



## Research Article

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# Recipe of Poor Performance: Case of a Misaligned Organisational Architecture of a TVET Campus

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## Abstract

*The objective of this qualitative study was to explore the nature of the organisational architecture of a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) campus according to the perspectives of students in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Twenty-two students in a TVET campus were selected using purposive sampling and interviewed to collect data. Thematic analysis was used to deduce relevant themes. The results reveal that the organisational architecture of the TVET campus had a twin strategy of active learning and assessment-led teaching that was cardinal, but inadequate for the learning needs of students, and misaligned by unsupportive systems, distant and disconnected style of management to respond to student's problems, shortage of good lecturers and lack of critical resources. Predominantly, students who had already failed in their course were active in cultivating dropout behaviour and culture among peers. The absence of workplace learning by students was a significant gap in the organisational architecture. Critical changes in management style, systems, staff, resources, student peer relations, and reinforcement of workplace learning are imperative if the organisational architecture of the TVET campus is to be re-aligned and effective as a pathway to work for the South African youths.*

**Keywords:** *organisational architecture; misaligned organisational architecture; misaligned TVET Campus; the functioning of TVET; alignment*

## 1. Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges as organisations in South Africa are suffering from contemptuous criticisms by some vocational educators, parents, students and industry for failing to link many adult learners to the world of work. According to Kahn (2017), barely a third of the students in TVET colleges in South Africa complete their courses and graduate. This poor performance is inconsistent with the priority of the government of South Africa to make TVET an institution of choice,

invoking questions of how TVET programmes are implemented as a pathway for learners to the world of work (Terblanche, 2017). The foundation for any organisation to excel and achieve desirable results hinge on the internal alignment of its various interdependent elements (e.g. strategy, style, system, staff, skills, shared values, structure) which constitute the organizational architecture.

While the phenomenon of organisational architecture is researched widely in the private sector, it is generally under-researched in the public education sector. The limited studies on organisation architecture in an educational setting have focused on a school in Israel (Kirschenboim, 2018), a university in the UK (Cox, Pinfield and Rutter, 2019) and university in Iraq (Alshaher, 2013). Despite the poor performance in TVET colleges in South Africa, there is a dearth of research by organisation researchers which has used the organisational and management tool of organisational architecture to fathom the degree of alignment within a TVET college or campus and propose informed re-alignment.

Extant research on TVET in South Africa reveals a variety of macro-level efforts (e.g. merger, recapitalisation, re-curruculation, expansion) undertaken during the past 15 years to transform the TVET sector, but also the unintended consequences at various levels, including the campus (Gewe, 2016). Inadvertently, the merger of 152 small technical colleges into fifty large multi-site TVET colleges in 2002 has fuelled the unintended challenge of institutional leadership in decentralised institutions. For example, institutional leaders are grappling with greater institutional autonomy, delegated budgetary and financial authority, the accountability for resources, relational work with external agents but also political interference (Robertson & Frick, 2018; Gewe, 2016).

In a different vein, the catalogue of the unintended consequences of changes in the TVET sector in South Africa also embraces the twin problems of high student dropout and deregistration, arising from the expanded admission policy (Kraak, 2016). TVET colleges in South Africa admit students who have left school, whether they completed secondary school or not and wish to undertake vocational training or complete their schooling (Department of Higher Education & Training (DHET) 2014). At the classroom level, lecturers are facing the problems of managing classes of students with mixed ability and motivational levels (Buthelezi, 2018). In the parlance of Buthelezi (2018, p.13), TVET colleges are attracting students who are “immature, irresponsible, unmotivated, difficult, demanding, and disruptive in the classroom”.

Predominantly, the extant educational research tradition isolates individual factors and cluster them as barriers and enablers related to students, lecturers, quality, institution and the government as a way to understand the implementation of TVET programmes (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization United, 2013). The pitfall of this research tradition is the view of elements of a TVET as static, and not systemic, failing to uncover the dynamic complexity of a TVET campus as an organisation. Matlala (2005) exemplifies the reductionist tradition by identifying problematic social relationships, poor management of time, personal and psychological problems, lack of accommodation, inability to communicate with lecturers and financial problems, as barriers to good student performance in a TVET campus, to mention but a few. There is a grave need for interdisciplinary researchers to integrate educational and organizational perspectives to uncover how the diverse internal elements create a web of elements, reinforcing each other positively or negatively - which holistically illuminates the organisational architecture of a TVET campus.

According to Gewe (2016), a TVET institution in South Africa comprises a plethora of dynamic interactions which involve six aspects. These internal elements and interactions in a TVET institution include executive leadership, accountability management, policy frameworks, compliance management, productive partnership and linkages, teaching and learning and student support services, student performance but also administrative efficiency in terms of various systems and resources. Contemporary organisational theorists need to adopt the systemic lens of organisational architecture to focus at the level of the TVET campus- a coalface of various micro-activities and interactions of multiple actors, which ultimately distinguish institutional and student success from failure. Profoundly, the organisational architecture helps to systematically understand both the variety of interdependent factors interacting in an organisation and the internal alignment that is foundational to achieve desired results (Higgins, 2005).

The current organisational study seeks to get a context-specific and systemic understanding of the nature of alignment or misalignment in a TVET campus from the standpoint of students in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) using the organisational architecture as a tool. Students form their meaning about the various elements which constitute the TVET campus based on their lived experiences and interactions with various people (e.g. peers, lecturers, administrators, support staff, management). As such, perspectives of students offer a unique dimension which is crucial if a TVET campus is to excel. This exploratory study is essential as Robertson and Frick (2018, p.73) remind us that there is “a paucity of scholarly work focused on South African vocational education in general”.

## 2. Research Objective and Question

The objective of this qualitative study was to explore the nature of the organisational architecture of a TVET campus according to the perspectives of students in KZN in South Africa. The key research question was: What is the nature of the organisational architecture of a TVET campus according to students in KZN?

The article starts by exploring the concept of organisational architecture which is crucial to understand the diverse internal elements of an organisation and how alignment occurs. After that, the focus is on research methodology, results, and the discussion of results from this study. Lastly, the article gives a conclusion to the research and identifies areas for future research.

## 3. Literature Review

The notion of organisational architecture is traceable to the McKinsey 7-S model developed in the late 1970s by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman at McKinsey & Company (Waterman, Peters and Phillip, 1980). In this case, the organisational architecture comprises elements categorised as “hard” (e.g. strategy, structure, and systems) or “soft” elements (e.g. staff, skills, style, shared values) (Kanyangale & Dyasi, 2018). The scholarship of organisational architecture upholds that the internal alignment of intertwined elements – whereby each reinforces the others in a web of interrelationships – is cardinal to achieve desired outcomes (Waterman et al., 1980). Managers get more done when there is harmony or an internal alignment of interdependent elements of organisational architecture. Waterman et al. (1980) warn that paying attention to “hard” elements while ignoring the “soft” aspects is a significant pitfall that negatively affects organisational performance.

Subsequently, the Higgins 8-S model developed in 2005 is an improvement of the McKinsey 7-S model. It is salient to underline the distinguishