairness in all research activities. Issues pertaining to the ethical procedures, which include confidentiality of data, are essential. Of utmost importance is the fact that confidentiality, particularly pertaining to TVET's, will be maintained during the research and in presentation of the findings of this research.

The information that will be extracted from the Twitter page of the TVET Colleges is considered to be in the public domain as it is freely accessible to any participant of Twitter that follows the TVET Colleges' page (Arya & Bhagat, 2017). Therefore, there is no need for informed consent from the students that have posted on these sites. Anonymity and confidentiality of the persons and institutions will be respected regarding the publication and archiving of the overall outcomes derived from this study (Dudovski, 2018).

1.8 Conclusion

South Africans make use of social media to communicate in general. In like manner, TVET Colleges make use of social media, but lack a strategy on how to utilise Twitter effectively and efficiently as a social media communication tool. The study will develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges

in South Africa. Twitter can be used by TVET Colleges to build relationships with students and the community at large. Once Twitter is utilised effectively and efficiently, information can be disseminated to students in a timeous manner, while the students can provide feedback to the colleges, thus improving communication between the respective TVET Colleges and students.



Chapter 2 – Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa

2.1 Introduction

The Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) are responsible for the education system of South Africa. The South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges are part of the DHET education system. The TVET Colleges offer vocational education in senior secondary schools and technical colleges for both private and public institutes such as non-governmental organisations (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

This chapter introduces literature on the topic of TVET Colleges in South Africa. Review of literature related to the topic is essential for this research as it assists the researcher in determining what management of a TVET College entails, and what communication challenges these colleges face with staff, students and other role players.

Section 2.2 reviews literature on Higher Education in South Africa; Section 2.3 offers a discussion of the National Development Plan in South Africa. Section 2.4 reviews Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges. Section 2.5 discusses Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa; Section 2.6 discusses challenges faced by Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa. Section 2.7 concludes with the summary of the chapter.

2.2 Higher Education in South Africa

The education system in South African is divided into three levels of institutions and these are primary, secondary and tertiary (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010). The South African primary education system is divided into foundation phase schools, which include Grades 0-3. Intermediary phase schools include Grades 4-6 (Expatica, 2020). The South African secondary education has a duration of six years; these cover Grades 7 to 12. These are further divided into two phases, the first being lower and the

second being senior secondary school (Macha & Kadakia, 2017). Tertiary education is the next level of education after the level of completion of secondary education (Maddock & Maroun, 2018).

A large number of both private and state managed institutions in South Africa provide tertiary education and training, under the control of the DHET. Higher education denotes tertiary institutions operating in the entire country (Muswaba & Worku, 2012). These consist of TVET Colleges, universities as well as Skills Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) which will be discussed in the next section.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the system that records the credits allocated to each level of learning attainment from various institutions, including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The allocation is done using a prescribed, aligned approach to make sure that both the skills and knowledge that have been learnt at the various institutions are recognised all over South Africa (Western Cape Government, 2018). The NQF objectives are intended to contribute towards the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of South Africa at large (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).

The NQF is made up of 10 levels that are then split into three groups. The first group contains Levels 1 to 4, which is equivalent to high school marks recorded from grade 9 to 12; college diplomas and technical qualifications fall under levels 5 to 7; levels 7 to 10 consists of Advanced National (vocational) certificates, Higher Certificates and university degrees (Allais, 2003). Table 1 below displays the ratings' breakdown of the NQF.

Table 1- Ratings' breakdown of the NQF (Maidment, 2020)

NQF Rating	Qualification
1	Grade 9 - National Technical Certificate Level 1
2	Grade 10 - National Technical Certificate Level 2
3	Grade 11 - National Technical Certificate Level 3

4	Grade 12 - National Senior Certificate and National Technical Certificate Level 4
5	Higher Certificates and Advanced National Technical Certificates
6	National Diploma and Advanced Certificates
7	Bachelor's Degree
8	Honours Degree
9	Master's Degree
10	Doctorate

2.2.1 Qualifications Offered at Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges

The TVET Colleges are higher educational institutions that offer 'post-school' courses, which are occupational or vocational by design (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). Two categories of qualifications are offered by TVET Colleges: National Certificate Vocational (NCV) and Report 191 qualifications, commonly known as the N-programmes. Both these qualifications fall under Level 4 of the NQF (see Table 1 in Section 2.2). National Certificates and National Introductory Certificates are also offered by certain TVET Colleges, these fall under Level 5 of the NQF (Terblanche, 2017).

After the successful completion of Grade 9, a student may begin studying at a TVET College instead of pursuing a matriculation certificate (NSC) in a school which leads to a diploma or degree at a university of technology or a traditional university (Maidment, 2020). After studying at a TVET College, one is equipped with the knowledge and skill to join the work force in a selected field or can enrol for advanced studies within a field at a university of technology. Generally, in South Africa, the assumption has been that TVET will contribute to human capital and economic development (Vally & Motala, 2014). Powell and McGrath (2014) add that the TVET sector will be key to the process of attaining social justice, as it is mainly targeted at increasing employability.

2.2.2 Qualifications Offered at Universities of Technology

In the wake of the political shifts from apartheid to democracy after 1994, reforms in the higher education system have led to the addition of Universities of Technology (UoTs) to the higher education sector in South Africa. These UoT programmes comprise “hands on” educational programmes with a focus on technical innovative problem-solving programmes, as opposed to programmes obtainable at universities. The national diplomas offered by UoTs, fall under Level 6 of the NQF, which differ from Level 7 Bachelor degrees offered at traditional universities. In some cases, one may study an extra year to earn a BTech degree, which also falls under Level 7 of the NQF. Individuals may also pursue postgraduate studies in a selected field of study at UoTs, as well as pursue additional studies at traditional universities, which offer more theoretical degrees (Maidment, 2020).

2.2.3 Qualifications Offered at Universities

South Africa has nearly one million students enrolled at the 26 public universities. These universities are focused more on theoretical learning than UoTs (Archer, 2017). Universities mostly offer undergraduate and postgraduate professional and academic qualifications (Tjønneland, 2017). Universities offer various qualifications which range from NQF Level 6 to Level 10. In addition to providing graduates an opportunity to venture into careers in the academia, university qualifications enable students to venture into a wide variety of professional careers in a more academic capacity as compared to graduates from UoTs (Maidment, 2020).

2.2.4 Sector Education and Training Authority

Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) is an initiative of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS). The SETA enables training for out-of-school youths as well as any person who may require supplementary skills and further training (College Education, 2020). The purpose of SETAs is to ensure that the National Skills Development Strategy is being utilised effectively so as to improve the skills of individuals in their sector. Each SETA is liable for managing and developing internships, learnerships and apprenticeships within its jurisdiction (Skills Education Training Authorities in South Africa, 2020).

The TVET Colleges, UoTs, traditional universities and SETAs have been instituted for training purposes as well as to equip people with skills of several disciplines after successful completion of secondary school. On completion, students eventually join the workers of the nation (Pritchett, 2013). Tertiary learning in South Africa plays an important role in curbing the skills' shortage, particularly in important sectors such as information technology, science, manufacturing and engineering (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).

2.3 National Development Plan in South Africa

The National Development Plan (NDP) was developed with the aim of eliminating poverty as well as reducing inequality by 2030. The NDP was announced in 2011 and is being utilised as a blueprint for resolving South Africa's challenges (Willem, 2018). The NDP was adopted by the Cabinet of South Africa, the executive branch of Government, as a long-term plan and vision for the nation. This plan envisions a South Africa where every individual embraces their full potential, a nation where opportunity is determined by ability, education and hard work. Improvement of education, improved platforms for innovation as well as skills development are some of the objectives which the NDP seeks to improve (South African Government, 2011).

As indicated in the NDP, the Higher Education (HE) sector is expected to perform the following three functions:

- To educate and equip individuals with high level skills, so as to meet the employment needs of both the public and private sectors,
- To yield new knowledge, evaluate and identify different applications for existing knowledge; and
- To provide opportunities for social mobility while firming up equity, social justice and democracy to resolve the injustices conveyed by the apartheid system (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).

The NDP seeks to improve the participation rate in higher education so as to attain more than 30%; furthermore, they want to double the number of scientists, increase the numbers of women and African postgraduates and improve the rate of graduation of FET

Colleges to 75% (South African Government, 2011). The challenge that is likely to be encountered is that although the goals are specified, tertiary educational institutions might not be able to sustain all the needs and anticipations of students (Spaull & Taylor, 2014). As a result, tertiary educational institutions, such as universities and TVET Colleges, might end up enrolling a large number of students that are not ready for tertiary education, yet who are anticipating that they will complete their studies and start postgraduate studies (Chimhowu, Hulme & Munro, 2019). Enrolling students who are not ready for tertiary education is likely to have a negative effect on the quality outcome as the quantity of enrolments does not guarantee good quality outcomes. There is a need to revise the NDP targets (Psacharopoulos, 2017).

Since the implementation of the NDP, the matric pass rate has improved with the class of 2019 achieving a pass rate of 81.3%, up from 78.2% in 2018 (South African Market Insights, 2020). An increase in spending on post-secondary education hopefully leads to an increase in the pass rate of students; however, to date, there are still large needs and a gap: the quantity and quality of graduates are still a challenge in closing the gap of a lack of skilled labour. According to Tewari and Ilesanmi (2020), the graduation rate at South Africa's public universities, among undergraduate students, is 15%.

2.4 Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Colleges

The TVET Colleges became common place around the world in 1999 after the successful UNESCO conference, called the World-wide Conference on Technical and Vocational Education, which was held during that same year (UNESCO, 2004). According to UNESCO and International Labour Organization (ILO), (2005, p. 2), TVET Colleges are viewed as “a wide-ranging term that denotes phases of the informative system, an accumulation of overall education, studying of technology and science related aspects, and accomplishment of applied skills, approaches, accepting information involving residents of different economic sectors and social life aspects”. Technical and vocational education can be described as, a fundamental aspect that requires basic learning, a phase of attaining lifelong learning. The phase aims at preparing individuals to be

responsible citizens to stimulate environmentally friendly sustainable development and facilitate the eradication of poverty (Psacharopoulos, 2017).

Technical and vocational education can be offered by official or non-official educational and training delivery channels through government, non-governmental or private associations (Powell & McGrath, 2014). Globally, technical and vocational education has evolved over the years. Several terms are used interchangeably with TVET, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), apprenticeship training, workforce training and Vocational Education and Training (VET). Some countries opt for technical education as a term, occupational education and industrial arts (Cahalan & Perna, 2015). The term TVET is now internationally recognised, thus it is the term currently implemented in South Africa as well.

Psacharopoulos (2017) asserts that TVET can be regarded as a way out of unemployment for youth and a way of stimulating economic development. Additionally, TVET is likened to the cases of Germany and Japan's industrial revolution which contributed to economic development through endorsing skills of less intellectual students. The TVET was established in order to accommodate those who were not able to go to university; hence it was meant to fill the middle-level skills' gap (Beharry-Ramraj, 2014).

2.5 Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa

Since the early 1990s, South African institutions that provided technical and vocational training were identified as Further Education Training (FET) Colleges. In 2012, DHET gave a mandate to all public and private FET institutions to amend their names to TVET Colleges (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016). The change was established in order for South African institutions to be in accordance with international standards. Kraak and Hall (1999), more than a decade before the change from FET to TVET, once indicated that complexity of FET education was becoming too 'broad and inclusive'.

The TVET Colleges are higher educational institutions which offer 'post-school' courses, which are occupational or vocational by design (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). Students receive education and training to secure practical type jobs or to secure entrepreneurial opportunities. South Africa has 50 registered TVET Colleges which is listed in table 2 (Western Cape Government, 2018). On the 15th of January 2014, DHET launched the "White Paper on Post-School Education and Training", where Blade Nzimande, the then Minister of Higher Education and Training, declared the renaming of all FET Colleges to TVET Colleges (Liebenberg, 2014). Table 2 below displays number of TVET Colleges by Province.

Table 2 - TVET Colleges by Province (TVET Colleges South Africa, 2019)

Province	Number of TVET Colleges
Eastern Cape	8
Free State	4
Gauteng	8
KwaZulu-Natal	9
Limpopo	7
Mpumalanga	3
Northern Cape	2
North West	3
Western Cape	6

2.5.1 Overview of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges

The entry requirements of TVET Colleges' courses range from Levels 1 to 4 of the NQF. Hence, a TVET certificate is bestowed on a student after successful completion of NQF

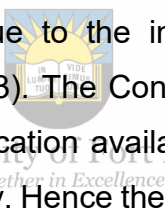
Level 4 (Gewer, 2013). The DHET is responsible for funding deserving students at public TVET Colleges. Through various funding opportunities, for example, The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the DHET has facilities to pay up to 100% of the study costs, whereas students only have to ensure that they do well and complete the courses in the stipulated record time, depending on the qualification. During the 2017 – 2018 financial year, the total funding allocated to tertiary educational institutions, such as public TVET Colleges, reflected an increase of 11% to an amount of R40.5 billion, as compared to what was allocated for the period between 2016 – 2017 financial year (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). The increase in spending in the Education sector was in line with the objectives of the NDP (South African Government, 2011).

Moreover, there is accessibility to full scholarships that are granted to students who apply and meet the academic requirements. South Africa's TVET Colleges offer a range of courses that accommodate industrial requirements such as agriculture, construction and building, commerce, engineering, business, management courses and education (Balwanz, 2019). Moreover, there is a chance of pursuing further education at universities of technology, if one wants to obtain a degree in the same field, such as, engineering (Krishnan, 2018).

There is a notion in South Africa that TVET institutions are likely to contribute towards improving human capital as well as economic development (Vally & Motala, 2014). Additionally, Powell (2014) states that TVET Colleges play a pivotal part in the process of obtaining social justice, as they were established with the aim of increasing employment rates. As a result, South Africans are of the view that skills development is needed in order to ensure socio-economic development (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). The mandate of TVET Colleges is believed to establish middle-level skills, thus leading to economic development (Papier, Powell, McBride & Needham, 2017). The TVET Colleges are also expected to resolve social inequalities that resulted from the apartheid era through providing skills and training for less privileged people and societies (Cloete & Butler-Adam, 2012). Another obligation of TVET Colleges is to offer training courses for

entrepreneurs that are in the informal sector and this is regarded as an opportunity for accessing higher education (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010).

South Africa's DHET set a target to increase enrolments in tertiary educational institutions to 2.5 million by the year 2030. In 2017, enrolment in TVET Colleges reduced by 2.5% as compared to 2016, with enrolment in National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) being one of the identified reasons for the decrease. The NC (V) is obtainable at three levels of the NQF, namely Levels 2, 3 and 4. These are a different vocational learning path to Grades 10, 11 and 12 of the schooling systems (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).

Currently, TVET Colleges are in a swift growth and development phase with more than 700 000 registered students. However, enrolment of 1 238 000 students was set as the target for 2019/2020 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020). Training students who come from poor backgrounds, who can only access poor quality education and are unemployed, may add value to the importance of addressing both social inequalities and poverty (Gewe, 2013).  The Constitution of South Africa (1996) states that the state must make further education available and accessible to South Africans through progressive means is a priority. Hence the constitution is in favour of accessibility and the availability of further education to South African citizens through TVET Colleges and other institutions.

Such TVET Colleges accommodate different students and their personal educational training needs. These vary from students preparing to obtain jobs and self-employment to students that are seeking to obtain a university qualification later (Luneburg, 2011). Institutions also seek to satisfy the needs of students who need vocational qualifications and upskilling or reskilling (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). The TVET Colleges are described as easily accessible because they provide a diverse choice of courses from short to long, which range from one-week training to qualifications that are obtained after a couple of years (Papier, Needham, Prinsloo & McBride, 2016).

A graduate that obtains a National Certificate Level 4 is eligible to further their studies at a university of technology after successfully completing a National Technical Education

Diploma (NATED) programme, including the NC (V) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). The TVET Colleges, therefore, can be best described as mediators that connect mandatory education, tertiary education as well as the work force (Powell & McGrath, 2014). The majority of TVET Colleges have multiple campuses. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2020), 50 TVET Colleges are currently registered in both urban and rural areas of South Africa.

2.5.2 Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges and Technology

Educational institutions in South Africa, such as TVET Colleges, make use of the internet, and specifically social media platforms, for example Twitter and Facebook, as communication tools (Mungofa & Peter, 2015). The social media platforms are used to share information such as details of what the learning institution has to offer to prospective students, lecturers and the local community. Information may include application dates and procedures, registration procedures and courses offered at various TVET Colleges (Dzvpatsva, Mitrovic & Dietrich, 2014).



2.5.2.1 Use of social media in teaching and learning

Education has become an evolving and ever-changing process that shapes itself as technology progresses. Technological changes have had various levels of influence in higher education (Ng'ambi, Brown, Bozalek, Gachago & Wood, 2016). Swart (2015) looked into how technology development manifests itself in classrooms and lecture halls, which the author classified as Social Learning. Social Learning refers to any learning done with social influences, in this case, social media (Swart, 2015, p. 1). Swart (2015) argues that Social Learning is not something recently identified or used in institutions, but a type of learning that has been in use in educational institutions' lecture halls for many years already. The Cape Peninsula University of Technology's Public Relations class was used as an example. The class makes use of the social platform by issuing students a twitter hash-tag that enables them to access information posted by their respective lecturers, to access additional information they might require, as well as providing them with the ability and opportunity to start a conversation that can help the group to clarify topics (Mungofa & Peter, 2015).

The study of Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic and Dietrich (2014) investigated the utilisation of: (1) a portal for validating the quality of evaluations by lecturers and (2) social media to improve interaction with FET college students so as to increase academic performance of students. Data, collected from 38 students and seven lecturers, showed an increase of 35% in the academic performance of students. Improvement came as a result of the introduction of social media as a knowledge portal, which indicated the advantages of enhancing learning through the use of electronic media such as social media (Anderson, 2019). The study offered FET lecturers further methodologies for learning and teaching that can be utilised to set up quality assessments via knowledge portals, and for students and social media to improve contact learning time (Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic & Dietrich, 2014).

2.5.2.2 Use of social media in communication

For rural colleges such as West Coast TVET College, which serves a large geographical area from Atlantis located in the south to the Northern Cape, there is a need to consider and select suitable means of communication wisely. As opposed to urban areas, West Coast College offers its services to a very different market. Given the rural setup, students' access to network devices and smart devices is limited, which is a challenge that the college needs to take into consideration (Swart, 2015). It was also concluded that in higher learning institutions, the utilisation of social media has enabled and encouraged student interaction; this usage has also enabled them to share information with other students as well as create content as individuals. Social media does not face geographical location barriers when sharing information, thus students are able to access educational resources (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2018). Social media helps as potential learning happens outside the lecture halls or independently of the students' location. Results found that the use of social media, from which students benefit and enjoy using has a positive effect on their performance and development (Mungofa & Peter, 2015).

2.5.2.3 General use of social media by students

A study by Shava, Chinyamurindi and Somdya (2016) sought to explain how features of mobile phones, together with the motivation behind the utilisation and duration spent on mobile devices such as mobile phones, have an influence on behavioural intent to utilise

mobiles in a selected sample of TVET College students in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

The study found that usage of mobile phones for leisure purposes was more popular as compared with the use of the mobile devices in work or study related causes. The study also found that the usage of mobile devices for outside communication purposes can add value in higher learning institutions such as TVET Colleges in South Africa.

Thus, a relevant framework should be adopted by the TVET College sector authorities, so as to incorporate the use of various communication application software, such as Twitter, WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook and LinkedIn. These applications are easily accessible via mobile phones such as smart phones which can link to the platforms of the TVET College system. These various software products may be of great use in guiding and supporting students (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2018).

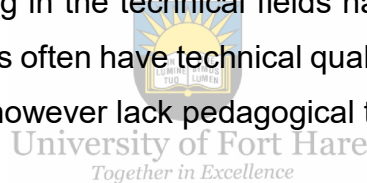
2.6 Challenges Faced by South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges

The TVET Colleges in South Africa are faced with numerous challenges. The challenges affecting TVET Colleges can be grouped into three categories: The first group is considered as 'Partnerships', which refers to the fact that there is no effective partnership between the colleges, communities and industry, respectively. The second group is known as 'Pathways', a term used to specify that there is no easy path for graduates looking for jobs or further education, as they frequently encounter challenges when moving from the college phase to employment. The last group is called 'Positive learning experience', which governs the eventual view of TVET Colleges as a last resort. The use of social media as a communication channel may mitigate the challenges faced by TVET Colleges (Human Resource Development Council for South Africa, 2014). Challenges confronted by South African TVET Colleges discussed in the following section include the provision of quality staff; the lack of strategy and administration issues; harsh governance reforms adopted by TVET Colleges; inadequate infrastructure for people with disabilities; low status of TVET Colleges resulting in a lack of employment; poor quality of education; lack of work-based training, mostly accessed by students from poor backgrounds;

outdated curriculums, gender stereotypes and the lack of an effective communication strategy (Human Resource Development Council for South Africa, 2014; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017; Visser, Van Biljon & Herselman, 2017).

2.6.1 Provision of Quality Staff

The first notable challenge is the lack of provision of quality staff, both administrative and academic. This challenge is mainly noticed in rural areas of South Africa, where some TVET Colleges are faced with difficulties of attracting and retaining quality staff (Van Wyk, 2009). A high turnover rate of lecturers, underqualified and unqualified lecturers as well as beginner lecturers are the usual cases in South African TVET Colleges. The TVET Colleges in the rural districts face another challenge of attracting and recruiting qualified lecturers to fill their vacancies. As a result, some of the lecturers in TVET Colleges do not have professional qualifications (Maarman & Lamont-Mbawuli, 2017). It is also important to note that lecturers teaching in the technical fields have been recruited from industry. These TVET College lecturers often have technical qualifications together with workplace experience and knowledge, however lack pedagogical training (Allais, 2003).



2.6.2 Lack of Strategy and Administration Issues

The second challenge faced by TVET Colleges is the lack of suitable leadership and management skills amongst college management. This can be connected to the lack of planning and focus at various institutions. Centralisation of all-important management and administrative roles is an example of administration issues (Psacharopoulos, 2017). This type of challenge triggered strained relationships between Central Office Managers and campuses, mainly because of the top-down management approach, which seemed to undermine the authority of Campus Heads (Van Wyk, 2009). This also led to poor communication regarding new policies and procedures on the part of Central Office, resulting in mix-ups and lack of responsiveness from the Campus Heads (McGrath, et al., 2019). A strategy on sustainable expansion of TVET Colleges should be founded on a realistic evaluation of current capacity and an analysis of the forms of provision that are likely to assist students (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012).

2.6.3 Harsh Governance Reforms Adopted by TVET Colleges

The TVET College instructors, leaders and committee chairpersons found that the governance reforms adopted in TVET Colleges lacked consultation of stakeholders and resulted in 'alienation, disillusionment and disempowerment' among staff members (Wedekind, 2010). Cremin and Nakabugo (2012) gave a detailed explanation of how these mergers brought about the disturbance of the work identities of instructors. Against the setting of such discoveries, one may infer that the staff working at these colleges were and are probably not going to be successful in delivering quality services, considering the difficulties with which they are faced, which go on to affect the quality of education (Psacharopoulos, 2017).

2.6.4 Inadequate Infrastructure for People with Disabilities

There is no national policy on disability as a guidance for education and training institutions in tertiary education institutions, despite efforts to incorporate disability into the broader policy field (Hanass-Hancock, Nene, Deghaye & Pillay, 2017). Individual institutions have distinctive methods in which to incorporate disability, and resourcing is distributed within each education and training institution based on their programmes. Commitment levels toward individuals with disability differ significantly among various institutions, as do the resources distributed to resolving disability issues (McGrath, et al., 2019). The TVET Colleges in particular lack the required resources to provide for students and staff with disabilities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). Special consideration should be given to the challenges faced by women with disabilities, students from poor families with disabilities and the throughput rates of disabled students. Policies should also cater for students with disabilities, as they need special consideration for training and work-based prospects, both during and after completion of their respective programmes (Hanass-Hancock, Nene, Deghaye & Pillay, 2017).

2.6.5 Low Status of TVET Colleges Result in a Lack of Employment

Another significant challenge is the low status of TVET Colleges which, as indicated by Maarman and Lamont-Mbawuli (2017), frequently impedes graduates trying to acquire jobs. Some graduates end up being unemployed, more specifically those from rural colleges which were regarded as under resourced, and those with whom the quality of

education might not have been comparable with former whites-only institutions (Powell & McGrath, 2014). In relation to the low status of TVT Colleges, TVET Colleges have been described as the 'weakest' in the South African educational system, which has exacerbated the negative perception of them (Human Resource Development Council for South Africa, 2014). The stigma associated with the TVET Colleges also stems from the fact that white collar jobs are valued more than blue collar jobs in the country. For TVET Colleges to be effective, they need to overcome these socio-cultural legacies. Some TVET Colleges have insufficient resources to effectively provide their services of educating students; they do not have the funds to purchase items such as machinery and computers, particularly for engineering students (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018).

2.6.6 Poor Education Quality

The Green Paper and The White Paper highlight the poor educational quality which best describes many of the TVET College institutions (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012). To add on, the White Paper states that most of the TVET Colleges were failing on both student and institutional outputs, despite the South African government having invested R2,5 billion into the recapitalisation of TVET institutions (Expatica, 2020). Regardless of various changes aimed at improving quality and efficiency, some TVET Colleges are still associated with underperformance (Kraak, Paterson & Boka , 2016). Poor educational quality has a negative influence on the overall pass rate of higher learning institutions, hence under-performing TVET Colleges may lose the merit-based funding they could have received from DHET, because of their current poor pass rates (Nkosi, 2019).

Another fascinating remark is the desire to see developments in the TVET Colleges on the issues specific to engineering students: how to acquire the job one wants; business-orientation skills; negotiation skills; motivation; and confidence restoration (Hart, 2018). South Africa is faced with a significant challenge in terms of acquiring skilled staff in TVET Colleges. General quality development and progression of the TVET Colleges sector is dependent on its human resources in the form of academic staff (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). The TVET College sector should sustain sufficient levels

of academic staff, build capacity, develop upcoming groups of academics and extensively improve equity (McGrath, et al., 2019).

As indicated earlier, Social Learning can be utilised as potential learning happens outside the classroom and is not limited to the location of students because they can access educational resources. Social Learning is characterised by role modelling and imitation. Therefore, if engineers, for instance, can role model senior experienced engineers through apprenticeship where they build their skills layer by layer, this can assist in improving the quality of education. Furthermore, students will have access to study material regardless of their geographical location and can revise material, rehearse and repeat activities until they fully understand them (Swart, 2015).

2.6.7 Lack of Work-Based Training

It is important for learners to gain practical experience of theoretical knowledge acquired and learnerships or workplace-based training, with exceptional training prospects in some places are vitally important (Beharry-Ramraj, 2014). A small number of employers are willing to offer apprenticeships and provide students with prospects of work experience. South African students have also missed the opportunities for beneficial training on major infrastructural programmes like the Gautrain- and World Cup project opportunities. Policies to promote learnerships or workplace-based training have been insufficient (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012). The Department of Labour, the Department of Education, and the Sector and Education Training Authorities (SETA) as well as employers are responsible for creating increased opportunities of work-based training, where each body should have their own established set of rules and regulations in this regard (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Updating and improving industry knowledge through the provision of suitable industry exposure opportunities for lecturers from TVET Colleges is essential so that they can cascade this knowledge to their students (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

2.6.8 Students from Poor Backgrounds

An average of 90% of students registered in various South African TVET Colleges are Black Africans, who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, with little to no resources to provide for educational needs such as books and study materials (Department of Higher

Education and Training, 2017). Yet, access and participation in post-secondary education ought not to be influenced by factors such as parental income, ethnicity or gender (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Due to the huge economic burden of sending a child to post-secondary institutions, such as universities, for instance, families prefer to send their children to institutions, such as TVET Colleges, since the courses are shorter and the fees more affordable. The authors (Cahalan & Perna, 2015) state that sending a child to universities in the United States can require parents to save up to 84% of their family's annual income. In African countries, such as Malawi, Tanzania and Rwanda, 90% of students attending institutions of higher education came from the richest households (Mountford-Zimdars & Harrison, 2016). In most cases, students from poor backgrounds tend to register at colleges for two-year programmes, for shorter courses or as part-time students. This has led to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds opting mainly for enrolment at TVET Colleges. Students from rural TVET Colleges have limited access to computers and internet connections which is a challenge when it comes to the communication and the exchange of information (Swart, 2015).



2.6.9 Outdated Curricula

Another challenge faced by TVET institutions in South Africa is that of out-of-date curricula. Lecturers and employers, therefore, were advocating a syllabus that aligns with the needs of industry so as to improve the employability of graduates (Hart, 2018). In higher educational institutions, the responsibility of curricula falls on individual institutions. However, a certain level of centralisation of curricula is required, as not all learning enables one to achieve a national qualification (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). Papier et al. (2016) indicate the need for partnerships between TVET Colleges, workplaces, government and other social partners in curriculum development so as to improve the quality of training in the country. To achieve the goal of increasing the provision of skills and development through the utilisation of TVET Colleges, it was decided that SETAs need to work hand in hand with TVET Colleges, together with the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) on applicable sector curriculum, with the aim of incorporating theoretical and workplace learning (Froneman, 2003).

2.6.10 Gender Stereotype

General biased gender norms and roles are in the curriculum which have the capability of reducing students' self-esteem and negatively influencing aspirations and the commitment from students (Cornwall, 2016). Subsequently, for gender equality to be promoted through education, educational program and textbook reform is mandatory, since evidently gender bias continues to be prevalent in textbooks around the world (Unesco, 2015). Former whites-only institutions, which now have registered black students, have reported black students as being victims of racism. It has also been reported that female students have also been victims of patriarchal practices as well as sexual harassment (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

2.6.11 Lack of an Effective Communication Strategy

The lack of a communication strategy is a challenge for most TVET Colleges, as most do not have a suitable strategy for the sharing of vital information as well as for conducting academic activities outside the classroom. The TVET Colleges make use of social media, but lack a strategy on how to make use of Twitter effectively and efficiently as a social media communication tool (Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic & Dietrich, 2014). For TVET Colleges to operate effectively and efficiently, TVET Colleges should operate with up-to-date, easily accessible and affordable communication platforms to conduct and communicate their management and academic functions. Vital information relating to qualifications, student registration and assessments, any administration activities and employer demand for programmes obtainable at TVET Colleges have to be effortlessly communicated, be readily available and shared (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). Given the current focus on e-learning, the use of social media should be promoted so as to improve the academic performance of students enrolled at TVET Colleges (Visser, Van Biljon & Herselman, 2017). In developed countries such as the United States of America, higher educational institutions utilise social media as a platform for enrolling students (Maarman & Lamont-Mbawuli, 2017). Other higher educational institutions utilise social media to improve active and informal learning by exploring the teaching methodology of Twitter as a lively, informal, out of class learning methodology (Gewer, 2013).

To improve academic efficiency, both students and lecturers are utilising social media as a knowledge portal for assessments. Social media and knowledge portals have been identified as being crucial in sharing knowledge between lecturers and students (Visser, Van Biljon & Herselman, 2017). The utilisation of electronic platforms such as social media has been criticised however by different researchers, with regards to the use of social media as a tool to share knowledge among TVET College students (Hamid, Chang & Kurnia, 2009; Sarachan & Reinson, 2011). A group of lectures from TVET Colleges in South Africa, pointed out that most students from departments outside of the IT departments, had opposed the notion of utilising social media electronic platforms as a tool to share or distribute academic information between students and lecturers (Visser, Van Biljon & Herselman, 2017). The group of lecturers went on to claim that the use of electronic platforms such as Twitter in academic activities was disruptive and destructive. However, other researchers established the opposite to be true, as they claimed that, if well administered, the use of Twitter in academic performance can yield positive results (Kabilan, Ahmad & Jafre, 2010; Greenhow & Gleason, 2012).



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2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some of the major writings with regards to the research study that seeks to establish a framework to improve social media as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa by assessing a case of Twitter. Some of the issues discussed include defining TVET, TVET Colleges in South Africa, Higher Education in South Africa and an Overview of TVET Colleges in South Africa before going on to conclude the chapter by discussing the various challenges faced by TVET Colleges in South Africa, such as, the provision of quality staff, the lack of a strategy and administration issues, poor education quality, students from poor backgrounds and the lack of an effective communication strategy. Some of the challenges outlined, such as poor education quality and students from poor backgrounds, are challenges associated with a lack of an effective communication strategy. This research study therefore hopes to demonstrate that these challenges can be addressed by the utilisation of social media.

Chapter 3 – The use of Social Media in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa

3.1 Introduction

Social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 59). Social media can be described as a set of Internet or web-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations that allow the creation and exchange of information created by various individuals and organisations. Access to portable devices with internet connectivity has increased over the years. This is mainly because of increased accessibility through the provision of various mobile networks’ connectivity. The use of mobile devices has seen a number of users making use of various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, as a means of communication to connect, share, expose themselves, engage and offer feedback.

This chapter is structured in a way that incorporates various aspects related to this research study. Section 3.2 starts off with a discussion of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model; Section 3.3 discusses the concept of social media; Section 3.4 discusses the use of social media in learning and Section 3.5 gives an overview of the use of social media in TVET Colleges. Section 3.6 sums up the chapter by giving a conclusion to the chapter.

3.2 Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model

Social media integration involves software being “used to handle social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram under a single platform and allows a user to post the same post to a set of selected social media accounts” (Ngai, Moon, Lam, Chin & Tao, 2015, p. 769). The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model was used in a study by Garcia to investigate how interactive social media pages such as Twitter, Facebook and

YouTube have transformed the communication paradigm. The findings were that the social media phenomena profoundly influenced various consumers. The study established that 67% of the consumers were likely to purchase from brands they had monitored or followed on Twitter, and 51% were more likely to purchase from a brand they had followed on Facebook (Garcia, 2011).

Ahmed (2016) conducted a study in Pakistan to investigate the adequacy of social media implementation in secondary education in Pakistan; it examined the perceptions that teachers have regarding the integration of social media tools in secondary education. The findings were that teachers believed that it was essential to spread awareness among parents and school management concerning social media's implementation and the benefits in the classrooms. A majority of the teachers were in favour of introducing social media forums in their classrooms, and some of them were already integrating it. Some stated the benefit of teachers communicating with their students without having to supply their personal phone numbers (Chadband, 2015). One of the findings was that almost every teacher who participated in the study had, to a certain extent, already integrated social media in their classroom settings. This had, reportedly, helped them to conduct their teaching more effectively (Ahmed, 2016).

Caramela (2018), states in a study on marketing practices and the significance of social media integration how important it is to promote products and services. The study showed that the use of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model to promote products and services had led to the products and services being more frequently purchased, used, shared and explored. The findings of the study were that it is vital to cater for every consumer's preference as these vary per person. If an institution does not have specific platforms or the policies are not implemented and policed, the institution's authority and reputation may be viewed poorly (Paquette, 2013). Figure 2 below, is an illustration of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model.

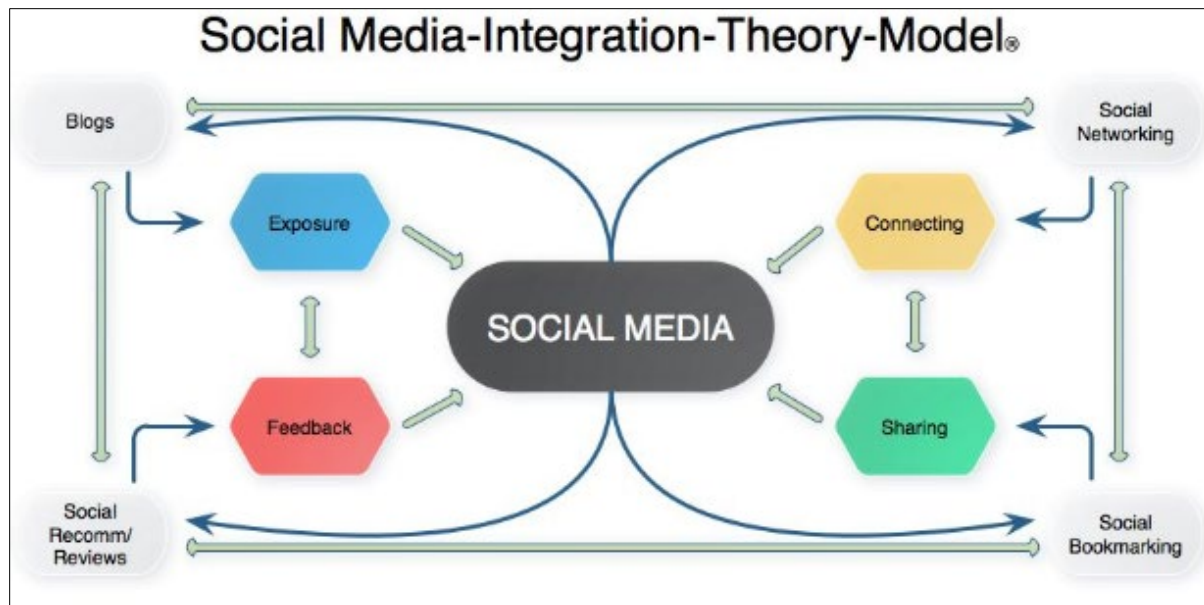


Figure 2. Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model (Garcia, 2011)

Garcia (2011) states that this model is a total engagement method, which was developed through interactive procedures that permit information exchange on a similar level between the consumer (student) and the brand (TVET College). Similar level information is enabled for consumers and brands, meaning that they can communicate together while making use of the same platform such as Twitter. The model has four functions of social media, namely, feedback, exposure, sharing and connecting. These four functions of the model will be discussed in detail in the following section.

3.2.1 Exposure

Social media platforms introduced changes from the traditional methods of communicating. Social media has transformed traditional communication to real-time exposure, feedback, engagement (connecting) and exchange of information (Garcia, 2011). Social media is a platform which enables TVET Colleges, local communities and students to market and share products and services on offer. A TVET College can make use of Twitter to advertise the next enrolment dates for prospective students. The TVET College can also advertise vacancies on its Twitter page to recruit new staff members. The exposure of the social media platforms provides consumers with a way of posting or

tweeting about different products, services, brands or information that promote the college (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

3.2.2 Feedback

Social media integration is viewed as an interactive process which allows the same level of information exchange between the TVET College and students. This creates long-term feedback communication procedures which provide an overall engagement approach between TVET Colleges and students (Garcia, 2011). A TVET College can post a tweet or poll on its Twitter page to get feedback from stakeholders, such as students, on the services the institute offers and in this way, the TVET College can make an informed decision based on the feedback. Social bookmarking on social media makes way for consumers to create reviews, make recommendations on a product or service and give valuable feedback. Feedback promotes interaction amongst users (Lau, 2017).

3.2.3 Connecting

The linking role of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model refers to connecting students and TVET Colleges with shared interests. An example will be to link prospective TVET College students to the TVET College through Twitter and the respective Twitter pages. Relation through social media eliminates the geographical location gaps that occur in conventional modes of communication (Tess, 2013). Connections are generated for users with common preferences by connecting or shifting from the conventional one. Previously, the conventional means of communication had restricted the timely relation of students and TVET Colleges to individuals with common interests (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016)

3.2.4 Sharing

Garcia (2011) suggests that social bookmarking sites can place information on the web with the capability to share with various social media platforms. There is a provocation engagement from individuals within similar groups, which then spreads into the social networking system. A student or TVET College can share a topic that interests him or her with peers on their Twitter page. Using the example of a TVET College sharing changes in policy introduced by the DHET, this information can be shared with other TVET

Colleges and students so that they can be informed about the changes (Leung, Bai & Stahura, 2015). In public universities in Canada, researchers have found that Twitter is used for instructional and learning purposes, to raise funds, communicate with sporting fans and to coordinate recruitment and admissions activities. Further uses of Twitter included supporting learner's adjustment to higher education as well as the marketing of the university and courses (Kimmons, Veletsianos & Woodward, 2017)

3.3 The Concept of Social Media

Social media is an aspect of technology that, through the Internet, permits interactions on different platforms (Jensen, 2015). Social media is also about sharing various types of content on an online domain. The content can, for instance, be recordings, photographs, news, conclusions and documents (Jorge, 2019). Additionally, there are also various online platforms which fall under social media: there are, for instance, social networks, online networks, digital broadcasts, video blogs, blogs, podcasts, wikis and sites for open bookmarking (Langmia, 2016). Social media can make content become democratised, since individuals can share and interface around shared content (Carpenter & Lertpratchya, 2016). It also opens up opportunities for organisations to have a balanced association with their clients. Subsequently, social media is a two-way communication, since it permits interactions from two sides. The phenomenon of social media and its two-way communication began from the advancement of Web 2.0, which developed from Web 1.0 (Jensen, 2015).

In previous years, studies have indicated the utilisation of teleconferencing as a social communication technique for proficient development. Across the globe, use of technological resources has increased and so has the literature that has been conducted on social media studies, yet most people have not yet fully grasped the concept of using it (Bucher, 2015). The use of social networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest, has managed to create a common system that caters for users who share the same interests. As interests have changed, clients have changed systems, extended systems, or left systems completely. Internet-based life, which started as an approach to interface, has formed into many network-based communication devices (Madianou, 2015).

Within the societies, mini groups appeared where individuals shared normal interests or teamed up on imaginative projects. The term 'network' no longer means face-to-face connection between individuals with a similar profession or job. Networks have become a fluid series of connections linking people who may not have professional commonalities, but have a need to share information (Baym, 2015). Conti and Passarella, (2017), argued that social and expert systems could merge through the utilisation of social media. Moreover, social media and the impact of innovation on everyday life for experts have changed the manner in which teachers grow with regards to their expertise (Arnaboldi, Passarella, Conti & Dunbar, 2015). Respondents in the investigation were familiarised fully with the use of social media networks and had created shaped systems with friends. The motivations behind the study also revealed that instructors also engaged in online group discussions. Remarkably, the investigation incorporated a structure for every teacher showing levels of impact that social media had on professional development (Conti & Passarella, 2017).

Murthy (2018), established that the utilisation of social media ought to be seen first as a social procedure, and then later viewed as a technological process. The suggestion was that technology was not the significant viewpoint, but the social or human sociological procedure through the utilisation of a technological procedure, for example, messaging, was progressively more significant. The value of innovation based on professional development would lie in the result, not the technological procedure. In essence, the mutual social experience was highlighted. Inside the setting of a social procedure, social media has a spot in the advancement of the professionalism structure (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). The studies additionally demonstrated approaches toward responding to internet systems which could be useful when respondents were regarded as strangers (Murthy, 2018).

Yang and Clark (2015) conducted an investigation on appreciating online social networks of 2015. The reason for the investigation was that appreciation affected correspondence or another helping conduct. In particular, the researchers hypothesised that individuals who are the recipient of kindness are more inclined to help others in the future (Yang & Clark, 2015). Within the domain of professional development, a sentiment of appreciation

could lead to commitment and preparation of learning the two significant standards of andragogy (Odom, Jarvis, Sandlin & Peek, 2013). An admonition to the gratitude hypothesis develops with further investigation of the conclusions of the study; this reprimand was in relation to a respondent's place within the network, either implanted or on the periphery of affected eagerness to help. Therefore, there is need to introduce some common thread before a social network could be used for professional development (Yang & Clark, 2015).

3.4 The Use of Social Media in Learning

The use of social media has evolved over the years with contributing factors such as growth of affordability on mobile computing devices, better quality of internet wireless, technologies of social media and the numerous web designs that become an essential aspect of people's day to day lives (Matzat & Vrieling, 2015). The establishment of social media learning has proved to be an essential requirement in most colleges. In our contemporary day, college students are being exposed to prevailing, fresh and evolving technologies that impact many aspects of their lives (Junco, Heiberger & Loken, 2011). In order to access various social media platforms on the internet, students make use of gadgets such as tablets, cell phones/ mobile devices, e-readers, desktop computers as well as laptops. This assists students to take part effectively in online learning, social networking, sharing of content, texting messages, blogging and considerably more (Sahrom, 2017).

Online networking involves individuals utilising the electronic and versatile applications for social communication. Furthermore, people and associations can create new content and also share educational content on the internet. Various interfaces utilised for social media have expanded with Facebook, My Space, WhatsApp and Twitter being among the top (Breunig, 2016). The social media devices and media sites empower students to associate with each other, express and offer their innovativeness. There are disadvantages related to social media technology, particularly when students build up on constant use of the internet, which involves lessening of higher-order reasoning processes (Ndyalivana & Kwinana, 2018). Additionally, constant use of the internet may

expose students to intelligent, redundant, and addictive upgrades that produce perpetual changes in brain structure (Gil de Zuniga, Diehl, Huber & Liu, 2017).

Clokie and Fourie (2016) discovered in a study that students with enhanced research skills, communication and technology, were able to assist their association with application ideas and also expand their involvement in course material, which are essential in their development, through using social networking. This means social media technologies have positive impacts on a student's life experience, knowledge base and skills which will be beneficial for a long time. Use of social media in colleges would suggest that students need to take the lead by taking an interest and delivering information, rather than expending just that which contributes towards the sustenance of an individual's progression (Alshabeb & Almaqrn, 2018). It is also important to note that students do not just take part in social interactions on social media, but interact with their peers and lecturers which is the start of their professional development (Van den Beemt, Thurlings & Willems, 2019).



3.4.1 Social Media and Student Recruitment

Worldwide colleges have grasped the use of social media to recruit prospective students because of greater competition, accessibility and non-existent geographical barriers (Chen & DiVall, 2018). Social Media technology platforms enable schools and colleges to adjust to changes that allow them to meet their recruitment targets which involve a large target of potential students across the world (Manzira & Tsvara, 2015). The utilisation of sites by the educational institutions limits communication costs over geographic spaces and, moreover, disintermediation will lessen the interaction channel since students can associate and link directly (Balasubramanian, Vishnu & Sidharth, 2016). It ought to be noticed that social networking discussions are casual, which requires high cooperation from the parties included. Such discussions empower profound commitment from prospective students proposing to enrol at a given college (Bamokarh, 2017). In South Africa, a research study conducted concluded that South African educational institutions still utilise some of the traditional methods of recruiting such as school visits and exhibitions; however, they are not far behind their international

counterparts. It was also found that the use of Twitter for student recruitment was substantially lower in South Africa than elsewhere (Koch, Gerber & De Klerk, 2018).

3.4.2 Disruptiveness of Technologies in Higher Education

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have fundamentally put resources into electronic learning technologies, for example, Blackboard and Moodle, yet they have not been embraced and utilised all round by students and staff (Flavin, 2013). Rather, different technologies, for example, social media or social networking technologies, which are not possessed or constrained by the schools, are generally used to help learning and teaching (Pacheco, Lips & Yoong, 2018). Problematic technologies are those that disturb customary practices regularly, beginning with a few users, however developing after some time to the degree that they dislodge a formerly prevailing, incumbent technology (Jordan & Duckett, 2018). The theory of disruptive innovation has significant explanatory power in thinking through the challenges and changes confronting higher education. New technology can disturb existing practices which may risk dismissal, yet additionally the new technology can proceed to change the training itself. The theory of disruptive innovation highlights that the unruly technologies are not structured expressly to help learning and teaching in advanced education, yet have instructive potential (Yadav, 2019).

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are examples of a successful story in tertiary education as compared to other social networks. This is due mainly to the fact that they are simple to utilise and are esteemed as lightweight technologies (Pacheco, Lips & Yoong, 2018). In that capacity, teachers' interests have increased both in use and research of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. In any case, Facebook, Twitter and other online applications can at the same time seize and section a person's responsiveness (Suhonen & Paliktzoglou, 2014). They have the likelihood of subverting higher-request thinking exercises that incorporate the sort of centre, concentration and diligence that is essential for basic reasoning and scholarly development (McCarthy, 2015).

In South Africa, the open distance learning (ODL) multi-dimensional system enables prospective and/or current University of South Africa (Unisa) students to overcome the

barriers of time, geographic positioning and the transactional divide between the institution and its stakeholders, particularly the students (Mbatha, 2015). However, disruptive learning innovations, such as social networks, often still include information that might not be strictly relevant to users. For example, some lecturers and students on Facebook and Twitter provide continuous status updates about their families, holidays, weekend activities and other interesting, but often meaningless, information; sometimes the personal information has nothing to do with teaching and learning (Balakrishnan, 2014). The ODL system uses different kinds of technologies and continues to play a pivotal role in helping academics to facilitate teaching and learning. Many Unisa academics use these tools to improve collaboration with their students and colleagues (Mbatha, 2015).

3.4.3 Importance of Technologies in Higher Education

Social media is one of the most popular and essential communication networks used by individuals and groups. Social media is regarded as one of the game-changers in the realm of learning and instruction (Seedat, Roodt & Mwapwele, 2019). Selwyn (2012) discussed the implications of social media for new types of learners, learning and higher education provision. Social life, through aspects of borrowed internet learning, is by all means happening progressively outside the formal advanced education framework, rather than the inner frameworks (Gurcan, 2015). This is as a result of a few stages being utilised to convey learning content and courseware, and a rundown among them incorporates YouTube and EDU. Applications utilised by students are not standardised around the globe, despite the fact that there is a rundown of well-known interfaces generally accessed (Selwyn, 2012).

Suhonen and Paliktzoglou (2014), inquired about discoveries which prove that utilising Facebook or Twitter can expand students' commitment through correspondence and coordinated effort, which make it a significant instructive device useful to Problem Based Learning (PBL). Past research shows that consolidation of online networking in learning and educating has the ability to bring better approaches for enquiry, correspondence, cooperation, information advancement; also, it can have negative or positive intellectual, social and emotional effects (Pimmer, Linxen & Grohbiel, 2012). In South Africa, more

recent research has shown how social media assists students to improve their academic studies. It allows collaboration and sharing of information between people; it affords students the opportunity of knowing what is happening in the world and provides them with access to media, such as videos and pictures, in support of such information (Seedat, Roodt & Mwapwele, 2019).

The use of social media networks in the educational process could help educators to apply the inquiry-based approach and encourage the collaboration between the instructor and the students, thereby encouraging engagement (Seedat, Roodt & Mwapwele, 2019). Also important is the potential of these technologies for encouraging independent self-directed learning as well as encouraging students to be active producers of knowledge, which once again is commonly regarded as a positive affordance for media (Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017). Research aimed at surveying the impact of social media for learning in the Eastern Cape Province's Universities, South Africa, was conducted. Amongst the conclusions, it was recommended that university authorities should encourage and provide easy knowledge acquisition skills, dispositions, and social learning practices needed in higher education and learning (Bamigboye & Olusesan, 2017).



3.5 The Use of Social Media in TVET Colleges

This section looks at the contention that there are points of interest and drawbacks to the use of internet and social networks in educational institutions. The advantages of social media usage in educational institutions exceed the disadvantages in light of the fact that in the present training, the social media innovation keeps on saturating educational programs and educational plan at regularly expanding rates (Bliss, 2015). Some portion of the duty of teachers, lecturers, tutors, instructors and mentors is to prepare their students. For this cause, regarding the expanding quality of social networking in the present society, it ought to assist students with the knowledge and understanding of the use of social media in a befitting way (Langmia, 2016). In order to improve the chances of success, educational institutions such as higher learning institutions need to create and implement policies. The policies will ensure the effective utilisation of social media platforms in teaching and practice, inside the numerous rules and strategies surfacing in educational associations (Hart, 2018).

Carpenter and Lertpratchya (2016) view social media as online administrations that permit people to build an open or semi-open profile inside a limited framework and articulate a rundown of different clients with whom they share an association or views. Social networking destinations, as opposed to sites devoted to networks of intrigue, are essentially composed around individuals (Bucher, 2015). Utilising versatile web-based social networking applications, for example, Facebook, Twitter and online journals, improves the potential outcomes of correspondence between and among users of different social media platforms (Fox & Thiessen, 2019).

Utilisation of innovation has encouraged communication in educational- and various customary up-close and personal communications. Social media offers students, teachers and lecturers an opportunity to create connections among themselves (Legaree, 2015). This enables and empowers students, teachers and lecturers to share appropriate points of view of each other and of the program, which in any case would not have been conceivable using traditional face-to-face method only (Solomou & Xeni, 2017). Hart (2018) asserts that organising with others using social media platforms is amplified when time and physical space restrictions are lifted. Utilising social media platforms such as Twitter may help to expel a portion of the boundaries to communication among students that are increasingly held in the traditional contact learning (Mohammadi, Thelwall, Kwasny & Holmes, 2018).

Additionally, the utilisation of social networks by the in-administration student teachers will enable them to construct a network which is a significant component of the educators' training. Educators inside a similar system can share data relating to their skills, strategies and their experiences in the classroom (Solomou & Xeni, 2017). Systems administration through the social media platform gives a stage from which networks of training can be created among the participants. Individuals from this network will assist the instructors with achieving their ideal objectives. Another quality of social media platforms that makes them essential to educators' training exercises is their inborn nature as a casual domain (Bliss, 2015). The effect of casual learning (for example, the discovery that happens outside the proper classroom settings) should not be belittled in moulding socialisation

forms among various professions, for example, teachers or student educators (Sahrom, 2017).

The rate at which school educators are utilising social media to help instruction and learning exercises is expanding. For instance, some teachers are urging students to utilise blogging stages like Word-Press, to create e-portfolios which have become a significant credible evaluation tool in advanced education (Tartari, 2015). Others urge students to make use of Twitter to intensify student commitment in the utilisation of Twitter to connect with students in a collaborative manner that helps the creation, altering and management of content online (Prestridge, 2014). These initiatives by instructors and students in the utilisation of social media as tools for educating and learning are promoting a new comprehension of learning programs. Such comprehension also prompts the rise of subjects, for example, through personalisation, coordinated effort, long range informal communication, social presence and nearness, user-created content (Zgheib & Dabbagh, 2013).



Bucher (2015) concluded that advanced education is being tested by observations that social media networks are enabling students to assume responsibility for their own learning. This led some people to believe that there is no referee of their insights, work, productivity, or thinking. Other scholars postulated that online networking advancements are proposing an instructive change to researchers and educators; they suggest that the network is the educational program instead of the way to comprehension or getting to the educational plan. They argue that advanced educational establishments ought to coordinate social media platforms which enhance the making of personalised and social learning spaces to help more student focused customised training frameworks (Selwyn, 2012; Zgheib & Dabbagh, 2013).

The educational use of social media platforms in South Africa has been constrained to blogging and other class assets. Social media in South Africa is viewed as a useful tool for collaboration and sharing knowledge between users. However, it must be tailored for specific audience needs (Budree, Fietkiewicz & Lins, 2019). Generally, as a result of individual preferences much of the time, the utilisation of social media platforms is to distribute material that was not introduced in class, or to get materials sent by students

which are not related to that which was learnt in class. These kinds of activities are not creative, despite the fact that they contribute to the transmission of information (Lau, 2017). The next section discusses some of the uses of Twitter in Teaching and Practice.

3.5.1 Uses of Twitter in Teaching and Practice

Below are some of the possible uses of Twitter in Teaching and Practice.

3.5.1.1 Using Twitter to send subject-related materials

Sending subject-related materials refers mainly to teacher or lecturer correspondence. For instance, in a study by Legaree (2015), the teacher utilised Twitter and started a thread on the educational plan of ultrasound ideas and updated the matter for consideration to Twitter each morning, with a fixation on a new subject every month. Followers got tweets pushed directly to their mobile devices. Over 80% of students evaluated the material shared and found the data helpful. The educators in the Lowe and Laffey (2011) study, shared that Twitter was utilised to scatter additional data identified with contemporary advertising and marketing issues, to alert students to on-going marketing events, or to send examples of key ideas examined in class. Students were requested to follow the tweets from the course. Pimmer, Linxen and Grohbiel (2012) sent students course-content items once per day over the learning time frame, and found that this training helped students to review data better. The teachers in Depala and Greene's publication (2016) tweeted on numerous occasions each day about expert data in their field of study and about individual accounts. Students were not required to follow. Nevertheless, most students who had encountered utilising Twitter for class reasons were amped up for following and corresponding with the teacher on the small-scale blogging instrument.

3.5.1.2 Using Twitter to associate with the instructor or colleagues

Twitter has filled in as a communicational stage for individuals to interface and offer data, either in up close and via personal settings or in online courses. For instance, students were urged to communicate with their teacher or schoolmates utilising Twitter voluntarily during a 12-week course (Lowther, 2017). Students in the study of Depala and Greene (2016) were approached to sign into Twitter twice a week for 15 weeks to tweet about course-related data, for example, video links, news related information and research, and

questions identified within tasks. Lau (2017), permitted students to take part in backchannel discourse utilising Twitter. Back channelling by means of Twitter is an action that permits students to keep up a dialogue while a class is in progress (Carpenter & Lertpratchya, 2016). The greater part of the tweets was identified with the class lectures and exercises, for example, students sharing data about assignment matters (Sahrom, 2017).

In the study of Liu, McKelroy, Kang, Harron, and Liu (2016), students who registered on the equivalent Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) used Twitter to interface data from different platforms, utilising an equivalent hash tag. Correspondingly, Chadwick, (2015), inspected how students in a class communicated with each other utilising Twitter. The course educators at first assumed a significant job in disseminating course content; however, as the course advanced, after some time, course members were collaborating all the more regularly with each other around subjects of normal intrigue. The idea of student commitment extended from sharing data about the weekly exercises, to offering their own thoughts or challenging new suggestions and opinions about the subjects being discussed.



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3.5.1.3 Using Twitter to cooperate with outside individuals

Cooperation with outside individuals mainly refers to the interaction with individuals not enrolled in the same class or course. Twitter extends the spatial limits of classrooms and carries outer resources to the classroom. For instance, Johnson (2015) requested that history students use Twitter to discuss topics in class; however, the movement ended up attracting outside members to follow and share content, related data, and subsequently brought back more value to the local learning conditions. In another research study, 13 students enrolled in a middle level French course at a university in the USA and tweeted twice weekly with 12 French speakers from France. The students' mental attitude toward the activity was good and they were excited about the chance to speak with French speakers in France outside the classroom, to keep improving their language proficiency (Parusheva, Aleksandrova & Hadzhikolev, 2018).

In a study that inspected teachers' utilisation of Twitter, the Carpenter and Krutka study (2014) of 755 K-16 educators found that most respondents (96%) used Twitter for

proficient advancement purposes. Respondents detailed their mostly shared educational and instructive resources with other outside educators through Twitter. Hash tags had all the earmarks of being a remarkable element of Twitter that encouraged these associations among educators with shared interests.

3.5.2 Types of Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), assert that there is no precise method for classifying social media. On a daily basis, new social media platforms are being utilised. This is something a classifying framework needs to consider. Be that as it may, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have attempted to classify social media into the following categories:

- Collaborative projects are a sort of internet base permitting the operators to build content together. Examples of collective projects are:
 - Wikis are a type of media where the user can alter, add and delete content based on texts. Wikipedia is a good example of a wiki.
 - Social bookmarking applications are media tools that empowers groups of individuals to share and rate connections and media material. Delicious is a case of a social bookmarking application.
- Blogs are regarded as one of the early types of social media. They can be likened to an individual site page and they are regularly overseen by a solitary person who presents sections on the blog (Kornejeva, 2012). The subject of blogs changes from being journals to a spot where data about a particular region are distributed. Websites are being utilised by numerous organisations to refresh partners, for example, workers and clients (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Blogs could likewise be utilised, for instance, as a stage where conclusions could be communicated, clients could be instructed and conversations with respect to an organisation could be started (Agnihotri, 2015). Content societies are sites that help the clients to distribute content to other people. There are numerous and various sorts of media that could be shared through these social media platforms.
- Social networking sites are a type of media that are famous. These sites make it feasible for individuals to associate with others, on the web, by making a profile (Haferkamp & Krämer, 2011). Profiles could incorporate a variety of artefacts, for

example, recordings and photographs. Organisations could utilise these locales, for instance, to do promotion of research or just for making brand networks. Two instances of social networking sites are Facebook and My space (Clark, Agloe & Green, 2017).

- Virtual worlds, as indicated by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), are two classifications that are likened to each other, which imply that they are a media form that permits its clients to associate in a three-dimensional condition. The two distinct classifications of virtual universes are:
 - Virtual game worlds, which are a media type which are now and again called massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG). This media type has rules, which the clients need to follow and these games ordinarily limit how much the clients can show of what their identity is. Organisations could, for instance, place in-game advertisements in this media (Haythornthwaite, 2019).
 - Virtual social universes, which are another virtual world, however here there are less instructions and the clients can pick their behaviour more, all alone, and carry on with a virtual life. Organisations, for instance, could utilise this media for advertisements, correspondence, selling virtual items and doing showcasing research. An example of this media is Second Life (Haythornthwaite, 2019).

3.5.3 Twitter or Micro-Blogging

Furthermore, a progressively contemporary means of social collaboration making use of technology is smaller scale blogging and, more especially, the use of Twitter. Schmidt (2016) examined the capability of consolidating advanced learning media to show members long lasting learning. Twitter, as a vehicle for advancing social connection and long-lasting learning, could change how individuals collaborate as adult students (Tang & Hew, 2017). Wright's (2010) study specifically discovered that student members used Twitter to connect to the content of the course 47% of the time. The vast majority of the subjective information demonstrated a steady, associated joint effort. Different advantages of Twitter as a shared methodology referred to in the investigation included: connecting with regular daily lives through content, becoming increasingly reflective and

encouraging a greater sense of community (Malik, Heyman-Schrum & Johri, 2019). Once more, the joint effort, network construction, and experienced-based bits of the research added more proof to the conviction that students were keen to learn when there was a need to know, a relationship to encounter, or something that cultivated an inner inspiration to learn (Schmidt, 2016).

Twitter has been demonstrated to be compelling for individual learning in an expert capacity. Schmidt (2016) explored the marvel of a "Tweet storm" to find network connections between students. Central to the research was the question of inspiration for experts to utilise social media for proficiency reasons. The researchers additionally recognised the downside of smaller scale blogging as a failure for "in depth discussions" (Schmidt, 2016). The Tweet storm technique made a configuration for discussion which permitted participants to see tweets and follow the discussion, basically defeating the drawback of the Twitter platform. Interestingly, the most elevated class for tweets was the classification marked 'motivation'. More explanations were recorded about motivation through community-oriented learning (Wright, 2010). In summation, the participants remarked on the persuasive component of the Tweet storm more than the manner in which it came into contrast with other strategies for sharing. Students in this investigation had an elevated level of motivation for investment in the learning experience (Candon, 2019).

In a comparative report led by Mohammadi, Thelwall, Kwasny and Holmes, (2018), analysts searched for preferences and users' aims in a Twitter group. The study was set up in the way Schmidt (2016) had led the Tweet storm examination: users had the option to interface and see the whole Twitter discussion through topic phrases and suggested content which had sifted through unimportant tweets. The outcome was a concentrated discussion via Twitter (Mohammadi, Thelwall, Kwasny & Holmes, 2018). The research permitted researchers to refine tools that proficient development designers could use to develop preference-based twitter groups. The suggestions for proficient advancement execution of a Twitter-based course or meeting were approved through the analysts' input model (Candon, 2019).

3.6 Conclusion

Twitter provides students with a means of working together to solve a common problem, or build a common project. Collaboration can be categorised into two groups which involve students who put up work together on a Twitter project or where they synchronise combined details on Twitter, for example, the management of time. Most of the literature that was discussed identified that both teachers and students can benefit from the use of social media as it helps to build on both the instructor and students' work and also keeps the mutual history of their learning progress. Social media, in general, enables educational institutions to provide stakeholders with information such as new programs being offered by educational institutions such as TVET Colleges, changes to policies, events, and institutional news.



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Chapter 4 - Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Research is a systematic process serving as a guideline for decision makers. Research consists of processes that include designing methods for gathering information, managing the acquired information gathering process, the analysis and understanding of results and the communication of outcomes to decision makers to maximise performance (Soiferman, 2010).

Research methodology relates to the systematic process which a researcher embarks upon so as to reach an informed decision regarding a research problem (Hughes, 2006). The research methodology section will start by discussing the research paradigm, followed by the research approach, research design, research population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, data trustworthiness, delimitation of the study and will then conclude with a section on ethics.



4.2 Research Paradigm

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A research paradigm explains the patterns of belief and practices that standardise inquiry within a specific area, by providing procedures through which investigation is conducted (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001). The research paradigm is a set of shared beliefs among members of a speciality area that guides the researchers' investigation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In Information Systems research, there are three main paradigms, namely, Positivism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism which will be discussed in the next sections.

4.2.1 Interpretivism

An interpretivist paradigm adopts a relativist ontology in which a sole incident may have various interpretations. Methods used to comprehend knowledge associated with human and social sciences differ to the methods used to comprehend knowledge associated with physical sciences (Klein & Myers, 1999). Individuals' experiences, interpretations and understanding of the same 'objective reality' vary among individuals, thus making it

difficult to quantify experiences of various individuals scientifically (Chowdhury, 2014). A qualitative researcher may implement an interpretive stance aiming towards an understanding that is appreciated for being interesting (Goldkuhl, 2012).

4.2.2 Positivism

The positivist paradigm allows researchers to study social reality and gain a deeper understanding of how humans behave – this is done through observation and reason; it allows one to conduct various approaches of natural sciences to study social science (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Positivists strongly believe that anything that cannot be observed or measured scientifically is unknown; thus, understanding of phenomena in this paradigm needs to be measured and supported by evidence (Pham, 2018). Researchers implementing the positivist paradigm believe objective truth exists and the goal of science is to discover it. To uncover truth, the researcher needs to be objective and collect facts using methods that are value-free. By using such methods, researchers are better positioned to identify general laws (Corry, Porter & McKenna, 2018)

4.2.3 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research. The main idea behind pragmatism, is that beliefs are guides to actions and should be judged against the outcomes, rather than abstract principles. The paradigmatic foundations are seldom known and pragmatists aim to construct knowledge that is useful in action (Girel, 2015). Essentially, pragmatism may be defined as solving problems using a practical and sensible approach instead of having fixed ideas or theories. An ideology is considered to be true and valid if it works to solve problems in a specific context. The pragmatic paradigm has been recommended and contended as being for the provision of philosophical and methodological foundations to be utilised in mixed methods research (Ormerod, 2006). Facts are not just there to be discovered, but are largely made through human activity, which can have significant effects on the social world. A further consequence is that philosophy, as a human activity which engages with the changing world, can also help change it. In that sense, pragmatism provides support for the idea that philosophy should engage not only with concepts, but also in praxis (Girel, 2015).

This research adopted the interpretivist paradigm. This approach has been deemed appropriate for the research as the empirical model of the study was derived from various individuals' tweets on Twitter. The findings generated reveal the use of Twitter as a tool used for communication on the respective TVET College's Twitter pages. A theme outlined from the findings has more of a qualitative nature, hence, there is no need for inferential statistical analysis (Gaus, 2017).

4.3 Research Approach

A research approach can be described as a variety of methods used to understand a research problem (Gaus, 2017). A research approach can be qualitative, quantitative or a mixed method, which is a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approach (Snelson, 2016).

4.3.1 Qualitative

Qualitative researchers use an inductive approach and develop a theory for a pattern of meaning based on the information collected. Naturalistic approaches believe that individuals' behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing the participants' frame of reference. Qualitative research takes a naturalist approach which believes that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the on-going action being investigated (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative research approach seeks to understand and interpret social interactions (Stumpfegger, 2017). The value of observing patterns in the use of qualitative research approaches such as interviews, focus group, and qualitative content analysis, is twofold in this instance: it unfolds how researchers can develop studies to gain an understanding of how and why people use social media platforms such as Twitter and it highlights the significance attached to TVET Colleges and student experiences with social media (Snelson, 2016).

4.3.2 Quantitative

Quantitative researchers use a deductive approach and test the validity of assumptions, theories or hypotheses at hand. The quantitative research approach focuses on quantifying and analysing variables so as to acquire results (Stumpfegger, 2017). The quantitative research approach includes the utilisation and examination of numerical

information by making use of specific statistical methods to answer questions such as how, who, what, where and when (Apuke, 2017).

4.3.3 Mixed Method

Mixed methods can be summarised as a research approach in which the researcher makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data, incorporating the two and then drawing interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems (Creswell, 2014). There are five reasons for making use of the mixed methods approach in any study. These reasons include expansion, triangulation, completion, initiation and development (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). The use of the mixed method research approach has value in research. McCusker and Gunaydin (2014) agree with Creswell about the two methods that draw interpretations based on the joint strengths of both collections of data to comprehend research problems (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2014).

This research study made use of the qualitative research approach, which has value in social media research (Snelson, 2016). Qualitative researchers use an inductive approach and are able to develop a theory for a pattern of meaning based on the information collected. This research study's data was collected from the various tweets on the respective TVET Colleges Twitter pages. The tweets were categorised based on the context of each tweet. The various tweets were then put into various themes based on the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model.

4.4 Research design

A research design provides researchers with a roadmap that integrates the various aspects of a study that are essential to successfully address the study's research problem. The research design is carefully chosen by the researcher to answer the research questions validly, objectively and accurately to arrive at the intended solution (Smeeton & Goda, 2003). The research design plays an important role in the gathering, analysis and documentation of data obtained from the research, according to its relevance. The common research designs used by researchers are: exploratory, causal and descriptive research which are discussed below (Dudovski, 2018).

4.4.1 Exploratory Research

Exploratory research “explores the research problem as it investigates and gathers more detail about the problem which is not clearly defined” (Reiter, 2017, p. 1). Exploratory research is an appropriate research design for a study that is addressing a topic which has high levels of ambiguity and ignorance about it and for when the problem is not very well understood (Dudovskiy, 2018).

4.4.2 Casual Research

Causal research is also known as explanatory research; this type of research analyses a problem by comparing the relationships of two variables (Dudovskiy, 2018). The main method used for casual research is an experiment. One of the variables of explanatory research must be known. A causal research design is one in which independent variables are manipulated by the other variables that are checked as much as possible to assess their ultimate effect they have on the independent variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

4.4.3 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research is “a type of conclusive research that has the description of something as its major objective - usually market characteristics or functions” (Kim, Sefcik & Bradway, 2017, p. 25). Descriptive research classifies the characteristics or discover the relationship between identified phenomenon (Apuke, 2017).

Considering the nature of this research, the descriptive research approach was most suitable because the research study seeks to provide answers to how Twitter, as a social media platform, can be used as a communication tool in TVET Colleges. The lack of efficient and effective use of social media in general by DHET has a negative influence on how TVET Colleges can effectively use social media (Chowdhury, 2014).

4.5 Population and Sampling

Qualitative researchers are guided by the depth and not the breath of the research, according to Suter (2012, p.236). The term population refers to “a large group of people who share common characteristics” (Dudovskiy, 2018, p. 1). The population was chosen based on limits of the research scope and constraints around data collection. Defining the target population is the first step when making decisions directed at sampling (Steinberg,

2017). All 50 of the TVET Colleges in South Africa were included in the population of the research study. From these 50 TVET Colleges, 36 was identified as having an official Twitter page which became the sample of the study (Appendix 4 – TVET Colleges with Twitter pages). The great number of followers and tweets on each TVET College Twitter page made this population very suitable to explore because one could analyse their online interactions (Bevan-Dye & Akpojivi, 2015).

4.6 Data collection

Data collection for this research included setting the actual boundaries for the research, collecting information through multiple measurement methods as well as establishing a protocol for gathering data. Consequently, in qualitative research, the researcher is considered the critical instrument through which the study project takes shape (Creswell, 2014). Data collection can be defined as “a process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest that allow for research questions to be answered, hypotheses to be tested and outcomes to be evaluated” (Apuke, 2017, p. 40). The purpose of this research is to develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. The following section will discuss primary data, secondary data, ethnography and netnography as data collection methods.

4.6.1 Primary Data

Primary data is data that was collected by the researcher for the specific research problem (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Primary data collection is relatively costly, requires a fair amount of time, resources and man power. The data collection is under the control and observation of the researcher (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016).

4.6.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is second-hand information which were originally collected to answer a research question not in the current study by another researcher (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Secondary data is a readily accessible form of data gathered from different sources such as censuses, reports, books, journal articles and websites. Secondary data

offers numerous advantages as it is readily available, saves time and associated costs to the researcher (Arya & Bhagat, 2017).

For the purposes of this research and speaking to the study approach, both secondary and primary data sources were utilised to explore and analyse the problem at hand. The 36 TVET College Twitter pages were used for the extraction of tweets and responses as primary sources of data to gain more information regarding the interaction on TVET College Twitter pages. Secondary data sources were used in the form of the social media integration theory model discussed in section 3.2, which assisted with the categorisation of tweets and ultimately, the recovery responses for the study. The type of data that was collected determined the data collection method utilised. The following paragraphs explore the systematic manner in which the data was collected.

4.6.3 Ethnography

Ethnography is part of the primary data collection method. Ethnography is a methodology that aims to understand the ways in which culture is simultaneously constructed by peoples' behaviours and experiences (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). It is a creative process which enables experiencing, interpreting, and representing culture and society. Ethnography involves observing the attitudes of a chosen population sample and drawing a conclusion based on the observation and intuition of the researcher (Baker, 2013).

4.6.4 Netnography

Netnography, which is also part of the primary data collection method, is "participant-observational research based in online fieldwork. It uses computer-mediated communications as a source of data to arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a culture or communal phenomenon" (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018, p. 657). Netnography is the method of collecting online data and it has been used in this research. This qualitative method was created specifically to examine consumer behaviour of cultures and communities inherent on the internet (Weijo, Hietanen & Mattila, 2014).

Netnography is interrelated to qualitative research methodologies for the online platform. The online platform consists of digital ethnography, online ethnography, virtual

ethnography and cyber-ethnography (Costello, McDermott & Wallace, 2017). Some authors argue that digital ethnography, online ethnography, virtual ethnography and cyber-ethnography are interchangeable (Grincheva, 2014). Other authors are of the view that there are finer distinctions between digital-, online-, virtual- and cyber-ethnography (Lugosi, Janta & Watson, 2012). Kozinets (2015) states that the aforementioned types of ethnography have no distinct characteristics and, as a result, are considered as more general approaches to online research. This research study thus uses digital-, online-, virtual- and cyber-ethnography interchangeably.

There are numerous benefits to netnography, including and not being limited to being detailed and naturalistic, and also having the capability of accurately representing participants' views and lived realities. Another great benefit is that netnography is faster, simpler and relatively inexpensive (Kozinets, 2015).

Netnography is a suitable data collection method to utilise in this research, considering that Twitter is the main site of interest. Twitter is one of the utilised social media platforms by students, prospective students, parents and community members of TVET Colleges. Netnography as an approach, explores data that is publicly available on the online platforms to identify, analyse, and comprehend behaviours (Weijo, Hietanen & Mattila, 2014).

The researcher made use of TweetDeck, a software application, which allows you to view various timelines in one interface. For this reason, it can be used to collect data from Twitter, by entering the Twitter handle of a TVET College as shown in the screenshot below:

Step 1: Open TweetDeck and type in the name of the handle

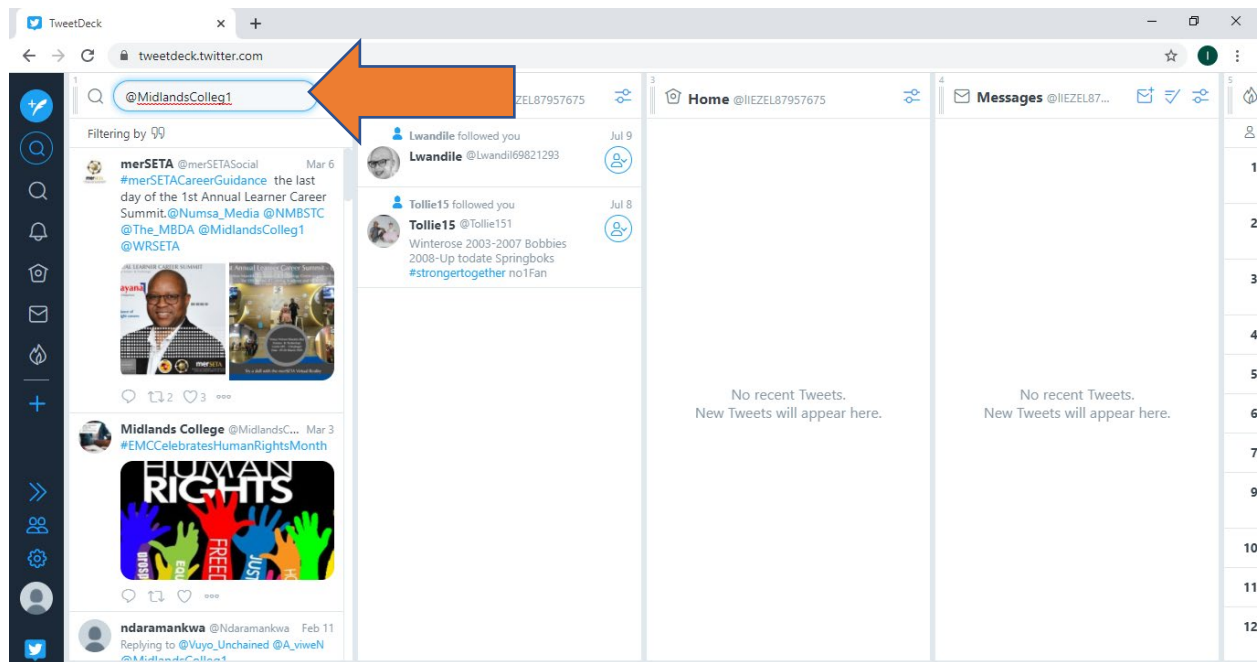


Figure 3. Step 1 - Tweet deck

The researcher also made use of the filters to select a specific period to collect data as shown in the screenshot below:



Step 2: Put in the filters next to where the handle is typed and select them.

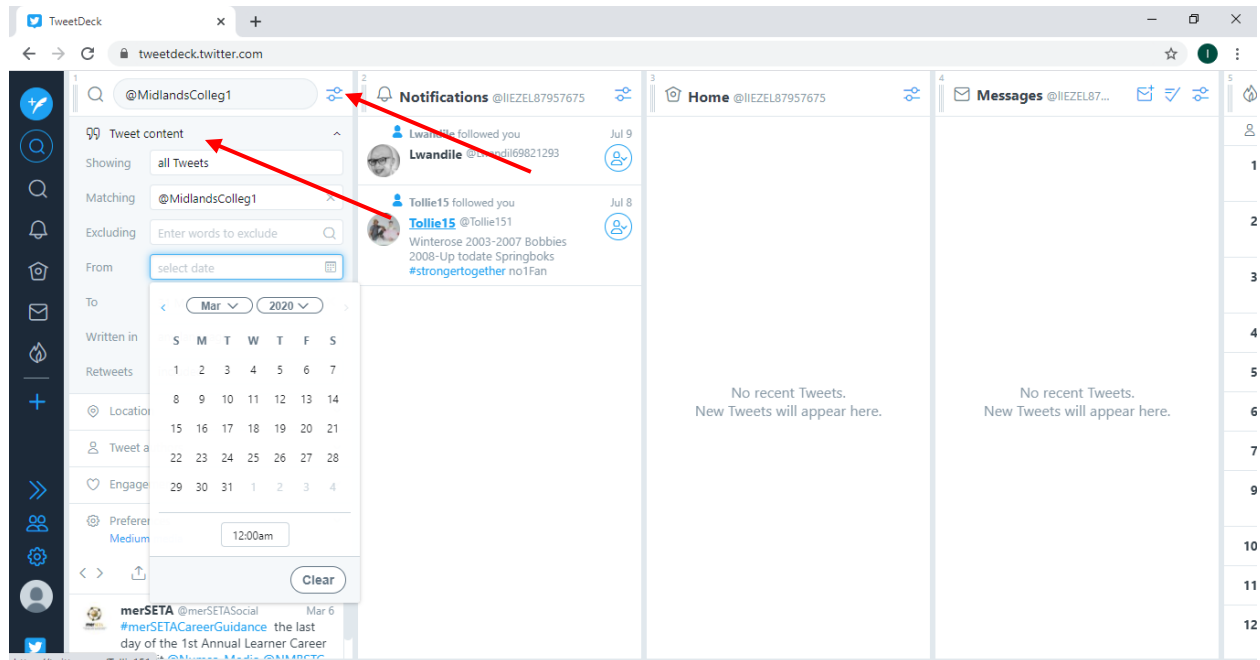


Figure 4. Step 2 - Tweet deck

The researcher then copied across the data into an Excel spreadsheet and cleaned the data after that. This was done per TVET College and was grouped by province.

4.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is used to evaluate data through systematic and logical techniques (Thorne, 2000). Data analysis entails description, interpretation, conclusions and theorisation, which are the four stages of data analysis.

Quantitative data is numerical in nature and qualitative data is non-numerical and is captured in a narrative format. Qualitative content analysis places emphasis on the themes and topics of the categories and the distribution, meaning and relations of them within the data under investigation (Creswell, 2014). Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication, with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text. Reducing text to countable categories is susceptible to oversight of the nuances and patterns of the research or study. Furthermore, the rigorous nature of quantitative content analysis does not account for

meanings of the text that can be extracted by looking at the discussion in its entirety (Neuman, 2014).

Quantitative studies result in data that provides quantifiable, objective, and easy to interpret results. The data can typically be summarised in a way that allows for generalisations that can be applied to the greater population and the results can be reproduced. The design of most quantitative studies also helps to ensure that personal bias does not impact the data. Quantitative data can be analysed in several ways (Neuman, 2014). Conversely, sampling strategies for qualitative methods in implementation studies are less explicit and often less evident, although the samples for qualitative inquiry are generally assumed to be selected purposefully to yield cases that are “information rich” (Ames, Glenton & Lewin, 2019).

For the purposes of this research, qualitative data was utilised. Tweets were categorised based on the context of each tweet. The various tweets were put into various themes based on the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model. Literature frequently refers to two main approaches towards content analysis: quantitative and qualitative. Organising data into codes (specifically defined categories) is part of both approaches to content analysis.

The qualitative data was analysed, making use of content and thematic analysis. The use of thematic coding and analysis assisted the author to retrieve themes with similar meaning from the Tweets that were collected from the TVET College Twitter pages. Since the study sought to explore the use of Twitter as a communication tool, similar ideas or patterns were identified and categorised to derive meaning that shed light and assisted in the answering of the research question. In addition, relevance of the subject matter was tested so that the findings of the study were relevant and usable (Agarwal, Xie, Vovsha, Rambow & Passonneau, 2011).

4.8 Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness refers to the validity and reliability of the data collected and the tools used to analyse it (Shepard, 2002). To ensure the validity of the data obtained for this research, qualitative data was measured according to accepted tools. Through the use of

triangulation, the consistency of qualitative data was measured. Multi-sources might also be used for information, for example, by taking different data from four various investigators. This would fructify and improve consistency of the study and therefore reliability as well (Arya & Bhagat, 2017).

4.9 Delimitation of the Study

The research focuses only on a single social media platform, Twitter, and the relevant Twitter pages of the 36 TVET Colleges in South Africa. Focus will be on “tweets” or posts on the Twitter page that were posted over a one-year period (April 2019 – March 2020) prior to the start of data collection.

4.10 Ethical Approval

Qualitative researchers must consider the potential “wrongness” of their actions in relation to the people whose lives they are studying, to their colleagues, and to those sponsoring their studies in a variety of ways. As advised, researchers cannot just seek to focus on knowledge production without taking stock of how they arrived at their subjective truths (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). In this research, the researcher was consciously guided by both moral and professional obligations to be ethical throughout the research process for, as rightly advised by Creswell (2014), educational researchers need to anticipate ethical issues throughout a research process.

Many ethical issues require researchers to balance two values which are the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied or others in society (Neuman, 2014). Following this advice, the researcher remained accountable to the University of Fort Hare’s Research Ethics Committee charged with the responsibility of regulating specific standard requirements regarding researcher-participant relationships, agreements and data collection protocols (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

Ethics in internet research is a vastly discussed subject among researchers and a clear agreement on this subject has not been reached to date. However, it is essential to be mindful of guidelines and to acknowledge ethics when selecting a sample to be included in the research and the methodology to be used (Ben-Jacob, 2017). Ethics can be described as what is believed to be morally right and wrong (Stang, 2018).

This research study was conducted in accordance with the principles, practices, procedures and structures as set out in the document of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) which applies to all the research studies carried out in the University of Fort Hare. Thus, for this research, ethical clearance was received from UREC (Appendix 3 – Ethical clearance certificate). These ethical guidelines relate to honesty, accountability, and professional courtesy and fairness in all research activities. Issues pertaining to the ethical procedures, which include confidentiality of data, are essential. Of importance is the fact that confidentiality, particularly pertaining to TVET's is of the utmost importance so it has been maintained during the research and in presenting the findings of this research.

The information that was extracted from the Twitter page of the TVET Colleges is considered to be in the public domain as it is freely accessible to any participant of Twitter that follows the TVET Colleges' page (Arya & Bhagat, 2017). Therefore, there is no need for informed consent from the students that have posted on these sites. Anonymity and confidentiality of the persons and institutions will be kept with regards to the publication and archiving of the overall outcomes depicted in this research (Dudovskiy, 2018).



4.10.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is concerned with the researcher informing participants about the nature of the study as well as ensuring that the participants understand the study. Consent is requested and required prior to a study.

4.10.2 Distinction between Public and Private

The comprehension of a public space as it is considered offline, is difficult to directly translate into the online context.

4.10.3 Anonymity

To protect personal information about the participants and to ensure confidentiality, researchers typically de-identify participants as a standard procedure.

4.10.4 Application to the Study

The social media platform utilised for this study was Facebook and its privacy policies state that information sharing is the very nature and purpose of social networking sites, otherwise, they would cease to exist.

4.11 Conclusion

Having satisfied the self with the laying down of a befitting research methodology, the researcher was ready for the core business of the research study. The Interpretivist research paradigm was used as the empirical model of the study. It derived from various individuals' experiences of Twitter as a social media communication tool. The research approach was qualitative and inductive so as to develop a theory for a pattern of meaning based on the information collected, which has value in social media research. While seeking to provide answers on how Twitter as a social media platform can be used as a communication tool in TVET Colleges, the research utilised the descriptive research design. In terms of the sample of the population in the research, quota sampling was used as this technique focuses on the following criteria: quality of the data; sociometric diversity of the sample; geographic coverage of the sample; and cost-effectiveness. Both secondary and primary data sources were utilised in the research to explore and analyse the problem at hand.

Netnography is a primary data collection method utilised in this research as it has the capability of accurately representing participants' views and lived realities. Data analysis of the research used qualitative content analysis which focused on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the various Tweets. Data trustworthiness was maintained through the use of triangulation, to ensure the validity of the data obtained for this research. The delimitation of the study, Twitter being the only social media platform to be included in the research together with the sample of ten TVET College Twitter pages, excludes any other applications or institutions. This research was conducted in accordance with the principles, practices, procedures and structures as set out in the document of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which applies to all research studies carried out in the University of Fort Hare. Thus, for this research, ethical clearance was applied for from UREC.

Information extracted from the Twitter page of the TVET Colleges is considered to be in the public domain as it is freely accessible to any participant of Twitter that follows the TVET Colleges' page. Therefore, there was no need for informed consent from the students that had posted on these sites. Anonymity and confidentiality of the persons and institutions were kept with regards to the publication and archiving of the overall outcomes arrived at in this research. The use of methods for gathering and analysing data on Twitter, a social media communication platform, roped in massive data that demanded careful planning and implementation. Thus, the following chapter unveils the implementation of an already laid out plan.



Chapter 5 – Analysis of Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings on the need for TVET Colleges to develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in their colleges in South Africa. The key issues articulated in this section include the inclusion criteria on selected tweets, background and demographic information, and the main research findings presented according to the goals of the study. The researcher used tables and graphical representations to display data. The data were obtained primarily from tweets that were shared between students, college, DHET and employers.

The following inclusion criteria have been added, driven by the study questions:

1. Empirical research has been conducted for Twitter, a similar modification of Twitter that offers a more secure space for college TVET students to communicate as the main technology used in education.
2. The research was conducted in line with educational settings.
3. The research findings specifically explain how teachers or students use Twitter, or how Twitter can impact teaching and learning.
4. Empirical study provides empirical observations with real evidence. Articles which presented personal opinions and theoretical arguments were excluded.

5.2 Purpose of Data Presentation

According to In and Lee (2017), data is usually obtained in a raw format and thus the underlying information requires a great deal of work to be interpreted. It is also important that raw data be summarised, analysed and presented in a manner that can be easily understood. When displaying data, tables and graphs are considered to be useful tools for relaying information (Bavdekar, 2015). They generally ensure that there are no problems with interpreting the data, that readers are captivated and intrigued, and that a significant amount of detailed data is routinely displayed (In & Lee, 2017). This is echoed by Bavdekar (2015), who states that the reader's attention is ideally captivated by the use

of tables and graphs, and that the details presented cannot be quickly overlooked. With regards to the nature of the research, the representation of data is vitally necessary in order to clearly explain the essence of the analysis of the need for TVET Colleges in South Africa to develop a framework to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool. The research findings were based on a single social media platform which is Twitter and all the relevant tweets from TVET Colleges in South Africa with Twitter accounts. From the research findings, the researcher identified 50 registered TVET Colleges in South Africa, that run on about 364 campuses spread throughout the country's rural and urban areas. Only 36 of the 50 TVET Colleges have a registered Twitter account.

5.3 Demographic Information

Tweets were collected from 36 TVET Colleges (72%) situated in eight out of the nine provinces of South Africa. Neither of the two TVET Colleges from the Northern Cape have Twitter accounts, as both only make use of Facebook as a social media platform. One of the TVET Colleges, Orbit TVET College, has an active Facebook page, which had 5 posts in February 2020 as compared to Taletso TVET College which was not active in February as not a single post was posted on the Facebook page. The tweets were selected from the listed TVET Colleges from the period April 2019 – March 2020 (Appendix 4 – list of TVET Colleges with Twitter accounts). The participants represented diverse languages and cultures as some of the tweets were written in English, IsiXhosa, isiZulu, Sotho and Tswana. The researcher made use of Google Translate in order to identify the languages and understand some of the tweets which were in unfamiliar languages.

5.3.1 Urban Vs Rural

The study investigated if the location of the TVET Colleges affects the Twitter activity. The researcher made use of the rural, urban and semi-urban definitions used by Statistics South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (2001, p. 60), rural areas are defined as “a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities which has a low population density and small settlements”. The urban areas, on the other hand, are defined as “the region surrounding a city. Urban areas are very developed, meaning there is “a density of human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways”.

Lastly semi-urban areas are defined as areas that “constitute human settlements with less dense populations than the urban areas”.

Figure 5 therefore shows the percentages of colleges that are located in rural and urban areas of nine provinces.

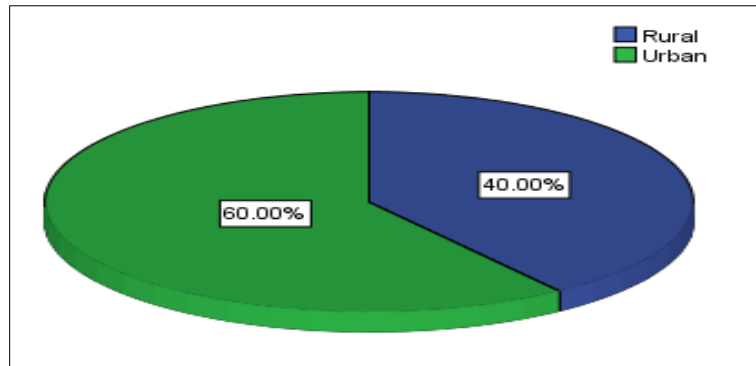


Figure 5. Location of TVET Colleges from the nine provinces (Compiled by Researcher)

Figure 5 indicates that 60% of the TVET Colleges were located in the urban areas while 40% of the colleges were located in rural areas. The study findings revealed that there are less TVET Colleges located in rural areas as compared to TVET Colleges located in urban areas. Table 3 below shows the percentages of tweets that were from rural TVET Colleges and percentages of tweets that were from urban TVET Colleges.

Table 3 - Percentages of TVET College Tweets from both rural and urban areas per province (Compiled by Researcher)

TVET Colleges (Province)	Volume of Tweets from TVET Colleges in Rural areas	Volume of Tweets from TVET Colleges in Urban areas
Eastern Cape	75%	25%
Free State	25%	75%
Gauteng	0%	100%
Kwa-Zulu Natal	11%	89%

Limpopo	75%	25%
Mpumalanga	60%	40%
Northern Cape	0%	0%
North West	0%	0%
Western Cape	20%	80%

The study findings therefore revealed that TVET Colleges in rural areas had less tweets as compared to TVET Colleges in urban areas. This implies that colleges in urban areas have more active Twitter accounts as compared to ones in rural areas.

5.3.2 TVET Colleges with Active or Non-Active Twitter Accounts

In order to identify the number of TVETs with Twitter accounts, the researcher checked on Twitter how many TVETs from each province had active Twitter accounts from the start of the study to the middle of the study and eventually the end of the study. Table 4 shows the percentages of active and non-active Twitter accounts of TVET Colleges from the nine provinces in South Africa, according to the number of tweets per month, which were collected at the end of the study period. Active Twitter accounts were also determined by counting the monthly number of tweets which were recorded on the TVET Twitter accounts of each college in different provinces. Consequently, non-active accounts were determined by an absence of tweets for a month (content posted on TVET Twitter accounts) at any college.

Table 4 - Percentages of TVET Colleges per province with active Twitter accounts (Compiled by Researcher)

TVET Colleges (Province)	Percentage of Active Twitter Accounts	Percentage of Non-Active Twitter Accounts
Eastern Cape	50%	50%

Free State	100%	0%
Gauteng	75%	25%
Kwa-Zulu Natal	89%	11%
Limpopo	67%	33%
Mpumalanga	100%	0%
Northern Cape	0%	100%
North West	67%	33%
Western Cape	80%	20%



Table 4 indicates that in South Africa, eight out of nine provinces had active Twitter accounts with Free State and Mpumalanga Provinces having the highest percentages. Northern Cape Province did not have any TVET College with a Twitter account, thus had 0%. The findings imply that most TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter as a communication tool.

5.3.3 Weekly Activity Level per Province

In order to identify the activity level of all TVETs in South Africa, the researcher collected tweets from Twitter accounts of all the TVETs in each province for the period April 2019 – March 2020. The tweets per month for the entire period were calculated in percentages and are presented below in Table 5.

Table 5 - Shows responses on the activity level of TVETs for study period (Compiled by Researcher)

Provinces in South Africa	Very Active	Active	Limited	Not Active	Overall average number of posts per week
Eastern Cape	–	–	80%	20%	2
Free State	37.5%	–	62.5%	–	12
Gauteng	8.3%	16.7%	50%	25%	14
Kwa-Zulu Natal	12.5%	–	87.5%	–	6
Limpopo	11%	22%	56%	11%	17
Mpumalanga	100%	–	–	–	34
Northern Cape	–	–	–	–	–
Northern West	–	–	75%	25%	7
Western Cape	62.5%	–	37.5%	–	42

Table 5 indicates that the Western Cape Province had the highest percentage of weekly activity with an average of 42 posts per week and Mpumalanga province had the second most with 34 posts on average per week. Northern West, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Cape provinces ranked lowest with an average of 7, 6 and 2 posts per week respectively.

5.3.4 Average Number of Tweets per Month

In order to analyse the tweets that were posted each month, the researcher went through all the tweets that were posted by various TVETs in different provinces and calculated the average of the tweets posted each month for the period of April 2019 – March 2020. Figure 6 and Table 6 below show the percentages of TVETs tweets per month.

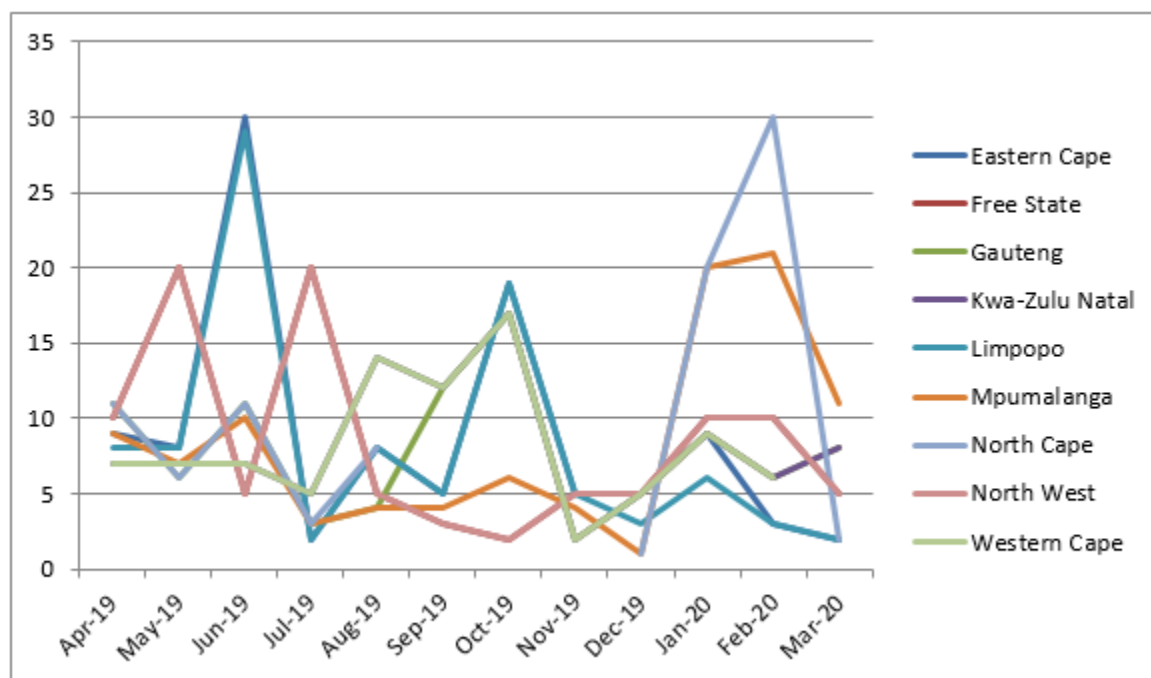


Figure 6. Percentage of TVET College tweets per month (Compiled by Researcher)

Figure 6 showed that Eastern Cape Province and Kwa-Zulu Natal Province had the highest average score of thirty tweets in the month of June 2019 and March 2020 respectively. The average of tweets was highlighted for each month as indicated in the figure above. Table 6 below also shows the average the percentages of TVETs tweets per month.

Table 6 – Percentages of tweets per month (Compiled by Researcher)

The % of TVET Colleges tweets per month	April 2019	May 2019	Jun 2019	Jul 2019	Aug 2019	Sept 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	March 2020
Eastern Cape	9%	8%	30%	2%	8%	5%	19%	5%	0%	9%	3%	2%
Free State	10%	20%	5%	20%	5%	3%	2%	5%	5%	10%	10%	5%
Gauteng	11%	6%	11%	3%	4%	4%	6%	4%	1%	19%	22%	11%
Kwa-Zulu Natal	7%	7%	7%	5%	14%	12%	17%	2%	5%	9%	6%	8%
Limpopo	8%	8%	29%	2%	8%	5%	19%	5%	3%	6%	3%	2%
Mpumalanga	9%	7%	10%	3%	4%	4%	6%	4%	1%	20%	21%	11%
North Cape	11%	6%	11%	3%	8%		10%		1%	20%	30%	2%
North West	10%	20%	5%	20%	5%	3%	2%	5%	5%	10%	10%	5%
Western Cape	7%	7%	7%	5%	14%	12%	17%	2%	5%	9%	6%	8%

5.4 Purpose of Twitter in TVET Colleges

This section highlights some of the uses and impact of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges.

5.4.1 Impacts of Twitter Use on Interactions

With reference to the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model, Garcia (2011) states that this model is a total engagement method, which was developed through interactive procedures that permit information exchange on a similar level between the consumer

(student) and the brand (TVET College). Engagement has also been used as a central teaching and learning mechanism since Vygotsky (1978) indicated that learning is an engaging method of continual interaction in socio-cultural contexts. In discussing the role of interaction in the delivery of courses, Moore (1989) suggested a structure that described three-dimensional experiences, namely the learner-content, the learner-instructor and the learner-learner. The researcher identified some of the impacts of Twitter use on interactions by identifying the various posts on the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts.

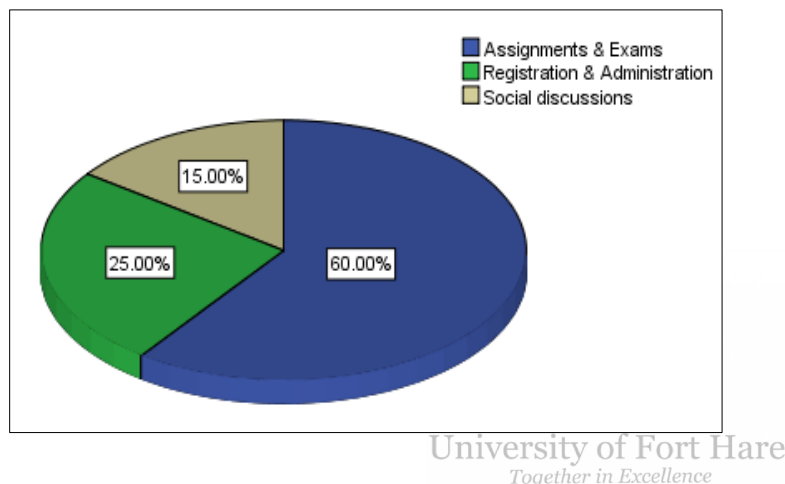


Figure 7. Posts on Twitter that individuals normally engage with (Compiled by Researcher)

Figure 7 indicates that that 65% of individuals who are believed to be students engage on Twitter to discuss issues that mostly involve assignments and examinations, whereas 25% go on Twitter to inquire about registration and administration queries. Only 15% discuss social issues on TVET College Twitter accounts.

5.4.2 Limiting the Duration of the Text (Tweet)

The researcher identified that tweets that users such as students and TVET administration normally post have 140 characters or less. Twitter restricts all tweets to no more than 140 characters. The researcher identified that participants protested that short message limits in-depth thought as supported by the study of Kassens-Noor (2012), which discusses how Twitter creates misunderstandings between individuals. For example, in a conversation between a teacher or lecturer and a student, there was a misinterpretation because of the 140-character limitation; the teacher or lecturer had not

expanded enough on the topic in the post. This led to the student misunderstanding what was required. From the study findings, the researcher identified that the restriction of Twitter to 140 characters limits students in their ability to address and give full details of their grievances on Twitter. Most of the tweets were split into two tweets, this is because twitter emphasizes on text-based information sharing through brief tweets. According to Ahmed (2016) Facebook offers a wide variety of services, including text-based posts, photo sharing, and advanced privacy settings that allow one to precisely customise who can see each post. The privacy settings, contact methods and types of social connections available on each site may appeal to various types of people. For example, people with increased privacy issues may favour sites like Facebook that give them personalized privacy settings.

5.4.3 Who Posts the Most on TVET Twitter Accounts?

In an attempt to find out who posted the most on Twitter, the researcher went through all the Twitter accounts of the TVET Colleges from the nine provinces. Figure 8 shows the percentages of the category which posts most frequently on the TVET Twitter accounts.

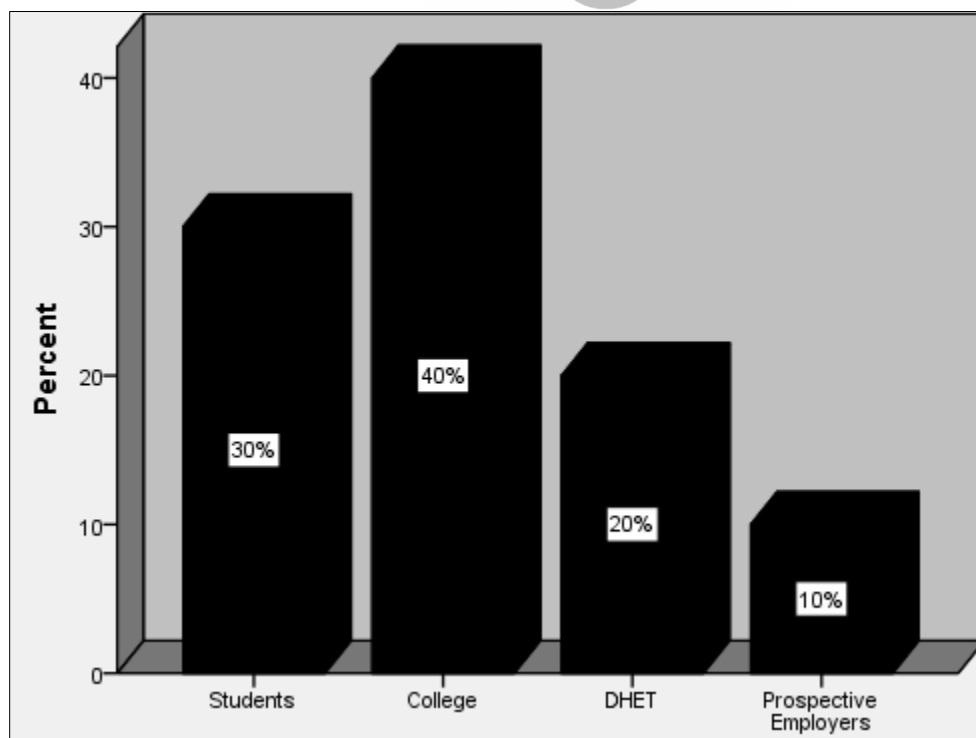


Figure 8. Graphical presentation of active posts (Compiled by Researcher)

Figure 8 show that 40% of the tweets on all the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts were from the college in the form of announcements mainly. Then 30% of the tweets from the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts were from students, whereas 20% of the tweets were announcements from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Only 10% of the tweets on all the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts were job vacancies from prospective employers.

5.5 Thematic Analysis per province

The next section categorises the various tweets from different TVET College Twitter accounts into main themes and sub-themes.

5.5.1 Eastern Cape Results

There are about fifty registered TVET Colleges in South Africa. The Eastern Cape province has four TVET Colleges which are Midlands, Ikhala, King Hitsa and Port Elizabeth (P.E.). Midlands is the most active college in the Eastern Cape. Ikhala, King Hitsa and P.E. follow up with King Hitsa being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from the Eastern Cape Province are as follows and is illustrated in table 7:

- Administration
 - Registration
 - Academic Calendar
- Complaints
 - Service Delivery
- Announcements
 - Meetings
 - Sports

Table 7 - Eastern Cape Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub-themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Academic Calendar	"When is the closing date please help @ikhalaTVET2" - Ikhala TVET College	7

	Registration	<i>"@MidlandsColleg1 Hello, are the applications still open for Electrical Engineering? Is this programme offered in Makanda campus?" - Eastern Cape Midlands TVET College</i>	18
Complaints	Service delivery	<i>"The people that are working for @MidlandsColleg1 in Park Avenue are useless sies..." - Eastern Cape Midlands TVET College</i> <i>"@PE_TVET_College the service at your bursary office is disgusting. Some people are clearly in the wrong job. The lady who assisted me was not interested and had a bad attitude, also had no idea who is responsible for forwarding my registration info to nsfas. Disappointed." - Port Elizabeth TVET College</i>	13
Announcements	Meetings	<i>"#merSETACareerGuidance the last day of the 1st Annual Learner Career Summit.@Numsa_Media @NMBSTC @The_MBDA @MidlandsColleg1 @WRSETA" - Eastern Cape Midlands TVET College</i>	9
	Sports	<i>"Athletics Sports opening ceremony Highlights @ Suzhou Vocational Institute of Industrial Technology." - Eastern Cape Midlands TVET College</i>	5

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Discussion: Overall, the research findings above indicate that the colleges in the Eastern Cape have more tweets based on Administration and Complaints, if one goes by the number of tweets received in each category. Most students had questions involving the Registration dates and processes. The colleges usually post the Application and Registration dates. However, the researcher noticed other tweets that fell under the main theme, Announcements. Other sub-themes, like Sports and Meetings, were identified as tweets that had been posted on various Twitter accounts.

5.5.2 Free State Results

The Free State has four TVET Colleges. Motheo is the most active college in the Free State. Flavius Mareka, Goldfields and Maluti follow up with Flavius Mareka being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified in the Free State Province are as follows (table 8):

- Administration
 - Academic Calendar
 - Registration
 - Funding
- Complaints
- Announcements
 - Funeral updates
 - Awards
 - Student Programs
- Prospective Employers
 - Vacancies

Table 8 - Free State Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub-themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Academic Calendar	 "Countdown to Open Day: 31 August 2019 at Bloemfontein Campus"- Motheo TVET College	5
	Registration	. "Last two days of registrations at Welkom campus"- Goldfields TVET College "the Registration will be on the 10th July 2019 for Second Semester. Bonamelo Campus: Management Assistant" - Maluti TVET College "Registration for Trimester 2 Apply online @ http://motheotvet.co.za " - Motheo TVET College	21
	Funding	"Apply now! #NSFAS2020" - Motheo TVET College	3
Complaints		"This the kind of English that we are subjected to at @flaviusmareka TVET College, specifically look at question 1.6, mind you this is an assignment for N6 Marketing Communications, an exit level subject" - Flavius Mareka TVET College "She opened a case on Sunday and to this day she has not received a case number. When she went today the "investigating officer" advised	28

		<i>her to drop the charges as this had no grounds to succeed in court” - Maluti TVET College</i> <i>“How do you expect us to survive with R870? What about accommodation? What’s happening at @MotheoCollege ?” - Motheo TVET College</i>	
Announcements	Funeral updates	<i>“Goldfields TVET College has learnt with shock and sadness about the untimely death of Mr Izaak Johannes ‘Sakkie’ Peters. Mr Peters died in a tragic car accident on Sunday 29 December 2019.” - Goldfields TVET College</i>	15
	Awards	<i>“Motheo TVET College has scooped Best in Education and Training Award at the 18th Annual Top Empowerment Awards” - Motheo TVET College</i>	9
	Student programs	<i>“12 Electrical and Civil Engineering students Airplane to China. Wish them well. #ExchangeProgramme” - Motheo TVET College</i> <i>“SRC providing meals and encouraging homeless to go back to school as they celebrate #Mandeladay” - Motheo TVET College</i> <i>“16 N6 Marketing Management students jetting off to China for 12 months Exchange Programme.</i> <i>Airplane safe and represent the College community well.” - Motheo TVET College</i>	12
Prospective Employers	Vacancies	<i>“Motheo TVET College invites suitable candidates to apply for the following Temporary Lecturer Post.</i> <i>Closing Date: 27 September 2019” - Motheo TVET College</i> <i>“VACANCY OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMMES POST: FACILITATOR: PLUMBING REF NO: GTVETC 01/07/2019 SALARY: R211 731.00 – R467 925.00 DURATION: 24 Months Contract CENTER: Goldfields TVET College (Tosa Campus)” - Goldfields TVET College</i>	14

Discussion: The research findings for the Free State province show that more tweets were on the colleges’ Announcements, mainly about Funerals and Student Programs.

Prospective Employment Opportunities were also tweeted about, however not as frequently as Administration and Complaints. From the above results, it was discovered that most of the tweets were Announcements that mainly came from the Administration of the Twitter account.

5.5.3 Gauteng Province Results

The Gauteng Province has six TVET Colleges. South West Gauteng is the most active college in the Gauteng Province. Ekurhuleni West, Ekurhuleni East, Central Johannesburg (JHB), Sedibeng and Tshwane South follow up with Ekurhuleni East being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from Gauteng Province are as follows (table 9):

- Administration
 - Academic Calendar
 - Applications
 - Registration
- Complaints
- Announcements
 - Funeral updates
 - Protests



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Table 9 - Gauteng Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub -theme	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Academic Calendar	<i>"Dear prospective students Please note that our applications for Trimester 2 (Engineering Studies) is currently open until 31 March 2020. You can apply online by visiting ewc.edu.za and click on the Apply here link."</i> - Ekurhuleni West TVET college	13
	Applications	<i>"Dear SWGC Prospective Students SECOND TRIMESTER APPLICATION WILL OPEN ON 11 MARCH 2020 For more information, please visit swgc.co.za or contact 086 176 8849 Thank you"</i> – South West Gauteng TVET college	16

	Registration	<i>"2020 Registration Dates 13-17 January 2020 visit tsc.edu.za for more information. #sponsored @TSC_TVET"</i> – Tshwane South TVET college	16
Complaints		<i>"When you come to someone's office and they continue with conversations with their colleagues & you're left waiting @EECFET @EkurhuleniEast"</i> – Ekurhuleni East TVET College <i>" @HigherEduGovZA I have been waiting for my diploma for two years straight now every time I go to @CJCCollege they tell me it is still with the you guys and there is nothing they can do. They have to wait for you guys to send it."</i> – Central Johannesburg TVET college <i>"@EWCTVET we have been here since 2am... what is happening"</i> – Ekurhuleni West TVET college <i>"We stand in queues as early as 4am only to be turned back home because the system goes offline, they say. @tumisolet @AdvoBarryRoux"</i> – Tshwane South TVET college	32
Announcements	Funeral Updates	<i>"RIP DADDY @TheRealMiss_Tee"</i> - Ekurhuleni West TVET college	11
	Protests	<i>"Please join us as we march to Orlando Police Station from George Tabor Campus, 1440 Mncube Drive, Dube Village, Dube, Soweto from 10: 00. SWGC, Period! Enough Said!"</i> – South West Gauteng TVET college	6

Discussions: From the above results, most of the tweets belonged under the main theme of Administration. Applications and Registration sub-categories had the most tweets recorded, followed by the Academic Calendar sub-category under the main theme, Administration. The researcher also found that tweets under the Complaints' theme were also high, where many of these grievances were from individuals, such as students, who had had problems with the colleges. The research findings for the Gauteng province showed that a few tweets were on Announcements and Funeral updates.

5.5.4 Kwa-Zulu Natal Province Results

The Kwa-Zulu Natal Province has eight TVET Colleges. Umfolozi is the most active college in Kwa-Zulu Natal. ESayidi, Coastal, Elangeni, Majuba, Mnambithi, Mthashana

and Thekwini follow, with Thekwini being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from Kwa-Zulu Natal Province are as follows (table 10):

- Administration
 - Registration
 - Applications
- Complaints
- Announcements
 - Student Affairs
 - Campaigns
 - Student Protests

Table 10 - Kwa-Zulu Natal Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub-themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Registration	<i>"@CoastalKzn when is the registration for next semester starting?" – Coastal TVET college</i> <i>"@elangenicollege when are registrations initiating?" – Elangeni TVET college</i> <i>"Interested in online distance learning? Please come through to Richtek to register for the following programmes: -Public Management -Financial Management -Business Management -Human Resources Management For more" – Umfolozi College</i> <i>"@MnambithiFET</i> <i>Hy I want to register for national certificate, can I come along and register today" – Mnambithi TVET college</i>	13
	Applications	<i>"Umbumbulu Campus Applications Now Open!!! 1) Public Management 2) Financial Management Closing Date: 30 April 2019 Required supporting documents are as follows: 2 x ID Certified Copies 2 x Parent/Guardian Certified ID Copy 2 x Certified Copies Matric Results" - Coastal KZN TVET College</i> <i>"#ApplyNow 2020 NSFAS Applications close on 30 November 2019" – Umfolozi College</i> <i>" Please email your full names, ID number, NSFAS/student ref no and when you applied to Disabilityrights@dsd.gov.za We will forward it to the</i>	

		<i>Disability Support Unit at NSFAS Head office” - Majuba TVET College</i>	
Complaints		<i>“From September to December the @UmfolojiCollege haven't made any payment I don't understand what is going on because I've submitted almost three invoices they suppose to pay R20 000 but still nothing please RT until it reaches them @BladeNzimandeMP @DBE_KZN” – Umfolozi College</i> <i>“Replying to @MuhleziNtombela @mzuasanda and 5 others</i> <i>@SABCNewsOnline What! Y'all don't understand what these kids are going through... are y'all serious” – Coastal TVET college</i> <i>“Even @elangenicollege does give us our transport ALLOWANCES... they claim @myNSFAS didn't include it this year. it's only that R975 which is supposed to be personal care. but now I'm not happy seeing that other colleges are getting better than others on Personal care” – Elangeni TVET college</i> <i>“Is this acceptable the chairperson of the students to lead if this way of behavior occurs it happened in Gamalakhe I'm so hurt to see this” – Esayidi TVET college</i> <i>“highly recommend that absolutely no one should ever decide to send anyone they know to register @ThekwiniCollege” – Thekwini TVET college</i>	28
Announcements	Student Affairs	<i>“Life Orientation lecturers @elangenicollege are preparing their lessons for #ActiveCitizenship” – Elangeni TVET college</i> <i>“@Ma_Lindrish @SABCNewsOnline I passed all my 3 years without selling my soul. Your statement goes for people who cannot stomach the truth” – Coastal TVET college</i> <i>“Call it Spring Fest Activation @esayidifet with @SMS_Shibe @BenzySA” – Esayidi TVET college</i>	14
	Campaigns	<i>“Working with @aidswize_sa @NanguManqonqoh and other artists pledged to combat the spread of HIV @CoastalKzn #aidswize @ Durban, KwaZulu-Natal instagram.com/p/B3fSiqQnjrv/...” - Coastal KZN TVET College</i>	3
	Student Protests	<i>“@ThekwiniCollege students were having a peaceful protest, obliging to the rules of not burning or vandalizing the school's property, but in return we got arrested and shot for simply fighting for our rights(allowances and residents) that we were</i>	12

		<i>promised to receive end of Jan” – Thekwini TVET college</i>	
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Discussion: The research findings above for the Kwazulu-Natal province showed more tweets under the Complaints and Announcements. Individuals, who are likely to be students, had grievances with the various colleges and tweeted their grievances on the Twitter accounts. The research findings above show that the colleges in Kwa-Zulu Natal received tweets under the Registration theme in the form of questions mainly involving the Registration dates and processes. The colleges usually post the Applications and Registration dates. The Announcements were usually about Campaigns that were held at TVET Colleges. There were no Funeral updates at any of the colleges. From the above results, there were less Registration tweets compared to Complaints and Announcement tweets.

5.5.5 Limpopo Province Results

The Limpopo Province has four TVET Colleges. Capricorn is the most active college in the Limpopo Province. Sephalale, Vhembe and Sekhukhune follow up with Sekhukhune being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from Limpopo Province are as follows (table 11):

- Administration
 - Bursaries
 - Academic Calendar
 - Registration
 - Applications
- Announcements
 - SRC Student Affairs
 - Warnings
 - Court Proceedings
 - Appointments and Opportunities
 - Funeral Updates

Table 11 - Limpopo Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub-themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Bursaries	<i>"All bursary beneficiaries are encouraged to open My NSFAS account before end of business today. All students without MY NSFAS Account will not be paid. If you are unable to login into MyNSFAS account, follow the steps on the poster on how to re-register MyNSFAS account."</i> – Capricorn TVET College <i>"Replying to @akreana_</i> <i>@myNSFAS @kagishor @CapricornTVET @ButiManamela @DrBladeNzimande What must one do before @myNSFAS responds to enquiries and ultimately pay allowances for Capricorn tvet college students. I have sent countless tweets and emails."</i> – Capricorn TVET College	2
	Academic Calendar	<i>"Take note that the 2nd Trimester applications and 2020 Graduations are postponed until further notice. Keep in touch with us through our social media platforms. Remember to always practice hygiene."</i> – Capricorn TVET College	1
	Registration	<i>"#Leptvetregistration2020 update Lephalale Campus We have NOW officially closed registration. Below are the dates for next registration: Engineering T2: 16-27 April 2020 Business Studies S2: 22 June-03 July 2020" The colleges give updates with the registration procedures, for example, "Replying to @VhembeTVETCol</i> <i>Business studies application for second semester registration?"</i> – Lephalale TVET college <i>"2020 REGISTRATION You are informed of the following: 1. Polokwane& Seshego campus programs are full. Registration for new applicants took place from 05-12 December 2019 2. Ramokgopa&Senwabarwana campus have limited space NB:there will be no walk-ins @ Polokwane& Seshego campus!"</i> – Capricorn TVET College	15
	Applications	<i>"Have you completed N6 and need to complete Work Integrated Learning for a period of 18 Months? TETA is giving you the opportunity to do so by applying for their Internship program in the following qualifications: ●HRM ●Financial Management"</i> – Capricorn TVET College <i>"Applications now OPEN for Worldskills International Competition Shanghai, China 2021"</i> – Capricorn TVET College	5

		<i>"Applications opening 2 March 2020 Download application form on capricorncollege.edu.za" – Capricorn TVET College</i> <i>"2020 Applications Now Open!!!! Click on this link to download the application form: capricorncollege.edu.za/main/content/2... " – Capricorn TVET College</i> <i>"@CapricornTVET how do we send applications." – Capricorn TVET College</i>	
Announcements	SRC Student Affairs	<i>"Vhembe TVET College Disability Awareness 2020, Makwarela Campus Celebrating under the theme "Who's Disabled" – Vhembe TVET college</i> <i>"SRC ELECTION UPDATE #Lephalale Campus SRC nominations are now open until the 12/02/2020. Students can visit SSS for nominations. SRC elections will take place on the 18/02/2020 and subsequently the inauguration will take place on the 20/01/2020" – Lephalale TVET college</i>	13
	Warnings	<i>"We have been made aware of fraudsters who are impersonating college officials and requesting students to pay a fee in order to be accepted to register at the college." - Capricorn TVET College</i>	1
	Court Proceedings	<i>"The accused Aubrey Manaka has pleaded Not guilty to all 5 charges against him. Case has been postponed to the 30 March 2020." - Capricorn TVET College</i> <i>"The Morebeng Magistrate's Court has postponed the rape and murder case of Aubrey Manaka to the 4th of February 2020. #justiceforpreciousramabulana" – Capricorn TVET College</i> <i>"Capricorn College for TVET students outside the Morweng Miegistrate Court The man accused of Precious Ramabulana's muder is due to appear at the Morebeng Magistrate's court." – Capricorn TVET College</i>	3
	Appointments and Opportunities	<i>"We would like to congratulate and welcome Ms K.J Moja on her appointment as Deputy Principal:Corporate Services. We wish Ms Moja well in her new role." – Capricorn TVET College</i> <i>"Meet Ms Sibongile Ramusi, the newly appointed Deputy Principal Finance." – Capricorn TVET College</i> <i>"Internship Opportunity for Capricorn TVET College students who have N6 in Civil Engineering and need to acquire experience •Stipend will b paid by DHET •Students with Disabilities r encouraged 2 apply •Closing Date:16/09/19 4 info call:Ms Mogale T on 0158800281 office hours" – Capricorn TVET College</i>	3

	Funeral Updates	<i>"#Final Goodbye Yesterday we said our final goodbye to our colleague Lesego Bernice Ntshabele @ Welgelval, Rustenburg. We will always remember Lesego for her ever-smiling face, her willingness to help and for the love...instagram.com/p/B8VdMLbFV81/..."</i> – Lephalale TVET college	3
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Discussion: The researcher noticed that the main themes tweeted about were Administration and Announcements. Notably the Registration sub-theme had many tweets followed by SRC Student Affairs, which were Political updates on Student Engagement events. The Limpopo province's research findings show that there were no Complaints in the period recorded. There were a few Funeral updates.

5.5.6 Mpumalanga Province Results

The Mpumalanga Province has three TVET Colleges. Nkangala is the most active college in the Mpumalanga Province. Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande follow up with Gert Sibande being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from Mpumalanga Province are as follows (table 12):

- Administration
 - Registration
 - Applications
- Complaints
- Announcements
 - Events
 - Student Updates
 - Competitions
- Prospective Employers


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Table 12 - Mpumalanga Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Registration	<i>"How to re-register a MyNSFAS account. Follow the simple steps outlined on the picture..."</i> – Nkangala TVET college	22

		<i>"Students came in numbers to register in Ermelo Campus." – Gert Sibande TVET college</i> <i>"Kindly be informed that registrations for Engineering studies (Nated) second trimester open on 13 May and will run until 15 May for first entering students, while Business Studies (Nated) second semester will be from 09 July 2019. Nkangala TVET College." – Nkangala TVET college</i> <i>"ATTENTION!! Nelspruit Campus returning Engineering Studies students, you are urged to go and get registered before 13:00 tomorrow, Friday 10 January 2020 as it is the last day for returning students' registrations." - Enhlanzeni TVET college</i>	
	Applications	<i>"WorkdSkills International Competition Shanghai, China 2021 Apply Now!" - Enhlanzeni TVET college</i> <i>"18 September 2019 was the closing date for 2020 applications at Mthimba Campus. 19 September 2019 is the closing date for Nelspruit Campus 2020 applications." - Enhlanzeni TVET college</i> <i>"@EhlanzeniTvet would any of your campuses be allowing late application for admission? On or after the 7th, after the learners have recieved their results?" - Enhlanzeni TVET college</i> <i>"Replying to @Nathi_Nsiba @GSCollege017</i> <i>Hello @GSCollege017. You cannot qualify for accommodation money and transport money at the same time. If you are receiving funding for accommodation then funding for transport will be granted to those who do not receive accommodation allowance. #nsfasSquad A.M" – Gert Sibande TVET college</i>	5
Complaints		<i>Replying to @Eskom_SA @NkangalaTVETCol and 4 others</i> <i>HOW THERE WILL NOT BE ANY ROLLING BLACKOUTS. AS THAT WILL BE A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THE UTTERLY PATHETIC SERVICE OUR GORVERMENT @MYANC AND @Eskom_SA FORCES THE TAX PAYERS TO PAY." – Nkangala TVET college</i> <i>"@EhlanzeniTvet Mashishing Campus Let this situation be dealt with ASAP students can't be</i>	15

		<i>put into 1 class for lesson Please intervene Management” – Enhlanzeni TVET college</i>	
Announcements	Events	<i>“2020 SRC Induction and Training camp at Premier Hotel, The Winkler.” – Enhlanzeni TVET college</i> <i>“Catch Gert Sibande TVET College live on Ikwekwezi FM Science and Technology show at 21h30-22h00. Theme: Civil Engineering and Building Construction. #TheLeadingCollegeBrandInSA” – Gert Sibande TVET college</i> <i>“The Nkangala District Business Expo is taking place from 19-20 February! Don't miss out if you are in the area @NkangalaTVETCol @EFFSC_WitbankMP @NBExpo2017” – Nkangala TVET college</i>	14
	Student Updates	<i>“Students visiting Perdekop Campus to write a placement test.” – Gert Sibande TVET college</i> <i>“Replying to @Nonjabulo_B</i> <i>Hi. Kindly note that the results are out.” – Nkangala TVET college</i>	11
	Competitions	<i>“Congratulations to Tshepo Lamula, Management Assistant (N4) student at Ermelo Campus for winning the college logo colours meaning competition. The new college logo colours mean the following: Gold - represents... facebook.com/gscollege.co.z...” – Gert Sibande TVET college</i> <i>“Congratulations @NkangalaTVETCol for this achievement” – Nkangala TVET college</i>	2
Prospective Employers		<i>“@EhlanzeniTvet is hiring click the link” – Enhlanzeni TVET college</i>	5

Discussion: The research findings above about the colleges in Mpumalanga show that there are more tweets under the Administration main theme, with the Registration sub-theme having more tweets compared to the Applications sub-theme. Individuals, such as students, tweeted questions about Applications. Institutions which provide funding such as NSFAS responded to student queries on Applications. The TVET College Twitter account administrators tweeted about Application and Registration dates.

Announcements such as Competition updates and events also had a high number of tweets during the period. The above findings also include Complaint tweets. Individuals such as students with Grievances, for example electricity issues, would use the Twitter platform to share their thoughts and views. All colleges from Mpumalanga did not have any Funeral updates in the given period.

5.5.7 North West Results

The North West Province has two TVET Colleges with main themes and sub-themes. Orbit is the most active college in the North West Province. Taletso follows up as being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from North West Province are as follows (table 13):

- Administration
 - Registration
 - Applications
 - Academic Calendar
- Prospective Employees
- Complaints
- Allegations
 - Corruption
- Announcements
 - Meetings
 - Student Protests
 - Competitions



Table 13 - North West Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub-themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Registration	"Can anyone help get a clue at @ORBIT_College at Mankwe. Particularly about registrations and students' accommodations." – Orbit TVET college "@ORBIT_College the is no registration, no new intake when classes resume on 20 Jan., what's happening: – Orbit TVET college	7

	Applications	<i>"2020 Applications NOW OPEN!!! Closing dates: New students- 22 November 2019; Senior students- 12 January 2020" – Orbit TVET college</i> <i>"Hi @Lesley79240397. Kindly be advised that NSFAS is obligated to the POPI Act, Protection of Personal Information Act to not divulge information to a third party. We urge that the applicant contact NSFAS directly. Thank you RN #nsfasSquad" - Taletso TVET college</i> <i>"Hi, please ask your wife to contact us directly on any platform with her ID number. Thank you, TB #NsfasSquad" - Taletso TVET college</i>	6
	Academic Calendar	<i>"@ORBIT_College is the any classes on Monday" – Orbit TVET college</i> <i>"Hi there @MosweleJ. Teaching & learning has resumed. Examinations started today, classes have also resumed." – Orbit TVET college</i> <i>"@ORBIT_College guys what's happening, is our academic calender still on order or it will be scrapped off completely" – Orbit TVET college</i>	5
Prospective Employees		<i>"I have a diploma in Management and registered with SACE FET phase for lecturing... I need a lecturing post @MotheoCollege @ORBIT_College @Taletso @HigherEduGovZA" – Orbit TVET college and - Taletso TVET college</i>	2
Complaints		<i>"@BladeNzimandeMP @ButiManamela how will TVETs rise when, in 2019, we are subjected to such brutality? Private security where outsourced to bulldoze their way into campus & eventually assault & shoot at unarmed students. @ORBIT_College" – Orbit TVET college</i> <i>"@ORBIT_College Why must students or former students wait years to receive their Diplomas from the college? I applied firstly in 2015 and it took 1 year 6 months to know it was rejected. I re-applied last year February, till today im been taken to and fro by your admin staff. Why?" – Orbit TVET college</i> <i>"Image other students getting allowance every month from the same funding scheme you applied for but not getting anything. How painful is that." – Taletso TVET college</i>	13
Allegations	Corruption	<i>"Replying to @philemonkgbsib1 @ButiManamela</i>	5

		@philemonkgbsib1 ORBIT College has noted your allegations regarding corruption at the College. Please find the attached memo from the Principal of the College for your urgent attention @ButiManamela @ministerdrblad1 @HigherEduGovZA” – Orbit TVET college “@ORBIT_College it is with the deepest regret use the word Corruption, I had an to meet Mr DE Mokoena who managed to help me understand that issue at hand is employer employee issue. I strongly believe in his leadership that orbit is in capable hands.” – Orbit TVET college “Replying to @philemonkgbsib1 @philemonkgbsib1 below is communique from @ORBIT_College following your meeting yesterday with Principal, Mr D Mokoena and Internal Audit & Assurance Manager @motseothatamoss. An email to this effect has also been sent to you. @ministerdrblad1 @ButiManamela @HigherEduGovZA” – Orbit TVET college “Replying to @ORBIT_College @motseothatamoss and 3 others I would like to apologize firstly to the minister, Mr Mokoena and orbit as an organisation. I hope that you will all accept my apology and put this matter to rest. I hope wish you all the best and thanks again for the meeting yesterday.” – Orbit TVET college	
Announcements	Meetings	“@philemonkgbsib1 below is communique from @ORBIT_College following your meeting yesterday with Principal, Mr D Mokoena and Internal Audit & Assurance Manager @motseothatamoss. An email to this effect has also been sent to you. @ministerdrblad1 @ButiManamela @HigherEduGovZA” – Orbit TVET college “Different SETAs present today @Taletso career awareness campaign exhibition and providing information on their offerings #TVETMonth2019” - Taletso TVET college	9
	Student Protests	“The situation at @ORBIT_College @MorningLiveSABC” – Orbit TVET college “Replying to @Bernnet_Ramsey @Adolphine_ and 2 others @SABCNewsOnline FIDELITY SECURITY shot the students of orbit mankwe campus. Because	6

		<i>the management of Orbit tvet college refuse to engage with the students.. “ – Orbit TVET college</i> <i>“@Taletso please do address students concerns as these strikes can't go on now and again due to you not putting students first” - Taletso TVET college</i>	
	Competitions	<i>“@ORBIT_College #studentsandstaff be the first to #winasheep SMS sheep to 33960 delivered to you on campus” – Orbit TVET college</i>	1

Discussion: The research findings above demonstrate that the colleges in North West received more tweets based on the main theme of Administration. The TVET Colleges tweeted about Registration dates and responded to queries about Registration and Applications. Notably institutions that offer Funding to students also responded to Enquiries on various TVET College Twitter pages. Complaints also have a high number of tweets with individuals complaining about Administration issues, such as issuing of certificates. A new main theme, Allegations, presented during the period being researched. Corruption allegations were addressed on one of the TVET College Twitter accounts. Prospective employees also used TVET College Twitter accounts to market themselves, with the hope of attracting potential employers.

5.5.8 Western Cape Province Results

The Western Cape Province has four TVET Colleges. False Bay is the most active college in the Western Cape Province. Boland, College of Cape Town and West Coast follow with Boland being the least active. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from Western Cape Province are as follows (table 14):

- Administration
 - Registration
 - Applications
- Complaints
- Announcements
 - Campaigns
 - Funeral Updates

- Competitions
- Student Affairs
- Current Affairs
- Prospective employers
 - Vacancy

Table 14 - Western Cape Results (Compiled by Researcher)

Themes	Sub-themes	Tweets	Number of Tweets
Administration	Registration	<i>"@CCT Official</i> <i>Can someone still register right now?" – College of Cape town TVET college</i> <i>"Applications are open for Part-Time studies. Click here for a full list of programmes you can still apply for until 14 February 2020." – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"@WestCoastCol Can someone still register right now?" – West Coastal TVET college</i>	11
	Applications	<i>"Late Applications and Registration are now available. Do not miss this opportunity. Interested and qualifying applicants who wish to study at the College of Cape Town in 2020 are hereby invited to apply." – College of Cape Town</i> <i>"Urgent notice from NSFAS! Is your application incomplete due to outstanding documents? Follow these instructions to upload the missing documents." – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"We still have space for some of our programmes at our Atlantis, Citrusdal, Vredenburg and Vredendal Campus. Get to the campus for more info. Applications for bursaries close on Friday! Get to the campus today to register for 2020." – West Coast TVET college</i> <i>"Replying to @FalsebayCollege</i> <i>Good day I would like to ask if it's possible for me to study on distance in course of electrical engineering" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"Replying to @onesmuspetrus</i> <i>Hello Onesmus, thank you for your tweet. Yes we offer Electrical Engineering N1-N6 via distance learning. Please visit our website on application information" – False Bay TVET college</i>	37

		<i>"I would like to know the documents that required when applying for NSFAS online" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"Your ID, consent form, guardian ID or parents" – False Bay TVET college</i>	
Complaints		<i>"Its so sad that i am told that @FalsebayCollege doesn't guarantee placement after my lil bother finished his N6 at this Institution. For what purpose is the Placement employed for?" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"And students are here on social media asking citizens for help cause you do not pat their meal allowancea on time." – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"@Noluyol81109652 Dear Claudi, please could you log your complaint on: falsebaycollege.co.za/index.php?opti... Your complaint will be fast tracked. Thank you" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"@Noluyol81109652 @FalsebayCollege sells nothing but dreams." – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"Replying to @FalsebayCollege</i> <i>My sister did motor mechanic for 3 years, for 3 years she is still waiting for her certificate, she is given different stories, and she is at home doing nothing" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"Replying to @JokoRaymond</i> <i>Hi Raymond, apology for the delay in response. Please contact the City campus on 021 464 2053 to follow up on the application" - College of Cape Town</i> <i>"You never responded to my question about late applications. Do you accept them?" - College of Cape Town</i> <i>"@CCT_Official I'm very disappointed when we went to your campus in town to check on the application that was made in 2019, and we found that my brother has be accepted but no one communicated that to him. And now they say he must come back in April because the class are full." - College of Cape Town</i>	14
Announcements	Campaigns	<i>"@FalsebayCollege just had a graduate from the college help me sort out a dstv Issue. He has helped before and this time I asked him where he studied? So pleased to hear it was at @FalsebayCollege - credit to the college! Very #entrepreneurial and very #customercentric!" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"National Water Week is an annual event that focuses public attention on the importance of water, one of South</i>	15

	<i>Africa's most limited resources. #BeResponsible. #SaveWater.</i> – False Bay TVET college <i>"Need to spread the news about @myNSFAS and TVET colleges like @FalsebayCollege. University is one of the options and lots of funding available"</i> – False Bay TVET college <i>"What are the benefits of joining the False Bay TVET College Alumni? Opportunity to join a Professional Forum Career opportunities Gateway to industry Networking Opportunities It's free and easy!"</i> – False Bay TVET college <i>"Our economy needs people with practical skills. With an apprenticeship through a TVET college, you can learn these skills and get on-the-job experience while you study. youtube.com/watch?v=fDbpvD... Choose to study with False Bay TVET College. Applications are open for Semester 2."</i> – False Bay TVET college <i>"Did you know? An STI is a germ that can cause an illness inside a person even though does not have any symptoms. Registered FBC Students may visit the mobile clinic for HIV testing with counselling. Speak to a registered nurse about STI screening and referral."</i> – False Bay TVET college <i>"TETACARES HIV AIDS Campaign team has kicked off the campaign run at West Coast College Malmesbury @WestCoastCol #MondayMotivation" - West Coast TVET College</i>	
Funeral updates	<i>"We came to support a former colleague from @WestCoastCol as she was laying her mother to rest" - West Coast TVET College</i>	1
Competition	<i>"Don't forget the competition is still on!! facebook.com/CCT.Home/posts"- College of Cape Town</i> <i>"Anti-Corruption poster and video design competition. Here is a chance to win!" - West Coast TVET College</i> <i>"Our very own College of Cape Town student Keagan Lucas is happy to be in Russia, Kazan and he is looking forward to the competition #WorldSkillsZA #WorldSkillsKazan2019"- College of Cape Town</i>	4
Student Affairs	<i>"#Meet our SRC! SRC allows students to share in decision-making with college management and their fellow-students" – False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"#Meet our SRCThe SRC is a governance structure elected annually through a democratic election process which is monitored by the Independent Electoral Committee (IEC)." – False Bay TVET college</i>	13

		<i>"Meet our SRC! SRC allows students to gain an understanding of democratic processes!" – False Bay TVET college</i>	
	Current Affairs	<i>"Did you know? The articles of our Constitution can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which means it is difficult for anyone, including the government, to take away the basic rights of a citizen." – West Coastal TVET college</i> <i>"Check out this months' MOT Youth of the Month: Preston Saayman! Preston is a newly trained Young MOTivator from @BolandCollege, Caledon Campus and is studying Human Resources! Click on the link below to read his poem! mot.org.za/mot-youth-of-t... #Courage2bReal" – Boland TVET college</i>	9
Prospective employers	Vacancies	<i>"Positions: Clerks, Secretary, Admin Officers, Social Work Courses: Grade 12 + Experience. NDip/Degree in Social Work, Information Technology, Supply Chain Management, Accounting or Financial Management, Fleet... facebook.com/244561931005/p..." -False Bay TVET college</i> <i>"INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS (SANParks) invites applications for a Internship Programme 2020. The internships are for the period of 12 months and the successful intern will receive" - College of Cape Town</i> <i>"ANNOUNCEMENT: RECRUITMENT Please note that ALL our recruitment activities in our local communities has been postponed until further notice. Visit our website on westcoastcollege.co.za. Download the application form here: bit.ly/30I01m" – Boland TVET college</i> <i>"Sales Internship at Momentum available for N6 graduates. Click here for programme requirements. ow.ly/pJG150xVSUX" - False Bay TVET college</i>	6

Discussion: The research findings above demonstrate that the colleges in the Western Cape had more tweets based on administration, the main theme. Applications, a sub-theme, had the most tweets, made up of TVET Colleges sharing Application details and a few individuals, such as students, enquiring about applications. Announcements, as another main theme, were the second most tweeted about in the Western Cape. The TVET Colleges had Campaigns, such as health and marketing of the TVET College, to attract prospective students. Individuals also tweeted Complaints with regards to TVET college Administrative issues, which some of the TVET Colleges redirected users to the

more formal way of logging complaints through a forum or telephonic follow-ups. The researcher found that there were no Funeral updates tweeted by TVET Colleges; however, an individual sent an update about the loss of a colleague's family member. Prospective employers' main theme was the least tweeted about in the period.

5.6 Themes Identified from the Tweets

The researcher identified some of the main themes and sub-themes that were on the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts and how they were linked to the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model which was used as a framework in this study. Table 15 below highlights the identified themes.

Table 15 - Themes Identified from Tweets (Compiled by Researcher)

Theory Construct	Main Themes	Sub Themes
Exposure	Administration  University of Fort Hare <i>Together in Excellence</i>	Academic Calendar
		Registration
		Applications
		Funding
		Bursaries
	Announcements	Campaigns
		Competitions
		Events
	Prospective Employers	Vacancies
Feedback	Administration	Registration
		Academic Calendar
		Applications
		Funding
		Bursaries
	Complaints	Service Delivery
Connecting	Administration	Registration
		Applications

		Funding
		Bursaries
		Academic Calendar
	Announcements 	Awards
		Campaigns
		Competitions
		Court Proceeding
		Events
		Funeral Updates
		Meetings
		Social Affairs
		Sports
		SRC Student Affairs
		Student Affairs
		Student Programs
		Student Protests
		Student Updates
	Allegations	Corruption
	Complaints	Service Delivery
	Prospective Employers	Vacancy
	Prospective Employees	
Sharing	Administration	Registration
		Applications
		Funding
		Bursaries
		Academic Calendar

When viewing the above research findings, it becomes clear that Announcements and Prospective Employers are main themes receiving exposure. In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that the TVET College Twitter accounts are utilised to market the TVET College, for example, when a TVET College mentions the advantages of enrolling at the institution. The research also outlines the use of Twitter to advertise job vacancies for those looking for employment. The exposure which falls under the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model explains how a TVET College can make use of Twitter to advertise the next enrolment dates, registration processes, funding and bursary options for prospective students. The TVET College can also advertise vacancies on its Twitter page to recruit new staff members. The exposure of the social media platforms provides consumers with a way to post or tweet about different products, services, brands or information that provide exposure to the college (Chen & DiVall, 2018).

In terms of feedback, social media integration is viewed as an interactive process which allows the same level information exchange between the TVET College and students. This creates long-term feedback communication procedures which provide an overall engagement approach between TVET Colleges and students (Garcia, 2011). Unlike the positive exposure the college gets, they also receive some not so favourable reactions to their products, services and performance. Together, the results indicate that complaints as a main theme, mainly provided feedback on services and products offered by various TVET Colleges. Individuals, such as students, got feedback on administrative queries such as registration dates, application dates, academic calendar, funding and bursary on Twitter.

The studies presented thus far provide evidence that Connecting as a theme allows open communication between the colleges and its stakeholders. The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model function of connecting refers to the connection of students and TVET Colleges with common interests. An example of connecting prospective TVET College students with the TVET College through social media and Twitter and its respective Twitter pages respectively removes the geographical location barriers which exist in the traditional means of communication (Tess, 2013). Many tweets on assignments were posted by both the college and the students. Prospective employers also got to answer

questions concerning job vacancies. Individuals displayed their grief and passed on their condolences to those that had lost a loved one from a college.

From the above results, under the Sharing theme, administration, allegations, prospective employers, prospective employees, complaints, announcements such as competitions were tweeted for those interested in participating. Garcia, (2011), suggests that social bookmarking sites can place information on the web with the capability of sharing with various social media platforms. This is due to a provocation engagement from individuals within similar groups, which then spreads into the social networking system. A TVET College or student was able to share a topic that interested them with peers on their Twitter page. Any sporting activities were also tweeted for those interested in joining to sign up for participation. Administration tweets about examination dates also allowed students time to prepare. Tweets were also posted to spread awareness of any danger that might affect the colleges or the students.

5.7 Conclusion



Tweets were collected from all the TVET Colleges from eight out of nine provinces in South Africa. From the data collected, thirty-six (72%) out of the fifty registered TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter as a social media platform for communication. Out of the thirty-six TVET Colleges in South Africa with Twitter accounts, 60% of the TVET Colleges are located in the urban areas and 40% of them are located in rural areas. The Free State and Mpumalanga had the highest percentages in terms of TVET Colleges with active Twitter accounts and Northern Cape had the least. Administration, Allegations, Announcements, Complaints, Prospective Employees and Prospective Employers were the main themes identified from the tweets.

Chapter 6 – Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter on social media as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. Most of the TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter as a means of communication, although for various purposes, as was highlighted in the previous chapter.

The effectiveness of Twitter as a communication tool amongst South African TVET Colleges is discussed in this chapter, after which the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model are presented that can be used by TVET Colleges as a framework against which to test the effective use of Twitter as well as the Critical Success Factors.

6.2 Demographics

The study comprised thirty-six TVET College Twitter accounts distributed through eight of the nine provinces in South Africa. Tweets were collected from all the TVET Colleges official Twitter accounts. The data collected consisted of tweets, retweets and replies from individuals such as prospective students, students, TVET College administrators, prospective employers and DHET staff.

It emerged that thirty-six of the fifty registered TVET Colleges in South Africa used Twitter as a communication tool. Notably, neither of the two Northern Cape TVET Colleges had Twitter accounts, as both use Facebook as a communication tool. The findings of the study suggest that the tweets were mostly written in English, IsiXhosa and isiZulu. In South Africa, isiZulu is South Africa's main language, spoken by almost a quarter (23%) of the entire population (Ntshangase & Bosch, 2020), followed by IsiXhosa which has (16%) of the population speaking the language. Ten percent of the entire population in SA speak English and it is also an international language (Alexander, 2018). These figures resonate with the research findings which highlighted three dominant languages that were mostly used on twitter by SA students (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The frequency of tweets showed that TVET Colleges in rural areas had less tweets as

compared to urban TVET Colleges. This implies that colleges in urban areas have more active Twitter accounts as compared to rural areas (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2018). It emerged that most tweets were from the TVET Colleges as they posted the most on Twitter accounts, using it mostly for administration, announcements and registration related issues. The least tweets were posted by prospective employers who tweeted about job vacancies.

The TVET Colleges included in this study are located in both rural and urban areas of South Africa. The researcher noted that twenty-two of the TVET Colleges are located in urban areas whereas fourteen of the TVET Colleges are located in the rural areas (Buthelezi, 2018; Statistics South Africa, 2001). Active TVET Twitter accounts were determined by checking the number of tweets that were posted per month on Twitter. Consequently, non-active Twitter accounts were identified by the absence of content posted on Twitter. Most active Twitter accounts were from TVET Colleges in urban areas. However, there were other TVET Colleges located in rural areas which had active Twitter accounts based on the monthly tweets in provinces such as Mpumalanga and Free State, which has both rural and urban TVET Colleges.



6.2.1 The Use of Twitter in TVET Colleges

The TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter to communicate with Twitter users such as prospective students, students and prospective employees. The various users also tweet to TVET Colleges if they have feedback, information, queries or concerns that are directed at the TVET Colleges. Prospective employers also use the TVET Twitter platforms to share job vacancies which may be of interest to the students or community. The DHET uses the TVET Twitter platforms to communicate with the colleges and students on important announcements regarding higher education. From the findings, the researcher grouped the tweets into different themes. The themes were placed into two categories of main themes and sub-themes. The main themes that were mostly highlighted amongst the tweets in all the provinces were tweets on announcements, complaints, administration and prospective employers. Sub-themes were common tweets that were posted on the TVET Colleges' Twitter accounts and these were grouped under the main themes.

The study identified main themes and sub-themes that were from the Twitter accounts of TVET Colleges in South Africa. Under the theme of Administration, the most popular tweets were on registration. Most tweets on registration were either from students who were inquiring about registration dates or from the colleges which were informing students of the opening and closing dates for registration. The research findings show that TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter for communication. At the beginning of a year and beginning of a semester, there is a great deal of activity on the Twitter accounts, with tweets under Administration, announcements, being the popular themes tweeted about. From the findings, the researcher noted that Twitter is mostly busy when students tweet about registration and administration related issues. This is mostly a period when the colleges are about to open, the period between January and March. A noticeable trend that was highlighted from the study findings is that students retweet registration related queries. The research findings showed that the activity of TVET Twitter accounts was determined by counting the monthly number of tweets which were recorded on the TVET Twitter accounts of each TVET College in different provinces. Consequently, non-active accounts were determined by tweets (content posted on TVET Twitter accounts) which, if none were recorded at any college for a month, it was regarded as a non-active account.



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A study by Tang and Hew (2017) identified the two most common ways in which individuals at educational institutions were using Twitter. The two were Communication and Assessment purposes as shown in Figure 9 below. Communication can be linked to the Announcements main theme identified by the researcher. However, Assessments do not have a direct link to the themes identified in this research.

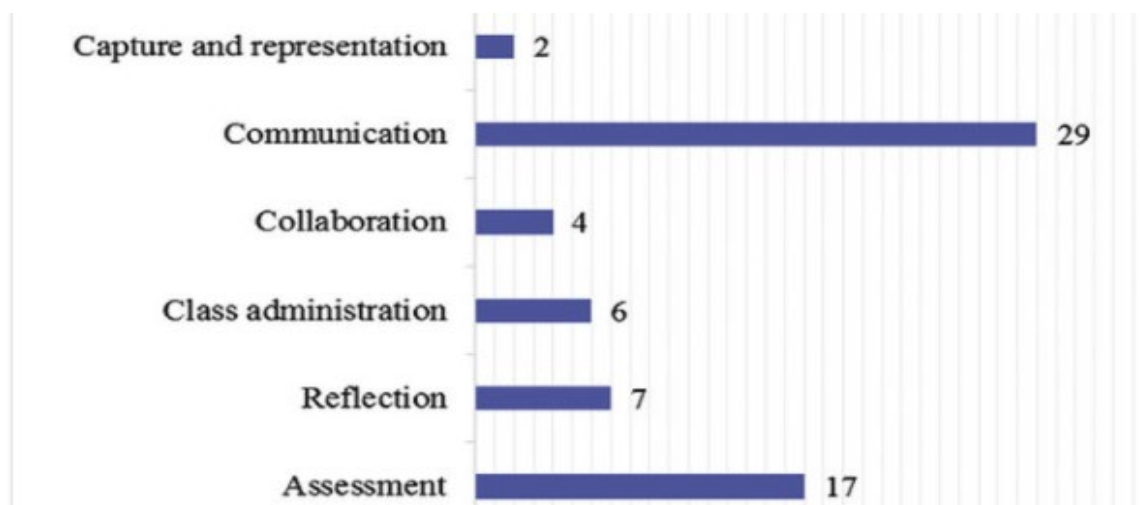


Figure 9. Categories of Twitter use in literature from 2006 to 2015 (Tang and Hew, 2017)

Raes, Adams, Montrieux and Schellens (2016) found that 43,3% of the student population preferred a closed forum on the learning management system of the university over the use of Twitter. This was evident during the focus groups' discussions in which alternative (social media) tools to activate prior knowledge about lesson topics, increase interaction and discussion within and without lectures, and to increase social bonding were discussed. Table 16 below shows the difference between students' expectations and experiences about the use of Twitter in higher educational institutions.

Table 16 - Differences between students' expectations and experiences about the use of Twitter in higher education (Raes et al., 2016)

	Pretest	Posttest	Difference	
	M (SD)	M (SD)	t(52)	p-value
Twitter is an interesting tool to get insight into fellow students' opinions.	4.53(0,82)	4.19(1.00)	2,34	.02
Twitter increases the flexibility within learning and instruction.	3.91(0.93)	4.28(0.99)	-2.11	.04
Because of Twitter, I feel more connected with the teacher and teaching assistants.	3.57(0.95)	3.19(1.09)	2.18	.03
Twitter is a good tool to become acquainted with relevant expertise in our field.	4.02(0.95)	4.47(0.95)	-3.04	.00
Twitter fades the border between education and private life.	4.06(1.05)	4.38(1.00)	-2.02	.05
Twitter is a good tool to learn how to filter information.	3.57(1.10)	4.04(0.98)	-3.60	.00

6.3 Mapping Themes to the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model

Chapter One of this study introduced the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model. This section discusses how the themes from the analysis of the tweets link to the Social Media-

Integration-Theory-Model which was discussed in Chapter Three. The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model consists of four quadrants, namely, Exposure, Connecting, Sharing and Feedback. The Exposure quadrant discusses social media platforms introduced changes from the traditional methods of communicating, such as tweeting about different products and services available in real time. The Connecting quadrant refers to connecting individuals such as students and TVET Colleges with common interests, while removing any barriers such as geographical barriers which exist in the traditional means of communication. The Sharing quadrant examines the capability of social media to share with various social media platforms, with the aim to provoke engagement from individuals within similar groups. The Feedback quadrant discusses the interactive process which allows individuals and groups to make recommendations on a product or service and give valuable feedback.

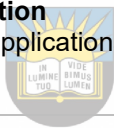
The researcher has acknowledged some of the main themes and sub-themes that were on the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts and how they were linked to the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model which was used in this study in table 15 in the previous chapter.

Table 17 is a summary of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model and how the themes from the analysis of the tweets link to the various constructs. The table, therefore, shows themes that were highlighted table 15 and how they can be linked to the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model. Each of these constructs and theme will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Table 17 – Model constructs vs Themes (Compiled by Researcher)

Model constructs	Themes
Exposure	• Administration (Academic calendar, registration, applications, funding and bursaries) • Announcements (campaigns, competitions and events) • Prospective Employers (vacancies)
Feedback	• Administration

	(Registration, academic calendars, applications, funding and bursary) • Complaints (service delivery)
Connecting	• Administration (registration, application, funding, academic calendar and bursaries) • Announcements (awards, campaigns, competitions, court proceedings, events, funeral updates, meetings, social affair, sports, SRC student affairs, student affairs, student programs, student protests, student updates). • Allegations (corruption) • Complaints (service delivery) • Prospective employers (vacancies)
Sharing	• Administration (registration, applications, funding, bursaries, academic calendar)



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6.3.1 Twitter as an Effective Tool to Provide Exposure to TVET Colleges.

The first quadrant, exposure, explains how a TVET College can make use of Twitter to advertise the next enrolment dates, registration processes, funding and bursary opportunities to prospective students. The TVETs may consider using Twitter to advertise important dates because Twitter posts can be retweeted and reposted such that, if a post reaches one person, it is likely to be reposted to more than five people (de Lanerolle, 2013). When the message reaches more than five people, it increases the chances of the TVET Colleges getting more prospective students enrolling at the TVET Colleges, through exposure.

TVET Colleges also advertise vacancies on their Twitter page to recruit new staff members. This is a fast and cost-effective way of advertising job vacancies: students who are interested in the job advert will simply request more information on Twitter. This also allows students to take note of the job requirements that will be mentioned on the tweet.

The wide reach of the social media platforms provides consumers with a way to post or tweet about different products, services, brands or information that provide exposure to the college (Chen & DiVall, 2018).

It is important for TVETs to use Twitter for building their brand by providing an insight into what TVET Colleges offer and why students need to enrol there. There are quite a number of TVET Colleges in South Africa, hence it is important for TVET Colleges to use Twitter to engage with their different target markets and remain competitive with other higher education learning institutions. The main themes that provide exposure to TVET Colleges which were highlighted in the study were administration, announcements and prospective employers. The following tweets were categorised under each sub-theme in order to provide a brief discussion as to why the tweets played a pivotal role to the colleges.

- Academic Calendar

The academic calendar sub-theme was a compilation of Tweets that sought to have clarification of dates on several events that were likely to be of paramount importance to both the students and the TVET Colleges. The tweets were mostly the same because it appeared that posting about registration dates, closing dates, enrolment dates or examination dates was advantageous to both the TVET College staff and their students. The study helped the researcher to understand that social networks such as Twitter can be essential in providing a successful two-way communication. Such communication enables the receiver and the sender to both get a clear understanding of the message that is being passed. The tweets which were categorised under this sub-theme, were based on announcing dates of several events that were to take place at the colleges. An example of the tweets which fall under the academic calendar sub-theme is shown below:

“When is the closing date please help @ikhalaTVET2” - Ikhala TVET College

- Registration

Registration related queries were mostly common from the prospective students and students who wanted to find out more about registration, although in a few instances, the colleges would also post to remind students to take note of the registration dates before

they closed. The tweets categorised under this sub-theme were mostly based on registration queries. The researcher noted that registration is an important aspect to all the TVET Colleges as it is crucial for students to register at the beginning of every semester. Most tweets on registration were posted by students who wanted to inquire more about registration. An example of the type of tweets which fall under the registration sub-theme is shown below:

“When is the Closing date for registration” - Midlands College

- Applications

The tweets which were aligned with this sub-theme were based on applications. Applications were not commonly posted on TVET Twitter accounts as they were mostly posted by the TVET College administration. These tweets were meant to notify prospective students as well as current students that applications for the upcoming year or semester had been opened. The tweets also provided contact information that prospective students could use if they wanted more information on the applications. Most queries on application dates and the application process were responded to by staff members of the TVET Colleges. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“Dear SWGC Prospective Students SECOND TRIMESTER APPLICATION WILL OPEN ON 11 MARCH 2020 For more information, please visit swgc.co.za or contact 086 176 8849 Thank you” – South West Gauteng TVET College

- Campaigns

Campaigns fell under tweets that were meant to raise awareness on a specific topic or a specific agenda. However, these tweets were not really common as compared to the other tweets. The researcher learnt that Twitter can be used as a powerful tool that raises awareness on a specific area. An example of the type of tweets which fall under the campaigns sub-theme is shown below:

“National Water Week is an annual event that focuses public attention on the importance of water, one of South Africa's most limited resources. #BeResponsible. #SaveWater.” – False Bay TVET college

- Vacancies

The tweets which were aligned with this theme were mostly about job offers/vacancies that were posted by prospective employers. Vacancy Tweets were meant to alert students, staff and the Twitter community of open job vacancies. These types of tweets were quite common as they were frequently posted on most TVET College Twitter accounts. The researcher learnt that Twitter can be used to advertise job vacancies. An example of the type of tweets which fall under the vacancy sub-theme is shown below:

“Sales Internship at Momentum available for N6 graduates. Click here for programme requirements. ow.ly/pJGI50xVSUX” - False Bay TVET College

6.3.2 Twitter as an Effective Tool to Provide Feedback to TVET Colleges

The second quadrant, feedback, explains the interactive process which allows the same level information exchange between the TVET College and students. This creates long-term feedback communication procedures which provide an overall engagement approach between TVET Colleges and students. TVET Colleges therefore, can use Twitter accounts to engage with students by creating a platform where students can tweet about anything connected to the college and the services offered. This involves negative or positive reactions from students when they post about services and products offered by various TVET Colleges. The TVET Colleges, in turn, will be able to improve on the areas of service and products raised by students in their complaints. The TVET Colleges can use the feedback from students to implement strategies that address areas of concern raised by students. On the other hand, it is important for students who post on the Twitter accounts to get responses from the TVET Colleges because if the raised issues are not addressed, it might result in student protests, which would reflect badly on the TVET College's reputation. When student grievances are addressed timeously, this creates a good relationship between the colleges and their students. The following tweets

were categorised under each sub-theme in order to provide a brief discussion as to why the tweets played a pivotal role to the colleges:

- Registration

The tweets categorised under this sub-theme were mostly based on registration queries. The researcher noted that registration is an important calendar event to all the TVET Colleges as all the TVET Colleges had tweets on registration related queries on their Twitter accounts. An example of the type of tweets which fall under the registration sub-theme is shown below:

“Makwarela Campus: Registration for returning students will be opened tomorrow Sunday the 19th January 2020.” – Vhembe TVET college

- Academic calendars

Students who were not sure of dates would normally find it beneficial to post queries on the TVET Twitter pages with the anticipation that the colleges would respond. In most cases, other students would respond or retweet the asked question or the colleges would simply respond to the students' queries. Likewise, colleges shared important dates concerning registrations or examinations so as to ensure that all of their students would receive the message. The tweets which were categorised under this sub-theme, were based on announcing dates of several events that were to take place at the colleges. An example of the tweets which fall under the academic calendar sub-theme is shown below:

“Replying to @JayReddington2

Yes, applications are open. Classes start 16 July 2019. falsebaycollege.co.za” – False Bay TVET college

- Applications

Posts on applications were quite common on the TVET Twitter accounts. Colleges normally tweeted about application dates and this would alarm prospective students who sought to apply at the TVET Colleges. TVET Colleges would then provide feedback by replying or tweeting about applications. In return, there were quite a few students who

also posted inquiries on when the application would start. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“Dear SWGC Prospective Students SECOND TRIMESTER APPLICATION WILL OPEN ON 11 MARCH 2020 For more information, please visit swgc.co.za or contact 086 176 8849 Thank you” – South West Gauteng TVET College

- Funding and Bursaries

This category of tweets was not common on all the TVET Colleges' Twitter accounts. However, there were a few colleges that had tweets based on funding and bursaries. These tweets were specifically meant for students who were funded for their school fees or were bursary beneficiaries. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“Good afternoon, please check out this info on [@myNSFAS](https://www.instagram.com/p/B78TK58AFfw/) [instagram.com/p/B78TK58AFfw/...](https://www.instagram.com/p/B78TK58AFfw/)” - Umfolozi College



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- Service Delivery

Service delivery tweets were common on all the TVET Twitter accounts. These tweets were mostly from students who complained about poor service delivery by the colleges. It is important to note that students can use Twitter as a platform for passing on a message of their personal experiences, especially poor service delivery, that they would have endured. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“Replying to @FalsebayCollege

Why You Guys Don't Offer Student Accommodation?” – False Bay TVET College

“Replying to @BrioKroza

Hello @BrioKroza, we don't have the necessary infrastructure to offer residence.” – False Bay TVET College

6.3.3 Twitter as an Effective Tool to Connect Communication to TVET Colleges

The third quadrant, connecting, which falls under the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model explains how connecting as a theme allows open communication between the colleges and its students as well as prospective students. The TVET Colleges may consider using Twitter as it allows them to reach out to their students (current and prospective) with little geographical barriers. It is important for TVET Colleges to reach students wherever they are as it makes communication cheaper and more effective. The use of Twitter will also allow TVET Colleges to post about assignments, examinations and job vacancies with the anticipation that the tweets will reach more students, despite their geographical location. Furthermore, TVET Colleges can use Twitter to connect students to their prospective employers. When Tweets on job vacancies have a contact point, students can easily inquire more about the job on offer. It is also important to take note that TVET Colleges can use Twitter to communicate about deaths. This creates a platform where students can show grief and pass on their condolences to those that have lost a loved one from the colleges. Below are examples of the tweets which were categorised under each sub-theme.



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- Registration

Tweets on registration are essential in ensuring a solid communication between students and the colleges. It appears that registration is of paramount importance in every TVET College because tweets in this regard appear on most active TVET Twitter accounts. Colleges emphasise registration dates to prospective students and students that need to register without fail. Below is an example of the tweets which were categorised under each sub-theme:

"2020 Registration Dates 13-17 January 2020 visit tsc.edu.za for more information. #sponsored @TSC_TVET" – Tshwane South TVET College

- Application

Tweets on applications were meant to inform prospective students of the application dates and the closing dates. Application tweets also highlighted the programs that were offered by TVET Colleges and the essential supporting documents that were crucial in order to ensure a successful application. Below is an example of the tweets which were categorised under each sub-theme:

“Umbumbulu Campus Applications Now Open!!! 1) Public Management 2) Financial Management Closing Date: 30 April 2019 Required supporting documents are as follows: 2 x ID Certified Copies 2 x Parent/Guardian Certified ID Copy 2 x Certified Copies Matric Results” - Coastal KZN TVET College

- Funeral updates

The tweets which were categorised under this sub-theme, were based on death announcements. This was a common type of tweet in most TVET Colleges with active accounts. The TVET Colleges announced the deaths of staff or students and in so doing, they connected students, staff and grieving families as individuals passed on their condolences through Twitter. An example of such tweets which fall under the funeral updates sub-theme is shown below:

“#Final Goodbye Yesterday we said our final goodbye to our colleague Lesego Bernice Ntshabele @ Welgelval, Rustenburg. We will always remember Lesego for her ever-smiling face, her willingness to help and for the love...instagram.com/p/B8VdMLbFV81/...” – Lephalale TVET College

- SRC student affairs

Tweets that fall under this category were queries, concerns or any issues which were specifically directed at the SRC. This was a common type of tweet amongst TVET Colleges and the tweets were mainly from students. Twitter connected students and SRC members thereby enabling communication on various issues. The role of the SRC in colleges is to address and oversee issues that concern students. However, the colleges also posted tweets that related to nominations and selection of the new SRC board. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“SRC ELECTION UPDATE #Lephalale Campus SRC nominations are now open until the 12/02/2020. Students can visit SSS for nominations. SRC elections will take place on the 18/02/2020 and subsequently the inauguration will take place on the 20/01/2020” – Lephalale TVET College

- Student protests

Student protests were also quite popular topics on the TVET Twitter accounts. It appears that the protests are mostly student driven as they seek to pass a message to the TVET Colleges concerning the grievances that they want addressed. The researcher noticed that students who are at colleges also use Twitter accounts to plan a protest and ensure that all the details of the protests are shared on the tweets. Students also used the Twitter platform to connect with media houses and share information. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

Replying to @Tshinaki_ @MzwakheMzimkhu8 and 4 others

@SABCNewsOnline I'm leading a delegation to demand justice on this issue.”– Coastal KZN TVET College



- Competitions

The Tweets that fall under this category were tweets on competitions which were specifically directed at the students. These were not very common types of tweets amongst TVET Colleges and the tweets were mainly to congratulate students that had excelled and were doing well in their academic achievements or to motivate students to be competitive. The TVET Colleges also used Twitter to connect their students with competitions which might interest them. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“Hello Russia Competition starts on the 22nd August 2019 Russia, Kazan #Worldskills #CapricornTVETCollege @tbose_matlou @WorldSkillsZA...” – Capricorn TVET College

- Court proceedings

The tweets which were categorised under this sub-theme, were based on court proceedings. This was not a common type of tweet in nearly all the TVET Colleges. Such tweets were posted by the Capricorn TVET College which were meant to connect and update students on a court case that was on-going. An example of the tweets which fall under the court proceedings sub-theme is shown below:

“The Morebeng Magistrate's Court has postponed the rape and murder case of Aubrey Manaka to the 4th of February 2020. #justiceforpreciousramabulana” – Capricorn TVET College

- Corruption

Tweets on corruption were not very common on all the TVET Colleges. These tweets were meant to air issues that were corrupt, either between the college and its employees or between the students and the colleges. Twitter was used to connect students and staff who may have been interested in corruption allegations. An example of the tweets which fall under the corruption sub-theme is shown below:

“@ORBIT_College it is with the deepest regret use the word Corruption, I had an to meet Mr DE Mokoena who managed to help me understand that issue at hand is employer employee issue. I strongly believe in his leadership that orbit is in capable hands.” – Orbit TVET College

- Vacancies

The tweets which were aligned with this theme were mostly about job offers/vacancies that were posted by prospective employers. Vacancy Tweets were meant to connect prospective employees such as students with prospective employers. These types of tweets were quite common as they were frequently posted on most TVET Twitter pages. The researcher learnt that Twitter can be used to advertise job vacancies. An example of the type of tweets which fall under the vacancy sub-theme is shown below:

“Positions: Clerks, Secretary, Admin Officers, Social Work Courses: Grade 12 + Experience. NDip/Degree in Social Work, Information Technology, Supply Chain

*Management, Accounting or Financial Management, Fleet...
facebook.com/244561931005/p...”- FalseBay TVET College*

6.3.4 Twitter as an Effective Tool to Provide Sharing for TVET Colleges

The fourth quadrant, sharing, which falls under the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model explains how a student or TVET College can share a topic that interests him or her with his or her peers on their Twitter page. The TVET's may consider using Twitter to announce sporting activities and encourage those interested in joining to sign up. It is important for the colleges to communicate with students about sports so that students engage and participate in sporting activities. Some students will not be aware of the type of sporting activities offered by the colleges, hence using Twitter to discuss sports will enlighten students on such offerings. Noticeably, TVET Colleges can also announce tweets on examination dates to allow students time to prepare. Understandably examination dates are crucial for students and the colleges can use this platform to highlight when examinations start and end. In any case, if students forget their examination dates, they can be guided by the tweets which would have been shared by TVETs. Moreover, TVET Colleges may also consider using Twitter to spread awareness of any danger that may affect the colleges. It is important for students to be alert of any form of dangers that are likely to affect them. Below are examples of the tweets which were categorised under each sub-theme:

- **Registration**

Tweets on registration are very common on all the TVET Colleges Twitter accounts. It appears that registration is of paramount importance hence the tweets on registration seem to occur on all TVET College twitter accounts. In some instances, tweets on registration included the programmes for which students could register. Colleges emphasise on registration dates to remind students that they need to register without fail. Below is an example of the tweets which were categorised under each sub-theme:

“Interested in online distance learning? Please come through to Richtek to register for the following programmes: -Public Management -Financial Management -Business Management -Human Resources Management For more” – Umfolozi College

- Applications

Application tweets were meant to notify prospective students as well as current students that applications for the upcoming year or semester had opened. Most queries on application dates and the application process were responded to by the TVET College staff. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:

“Umbumbulu Campus Applications Now Open!!! 1) Public Management 2) Financial Management Closing Date: 30 April 2019 Required supporting documents are as follows: 2 x ID Certified Copies 2 x Parent/Guardian Certified ID Copy 2 x Certified Copies Matric Results” - Coastal KZN TVET College

- Funding and Bursary

This category of tweets was not common on all the TVET Colleges' Twitter accounts. However, there were a few colleges that had tweets based on funding and bursaries. These tweets were specifically meant for students who were funded for their school fees or were bursary beneficiaries. An example of the type of tweets which fall under this category is shown below:



“All bursary beneficiaries are encouraged to open My NSFAS account before end of business today. All students without MY NSFAS Account will not be paid. If you are unable to login into MyNSFASaccount, follow the steps on the poster on how to register MyNSFAS account.” – Capricorn TVET College

- Academic calendar

The tweets which were categorised under this sub-theme, were based on announcing dates of several events that were to take place at the colleges. The TVET Colleges tweeted dates that were important for students to note. An example of the tweets which fall under the academic calendar sub-theme is shown below:

“Dear prospective students Please note that our applications for Trimester 2 (Engineering Studies) are currently open until 31 March 2020. You can apply online by visiting ewc.edu.za and click on the Apply here link.” - Ekurhuleni West TVET College

It was essential for the colleges to have Twitter accounts in order for them to be able to announce dates for upcoming events as they kept the students abreast of and up-to-date with current events taking place at colleges. It is also important to note that TVET Twitter accounts were used to disseminate important information on funeral updates, sports, funding and bursaries. The content which was posted on the Twitter accounts was very informative. Students, TVET College administration and local communities were alarmed at corruption taking place in colleges, SRC student affairs as well as protests that were to take place. One of the key reasons why TVET Colleges used Twitter for communicating with students, prospective students and TVET College staff was to ensure that important dates of events to take place, registrations, applications and all of the above-mentioned activities were not missed by students.

6.4 Conceptual Framework

The Figure 10 below presents a conceptual framework for this study. Figure 10 has been adapted and modified using Garcia (2011). Garcia (2011) states that this model is a total engagement method, which was developed through interactive procedures that permit information exchange on a similar level between the student and the TVET Colleges. This framework shows linkages of the four quadrants that are part of the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model and the themes that were identified on Twitter in this study. The use of Twitter was measured by the tweets that were posted and through the number of the actual tweets per month. It is clear that the use of Twitter has not been fully incorporated in TVET Colleges yet. As a result, the framework has been used in order to illustrate how the use of Twitter can be improved as a communication tool in and by TVET Colleges in South Africa.

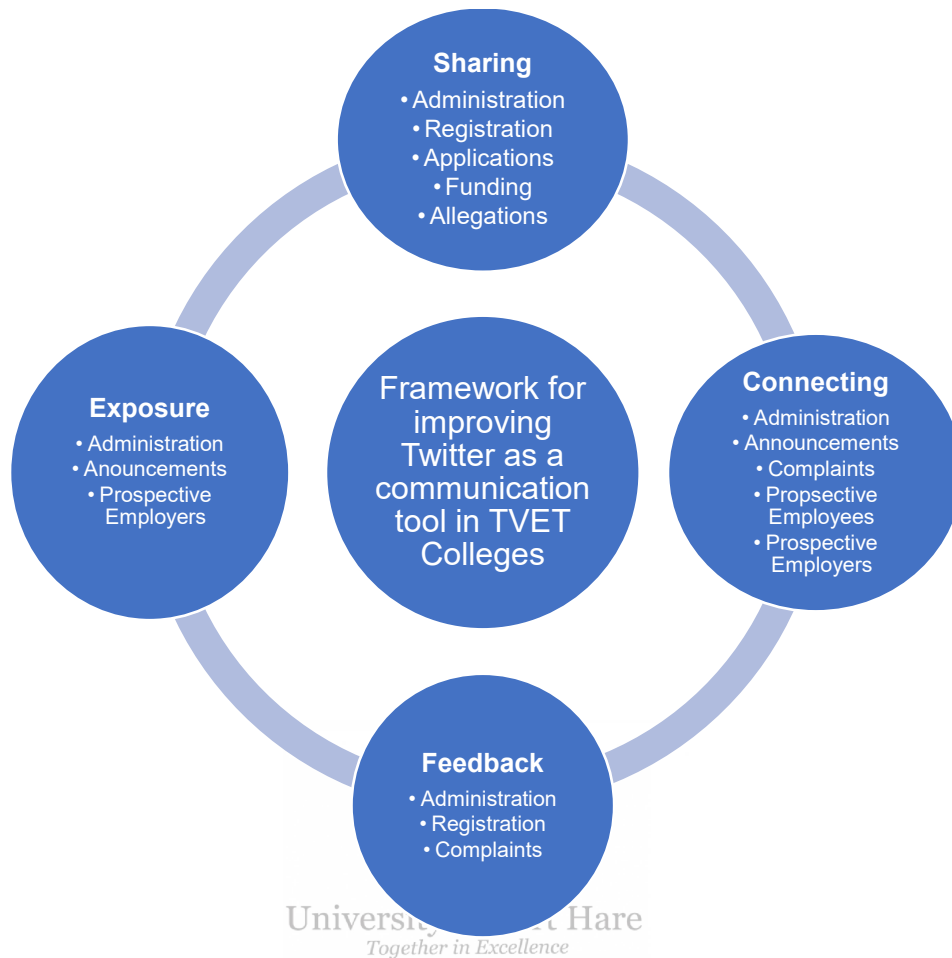


Figure 10. A framework for improving Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges (Compiled by Researcher using the Social Integration Model)

6.5 Critical Success Factors

A Critical Success Factor (CSF) is an important strategy that must be executed by an organisation (Khalek, 2018). Communication through the use of social media is essential to TVET Colleges and yet it remains one of the neglected areas in TVET Colleges in South Africa. There is need for TVET Colleges in South Africa to improve on their use of Twitter as a communication tool. In order for them to be successful, there are significant factors to be considered which:

- Are crucial to the performance of the TVET Colleges' Twitter accounts

- Profit the whole organisation, for example, in this study the organisations would be TVET Colleges, staff members and the students.

The CSFs are better known as phases of action which can contain the means or intended results, as well as the action. The research study considered the following CSFs which will improve Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa (Khalek & Mohamad, 2018):

CSF 1: Procurement and maintenance of ICT infrastructure

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is known at TVET Colleges in South Africa as an instrument for promoting teaching and learning. Social media is used in South Africa as a tool to enhance the quality of communication and it facilitates the easy access of information at TVET Colleges (Pereira-Kotze, Doherty & Swart, 2020; Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2018). The research findings showed that most active Twitter accounts were from TVET Colleges in the urban areas as compared to the rural ones; this could be due to the fact that internet is not easily accessible in remote areas. In order to improve the effectiveness of using Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges, there is need for colleges in remote areas to consider improving their ICT infrastructure, such as their computer laboratories, and by providing free internet that will allow easier access and use to the TVET College staff and students. The TVET students would then be able to access computer laboratories and Twitter so as to communicate as needed with the TVET College or other students.

CSF 2: Implementing a policy that guides the use of social networks

TVET Colleges in SA can improve on their use of social media as a communication tool by having a policy that promotes the use of social networks such as Twitter. Having a policy put in place in colleges will establish a strong foundation of communication between colleges and their students, thus increasing the chances of successfully using social media as an effective tool for communication. The TVET Colleges can consider instituting a media management team that makes sure the policy is implemented and followed up. The purpose of the policy would be to encourage better communication and mostly engagement so that Twitter accounts would enjoy increased traffic and activity. This will ensure that there is solid communication which is also equally active between the TVET

Colleges and their students, as well as for prospective employers who post job vacancies on Twitter accounts. If the policy is successfully implemented, DHET will also benefit when they post relevant information on Twitter as it will reach a greater audience of students. The policy must be mandatory so that students will know the importance of participating on the colleges' social media platforms. It is also essential for TVET Colleges to promote the use of social media platforms such as Twitter by establishing group discussion forums on Twitter that allow students to engage and discuss school related topics together.

CSF 3: Raising awareness on using Twitter as a tool for communication

It is important to raise awareness of how to use social media effectively in colleges. The TVET Colleges can draft planning strategies that seek to understand the trends that are currently dominating on TVET Twitter accounts and to identify what they are doing wrong and how it can be corrected. The use of Twitter stretches beyond personal use; it can be more effective when students and the TVET College staff engage and participate more on Twitter accounts. The TVET Colleges should consider Twitter as a means of generating awareness on increasing enrolments by advertising about their colleges on Twitter and launching campaigns at their schools that encourage maximum participation on Twitter accounts. Out of the fifty registered TVET Colleges, fourteen do not have Twitter accounts and Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Northern Cape and North West have the least active TVET College Twitter accounts. This can be addressed by having policies in place to promote the use of Twitter in TVET Colleges. By using Twitter more often for communication, TVET Colleges and students will establish an effective platform that will allow communication even during uncertain times, for example, the current COVID-19 pandemic which has schools communicating with their students online. It therefore is essential to encourage students to have more interactions with their TVET Colleges on Twitter. The TVET Colleges should consider having hashtag (#) campaigns that encourage students to post tweets on TVET Colleges' Twitter pages. This will help to increase activity on their pages thus having more students participating on Twitter and making use of Twitter more efficiently and effectively as a communication tool. The colleges can highlight the benefits of using Twitter for academic purposes as it can be used to alert students of the crucial announcements such as assignments,

communication for facilitating group discussions and communicating with peers concerning assignment related queries. The use of Twitter in the educational process could go a long way to help the TVET College administrators in applying the inquiry-based approach and should encourage the collaboration between the colleges and the students, thereby ensuring engagement.

CSF 4: Intensive Training to Manage Administration of Twitter Accounts

From the research findings, the researcher identified the need to have intensive training for the management of Twitter accounts. Some of the tweets have one-way communication, in which some important queries are not responded to in a timely manner or are completely ignored by TVET College Twitter Administration. There is need for TVET Colleges to implement an intensive training strategy that specifically targets the management or administration of Twitter accounts. The study highlights some key aspects on the effectiveness of using Twitter as a communication tool, for example, students who post their grievances on Twitter which are directed at the TVET College anticipate that the TVET College will respond to their grievances. If the Twitter accounts are not properly managed and responded to timeously, it hinders successful, important communication between the TVET Colleges and students. The researcher, therefore, recommends intensive training for the departments or individuals that are responsible for handling social media affairs at TVET Colleges. Training would go a long way in improving the effectiveness of communication on TVET Colleges' Twitter accounts. This would also help students realise the benefits of using Twitter as communication tool if the queries or grievances raised are given the attention they deserve.

CSF 5: Appoint leaders to steer the policy

Having a policy or strategy document does not ensure the successful implementation of the use of Twitter as communication tool. In Section 2.5, the lack of strategy and management skills, the disadvantages can be addressed by drafting a policy together. However, it is essential to have a team of industrial leaders in place to ensure that the policy document or strategies introduced are being implemented accordingly, thus increasing the chances of the successful use of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges. The team can be there to gather support of all stakeholders during the drafting

of the policy as well as to give feedback to stakeholders. In areas where some of the stated tasks or objectives need revision, the appointed team can address the issues in a timely manner. This will ensure that the project does not stall at any given time.

6.6 Conclusion

The research findings from the study revealed that Twitter is an effective tool of communication that is used by TVET Colleges to convey important messages. Thirty-six out of fifty TVET Colleges in South Africa have Twitter accounts that post relevant content which has proven to be useful to prospective students, students, prospective employees, prospective employers and TVET Colleges. The chapter provided an analysis of the study findings by giving a summary of the demographics, a discussion of the CSFs that could be used in this study. There are various aspects, such as, the lack of strategy and administrative issues; inadequate infrastructure; the lack of an effective communication strategy and students from poor backgrounds which need to be addressed to ensure the successful use of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges across all nine provinces of South Africa. Some of these challenges can be addressed by the identified CSF's such as the implementation of a policy, appointment of leaders to steer the policy and the procurement and maintenance of ICT infrastructure. Addressing these factors would certainly assist individuals from poor backgrounds at least.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The TVET Colleges in South Africa make use of social media networks, but they lack a strategy on how to utilise Twitter effectively and efficiently as a social media communication tool. There is a lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, a lack of policy or strategy and leadership to steer the social media drive in most TVET Colleges in South Africa. Using Twitter in TVET Colleges has many advantages, such as, extending the reach of the TVET Colleges and demonstrating the value to society, but thus far, the study reviewed that Twitter has not reached its maximum potential. Some of the advantages of using Twitter in higher education are that it is used to disseminate information and not elicit action from students. The chapter starts off by a discussion of the research sub-questions and how they were answered. It also provides a summary of the entire study chapters and offers a conclusion to the results and makes recommendations. The study also presented areas for further research.

7.2 Research Sub-Questions

This section discusses the research questions.

7.2.1 What is the Purpose of Twitter When Used by TVET Colleges in South Africa as a Communication Tool?

The research study answers this question in Chapter 3, Section 3.4 which discusses the use of social media in learning and in Section 3.5, which provides a discussion of the uses of Twitter in teaching and practice. The research outlines the importance of using social media platforms such as Twitter as a communication tool in higher educational institutions such as TVET Colleges. The establishment of social media learning has

proved to be an essential requirement in most TVET Colleges. Use of social media in TVET Colleges would encourage students to take the lead by taking an interest in delivering information. Social media and student recruitment discuss how social media technology platforms enable schools and colleges to adjust to changes that allow them to meet their recruitment targets, which may involve a large target of potential students.

The use of social media in South Africa assists students to improve their academic studies, allows collaboration and sharing of information with each other, and affords students the opportunity to know what is happening in the world by accessing media such as videos and pictures in support of such information. From the nine Provinces that were assessed in this study, only one province did not have TVET Colleges that did not have a Twitter account. A total of 14 TVET Colleges did not have Twitter accounts. The TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter for communication, mostly with their students and the local communities.

7.2.2 How Effective is Twitter as a Communication Tool for TVET Colleges in South Africa?



The research question is answered in Chapter 3 Section 3.4.3 which outlines the importance of technologies in higher education. The studies conducted by other scholars, which were reviewed in this study, indicated that social media is one of the most popular and essential communication networks used by individuals and groups. The study also provided a discussion of the implications of social media for new types of learners, learning and higher education provision. It is also important to note that the study findings revealed that Twitter is an effective tool of communication which can be used by colleges to convey different messages to their students. A number of themes were highlighted from the study with some of the main themes that stood out in the research findings being administration, complaints, and announcements. Most of the TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter as a communication tool.

The study findings also revealed that thirty-six (72%) out of the fifty registered TVET Colleges in South Africa use Twitter as a social media platform for communication. Most tweets that were on the TVET Colleges' pages were either school related queries from students that had to do with registration, administration or complaints about the

performance of the colleges. Twitter proved to be an effective communication tool used by TVET Colleges as it helped to convey administration/registration matters and procedures to both students and the college staff. In most cases, students who had queries with regards to administration/registration, would tweet the TVET College directly themselves.

On the other hand, it is important to note that there are notable factors that are affecting the successful implementation of using Twitter as a communication tool, such as the lack of strategy or policy as well as the lack of training to manage administration of Twitter accounts. These challenges have arisen because the participation in training on the effective use Twitter as a communication tool at TVET Colleges in South Africa was not fully implemented.

7.2.3 Which Strategies can be Implemented to Improve the Use of Twitter as a Communication Tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa?

The research question is answered in Chapter 3, where the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model was explained and how it could prove useful in this study. Social media integration occurs “when a software is used to handle social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram under a single platform and allows a user to post the same post to a set of selected social media accounts” (Ngai, Moon, Lam, Chin & Tao, 2015, p. 769). The study used the model to discuss the similar level of information which focuses on consumers and brands, meaning that they can communicate together, while making use of the same platform, such as, Twitter. The model had four functions of social media which were identified as feedback, exposure, sharing and connecting. These four functions of the model were discussed in line with the themes of the study. The model can be implemented by TVET Colleges in South Africa in order to improve the use of Twitter as an effective communication tool. Chapter 6 answers the research question as the research provides a section of CSFs which can be used by TVET Colleges in South Africa so as to improve the use of Twitter as a communication tool. The CSFs do not only suggest strategies that could improve the use of Twitter as a communication tool, but also serve as a guide for further research areas. An example of the CSFs which can be

implemented is that of raising awareness in TVET Colleges of the importance of using Twitter for communication.

7.3 Chapter Summaries

This section summarises the various chapters in this research.

7.3.1 Research Proposal Chapter

Chapter One served as the introductory chapter for the research study. The chapter instigated thought by highlighting key areas of the research, such as the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, research aim, research questions and significance of the study being some of the discussed issues. The chapter started by presenting a detailed background of the study which discusses TVET Colleges as higher educational institutions that offer post-secondary education courses which are occupational or vocational by design (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016). The background of the study also provided a detailed account of how TVET Colleges in South Africa use social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook for communication.



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This was followed by a discussion of the statement of the research problem which revealed that South African TVET Colleges make use of social media, but lack a strategy on how to utilise Twitter effectively and efficiently as a social media communication tool (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018). There were quite a number of factors that were highlighted by the researcher that contributed to TVET Colleges not using Twitter efficiently for communication. These included the lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, the lack of policy or strategy and poor leadership to steer the social media drive. This chapter further presented the research objectives of the study that guided the researcher as to how to answer the research questions. The primary objective of the study is to develop a framework that improves the integration of Twitter as a communication tool at TVET Colleges in South Africa.

Additionally, the chapter also discussed the significance of the study which indicated that Twitter can be used properly, if information can be disseminated to students in a timely manner, while the students can provide feedback to the colleges, thus improving

communication between the TVET College and students. The researcher provided brief literature on the work that has been done by other scholars with regards to the research topic. The chapter introduced the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model which was used to investigate how interactive social media pages such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have transformed the communication paradigm. The chapter was summed up by a brief discussion of the methodology to be undertaken for this study. Some of the discussed issues included the research approach, paradigm, strategy and design. The methodology was further discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

7.3.2 Literature Review: TVET Colleges Chapter

Chapter Two analysed some of the major writings with regards to the research study that seeks to establish a framework to improve social media as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. The chapter compared, contrasted and addressed literature from books, journals and websites. The chapter discussed what TVET entails and what the communication challenges faced by staff, students and other key players are. Some of the key areas that were discussed in Chapter Two include a section on Higher Education in South Africa, a discussion of the National Development Plan in South Africa and an overall discussion of TVET Colleges in South Africa that includes the challenges faced by TVET Colleges in South Africa. The chapter begins by a discussion of the breakdown of the education system in South Africa, which is divided into three levels that include primary, secondary and tertiary education. The chapter further discusses how tertiary institutions operate in South Africa and how state managed institutions in South Africa provide tertiary education and training, under the control of the DHET. This chapter also provided the outline of the NQF and how the system that records the credits from various institutions is allocated to each level of learning attainment, including Higher Educational Institutions.

Additionally, other issues discussed in the chapter included defining TVET, TVET Colleges in South Africa, Higher Education in South Africa and an overview of TVET Colleges in South Africa. The chapter was summed up by discussing the various challenges faced by TVET Colleges in South Africa, such as, the provision of quality staff; the lack of a strategy and administration issues; poor educational quality; students from

poor backgrounds and the lack of an effective communication strategy. Some of the challenges outlined, such as, the poor quality of education and students from poor backgrounds are challenges associated with the lack of an effective communication strategy. These challenges, however, can be addressed by the effective utilisation of social media.

7.3.3 Literature Review: Social Media Chapter

Chapter Three provided a discussion on social media and therefore it incorporated various aspects related to the research study. The chapter discussed the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model used as a framework for this study. The model had four functions which were linked to the research. The four functions of the model and how they resonate with the research topic were discussed in detail in this chapter. The four functions of the model were highlighted as feedback, exposure, sharing and connecting. Garcia, (2011), highlighted that the model is a total engagement method, which was developed through interactive procedures that permit information exchange on a similar level between the consumer (student) and the brand (TVET College); hence it was relevant to this study. This was followed by a detailed account of the concept of social media which revealed that it is an aspect of technology that, through the internet, permits interactions on different platforms. In this case, the study focused on Twitter as a communication tool for TVET Colleges.

Moreover, the chapter also provided a review of literature on the use of social media in learning and also gave an overview of the use of social media in teaching and learning. Studies conducted by (Matzat & Vrieling, 2015) indicated that the use of social media has constantly evolved over the years. Some of the contributing factors to this notion were noted as the growth of affordability on mobile computing devices; better quality of internet wireless; technologies of social media and numerous web designs which have become an essential aspect of people's daily lives.

The research study's findings concurred with those of other scholars who identified in the Literature Review that the establishment of social media learning has proven to be an essential requirement in most colleges. Furthermore, the research study also aligned with the authors' studies that were reviewed in that the chapter provided a discussion on how

social networks provide students with a platform or means of working together to solve a common problem, or build a common project. Most of the literature that was discussed identified that both teachers and students can benefit from the use of social media as it helps to build on both the instructor and student's work and also keep mutual history of their learning progress.

The chapter highlighted the benefits of using social media in general as it enables educational institutions to provide stakeholders with information, such as, new programs being offered by educational institutions like TVET Colleges, changes to policies, events, and institutional news.

7.3.4 Methodology Chapter

Chapter Four provided the steps (methods) that were undertaken in order to successfully conduct the research. The chapter began with a discussion on the research paradigm, followed by the research approach, research design, research population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, data trustworthiness, delimitation of the study and it concluded with a section on ethics. Firstly, the research study adopted the interpretivist paradigm. This approach was deemed appropriate for the research as the empirical model of the study is derived from various individuals' tweets on Twitter as a social media communication tool. Secondly, the chapter highlighted that the research adopted the qualitative research method for this study. This is due to the fact that the qualitative research approach has value in the discussion of social media, from which the data was collected off the various tweets on the respective TVET Colleges' Twitter pages.

The chapter further gave a discussion on the research design adopted for this study. Descriptive research was used because the research sought to provide answers on how Twitter as a social media platform can be used as a communication tool in TVET Colleges and this design was more appropriate for implementation in this study than others. Additionally, the chapter identified the target population and sampling methods to be used for this study. The target population for the study were all the TVET Colleges in South Africa. The study had a sample size that consisted of 36 TVET Colleges' users. Netnography was used to collect the online data from Twitter that was analysed in the study. The chapter also highlighted the use of the quota sampling technique for this

research as it focuses on the quality of the data; sociometric diversity of the sample; geographic coverage of the sample; and cost-effectiveness. Both secondary and primary data sources were utilised in the research to explore and analyse the problem at hand. Ethical considerations were also covered in this chapter.

7.3.5 Data Presentation and Analysis Chapter

Chapter Five presented data and analysed the findings which were assessed, based on the tweets of TVET Colleges in South Africa. The key areas that were established in this chapter were the inclusion criteria on selected tweets, background and demographic information and the main research findings presented according to the goals of the study. The researcher used tables and graphical representations to display the data which was obtained primarily from tweets that were shared between students, college, DHET and employers. The chapter provided a detailed account of the research findings which were based on a single social media platform, namely, Twitter. From the research findings, the researcher identified 50 registered TVET Colleges in South Africa and hence used the tweets from these colleges for the data presentation. Firstly, the demographics section was presented, which stated the diversity of the tweets which were posted in different languages on the TVET Twitter accounts. However, the commonly used languages were identified by tweets which were written in English, IsiXhosa, isiZulu, Sotho and Tswana.

Secondly, the chapter also discussed the location of TVET Colleges and it was discovered that most TVET Colleges were located in urban areas as compared to rural areas. Furthermore, the activity level of TVET Colleges was established based on the number of tweets posted weekly. This was followed by an interesting account of the purpose of having Twitter in TVET Colleges. Some of the key issues that highlighted the purpose/importance of Twitter were identified as the impact of using Twitter for interactions; the limited duration of texts (Tweet), and identifying the groups of people who posted the most on TVET Twitter accounts. The chapter was summed up by a discussion of the major themes and sub-themes that had emerged from the study findings. The themes were interpreted using the Social Integration Model that categorised the various tweets from different TVET College Twitter accounts into main themes and sub-themes.

7.3.6 Discussion Chapter

Chapter 6 analysed the research findings that were discussed in Chapter Five. The chapter sought to give an in-depth analysis of the results as well as a discussion on the relevance of the effectiveness of Twitter as a communication tool amongst South African TVET Colleges. The chapter further discussed the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model which was used as a framework for this study and viewed as an interactive process, which allows the same level of information exchange between the TVET College and students.

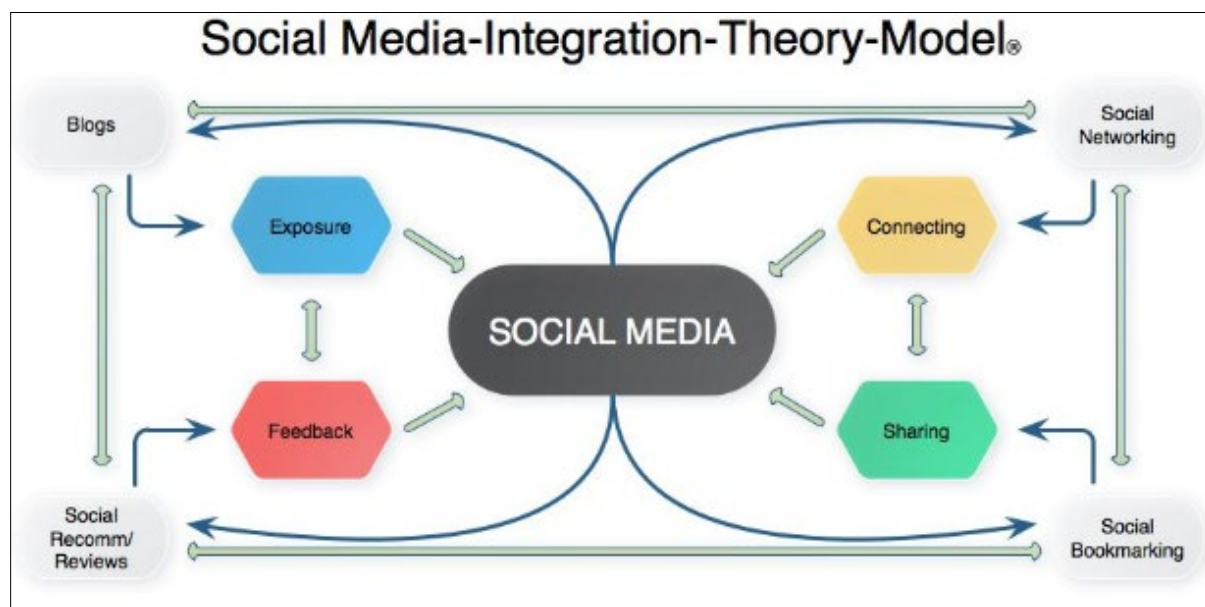
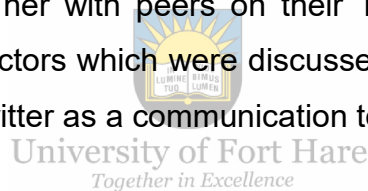


Figure 11. Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model (Garcia, 2011)

This model was assessed by the researcher as an opportunity that created long-term feedback communication procedures which can provide an overall engagement approach between TVET Colleges and students. The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model addressed the research problem and the research question because it provided the framework against which the research findings were tested: this is evidenced by the way in which the findings fit the four pillars of the model. The exposure which falls under the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model explains how a TVET College can make use of Twitter to advertise the next enrolment dates, registration processes, funding and bursary options for prospective students. The TVET Colleges can also advertise vacancies on their Twitter page to recruit new staff members. In terms of feedback, the results indicated

that complaints as a main theme, mainly provided feedback on services and products offered by various TVET Colleges. In addition, students got feedback on administrative queries such as registration dates, application dates, academic calendar, funding and bursaries on Twitter.

The Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model's function of connecting referred to connecting students and TVET Colleges with common interests. The study's findings concurred with the theoretical model in that it connected prospective TVET College students with the TVET College through Twitter and the respective Twitter pages. The study findings revealed how connections could also be seen through prospective employers who sought to connect with TVET students that were looking for employment. The sharing theme was evidenced by the findings which revealed that there is a provocation engagement from individuals within similar groups, which then spreads into the social networking system. A student or TVET College staff member could share a topic that interested him or her with peers on their Twitter page. Lastly, the chapter provided Critical Success Factors which were discussed in this study in order to ensure the effectiveness of using Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges.



7.4 Limitations

The study only focused on Twitter as an effective communication tool for TVET Colleges. This then limits the possibility of establishing if other social media networks in TVET Colleges are effectively being used for communication or not. Another limitation for this study was the fact that this research project was conducted during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, where most colleges were closed and lockdown restrictions fully imposed. This made it not permissible for the researcher to move around whilst collecting data. The researcher could not find out which challenges were possibly being faced that were affecting some of the TVET Colleges with or without Twitter accounts as well as those with inactive Twitter accounts. In order to counter this problem, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach which fully assessed data based on the TVET Twitter accounts and the tweets (content posted on Twitter).

7.5 Areas of Further Research

Further research can be conducted on the successful implementation of using social media networks in tertiary education. This will allow the researcher to tackle other platforms and not narrow down the research to a specific social network.

7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has summarised the research study on the effectiveness of using Twitter as a communication tool amongst South African TVET Colleges. The study highlighted some key areas such as the importance of using Twitter in learning and how the Social Media-Integration-Theory-Model could aid the development of a framework that seeks to improve the integration of Twitter as a communication tool in TVET Colleges in South Africa. The study focused on how TVET Colleges currently use Twitter by assessing the tweets that were posted on their Twitter accounts. The findings of the research established that Twitter can also be used by TVET Colleges to build relationships with students and the community at large.



Additionally, this research study also showed how TVET Colleges could show their worth to the community and thereby increase their reach and provide recruitment possibilities. Furthermore, the study also presented the findings, conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations on how TVET Colleges in South Africa can effectively use Twitter as a communication tool. However, there is need to ensure that Twitter is being used properly by TVET Colleges and information is disseminated to students in a timeous manner. Students from their side can provide constructive feedback to the colleges, thus improving communication between the TVET College and students.

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Appendix 1: Plagiarism Report

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Appendix 2: Proof Reading Certificate

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have 42 years' experience in the teaching profession, both at high school and tertiary level. In my last position before retiring in December 2016, I was a Teaching and Learning Consultant and had acted as Manager of the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) of the University of Fort Hare on three different occasions. As a consultant, I facilitated modules on the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training (PGDHET) and also evaluated lecturers' teaching and their courses. My skills set allowed me to focus on management, language, research and student development. Activities which speak to this include being the Co-ordinator of the Language and Writing Advancement Programme (LWAP) and the Supplemental Instruction Programme (SI) for two years plus being the Editor of the TLC's bi-annual newsletter for approximately eight years.

For the past three years I have been proofreading and editing for academics on a time-on-task basis. I hereby certify that I have proofread a Master's thesis submitted to me by the corresponding author, Sangudzayi Innocent Nyamanhare, Student Number 201511043, whose study's research topic is:

'A Framework to Improve Social Media as a Communication Tool in Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges in South Africa: A Case of Twitter'

I have corrected superficial errors in spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation in the abstract and the body of the manuscript. I have checked the balance required between in-text referencing and end-referencing, where the one needs to be a mirror image of the other, according to APA referencing guidelines. I trust that the aforementioned will meet with the examiners' approval and that the language used accurately reflects the author's intended meaning. Furthermore, I have made every effort to ensure that the manuscript is clear, reads smoothly and avoids confusion or misunderstanding. The principles of anonymity, confidentiality, accountability and reliability have been respected by all researching parties.

DISCLAIMER: The proofreader cannot be held responsible for any errors introduced after the proofreading has been completed, due to changes being made during the corrections' process.

Should there be any questions that arise from this exercise, kindly contact me on lscheckle@gmail.com.



Linda Scheckle (Private Editing Service)

18 February 2021



Address:
20 Klein Bron Mews
Moepel Crescent
Klein Bron Estate
Cape Town
7560

Appendix 3: Ethical Clearance Certificate



University of Fort Hare
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ETHICS CLEARANCE **REC-270710-028-RA Level 01**

Project Number: CIL011SNYA01

Project title: **A framework to improve social media as a communication tool in Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges in South Africa: A case of Twitter.**

Qualification: Masters in Information Systems Principal

Researcher: Sangudzayi Innocent Nyamanhere

Supervisor: Prof L. Cilliers

Co-supervisor: Dr K. Viljoen

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC), I hereby grant ethics approval for CIL011SNYA01. This approval is valid for 12 months from the date of approval. Renewal of approval must be applied for BEFORE termination of this approval period. Renewal is subject to receipt of a satisfactory progress report. The approval covers the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). The research may commence as from the 25/03/20, using the reference number indicated above.

Note that should any other instruments be required or amendments become necessary, these require separate authorisation.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of:

- Any material changes in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document;
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research.

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this approval if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected;
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented;
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require;
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to.
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

Your compliance with DoH 2015 guidelines and other regulatory instruments and with UREC ethics requirements as contained in the UREC terms of reference and standard operating procedures, is implied.

The UREC wishes you well in your research.

Yours sincerely



Professor Renuka Vithal
UREC-Chairperson
 30 July 2020

Appendix 4: List of TVET Colleges that use Twitter

Twitter						
	Do TVET have a page? Y/N	Date page was created	No. of followers	Is there interaction? (students or TVET college) Y/N	Time interval between posts (how active is page) Very/Limited/Not very active	Time duration of posts (the post furthest back that can be accessed today) E.g. 6 weeks/months
List of TVET Colleges						
EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE						
Buffalo City TVET College	No					
Easter Cape Midlands TVET College	Yes - @MidlandsColleg1	May 2012	1484	Yes (both)	Limited	12 months
Ikhala TVET College	Yes - @ikhalaTVET2	February 2015	103	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Ingwe TVET College	No					
King Hintsa TVET College	Yes - @King_hintsacol	January 2014	171	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
King Sabata Dalindyebo TVET College	No					

Lovedale TVET College	No					
Port Elizabeth TVET College	Yes - @PE TVET College	May 2017	65	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
FREE STATE PROVINCE						
Flavius Mareka TVET College	Yes - @flaviusmareka	August 2011	142	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Goldfields TVET College	Yes - @GTVETCOLLEGE	February 2016	207	Yes (both)	Very	12 months
Maluti TVET College	Yes - @MalutiTvet	September 2014	171	Yes (both)	Very	12 months
Motheo TVET College	Yes - @MotheoCollege	March 2013	1384	Yes (both)	Limited	12 months
GAUTENG PROVINCE						
Central Johannesburg TVET College	Yes - @CJCCollege	February 2014	35	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Ekurhuleni East TVET College	Yes - @EECFET	April 2012	284	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Ekurhuleni West TVET College	Yes - @EWCTVET	October 2016	643	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Sedibeng TVET College	Yes - @SedibengC	July 2015	80	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
South West Gauteng TVET College	Yes - @SWGCollege	August 2010	831	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Tshwane North TVET College	No					

Tshwane South TVET College	Yes - @TSC_TVET	November 2012	1297	Yes (both)	Limited	12 months
Western TVET College	No					
KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCE						
Coastal TVET College	Yes - @CoastalKzn	September 2014	311	Yes (both)	Limited	12 months
Elangeni TVET College	Yes - @elangenicollege	October 2010	465	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Esayidi TVET College	Yes - @esayidifet	January 2013	12	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Majuba TVET College	Yes - @Majuba_College	July 2014	537	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Mnambithi TVET College	Yes - @MnambithiFET	November 2013	176	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Mthashana TVET College	Yes - @MthashanaFETC	August 2011	102	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Thekwini TVET College	Yes - @Thekwinicollege	November 2014	190	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Umfolozi TVET College	Yes - @UmfoloziCollege	November 2012	1199	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Umgungundlovu TVET College	No					
LIMPOPO PROVINCE						
Capricorn TVET College	Yes - @CapricornTVET	October 2016	765	Yes (both)	Limited	12 months

Lephalale TVET College	Yes - @LephalaleTVET	June 2016	167	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Letaba TVET College	Yes - @LetabaTvet	September 2016	165	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Mopani South East TVET College	No					
Sekhukhune TVET College	Yes - @SekhukhuneFET	October 2012	16	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Vhembe TVET College	Yes - @VhembeTVETCol	July 2018	61	Yes (both)	Limited	12 months
Waterberg TVET College	No					



MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Ehlanzeni TVET College	Yes - @EhlanzeniTvet	February 2016	477	Yes (both)	Very	12 months
Gert Sibande TVET College	Yes - @GSCollege017	December 2013	475	Yes (both)	Very	12 months
Nkangala TVET College	Yes - @NkangalaTVETCol	July 2011	2467	Yes (both)	Very	12 months

NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

Northern Cape Rural TVET College	No					
Northern Cape Urban TVET College	No					

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

ORBIT TVET College	Yes - @ORBIT_College	August 2011	1357	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Taletso TVET College	Yes - @Taletso	April 2010	1172	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
Vuselela TVET College	No					

WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Boland TVET College	Yes - @BolandCollege	February 2012	345	Yes (both)	Not very active	12 months
College of Cape Town for TVET	Yes - @CCT_Official	May 2011	3638	Yes (both)	Very	12 months
False Bay TVET College	Yes - @FalsebayCollege	October 2012		Yes (both)	Very	12 months
Northlink TVET College	No					
South Cape TVET College	No					
West Coast TVET College	Yes - @WestCoastCol	January 2013	2198	Yes (both)	Very	12 months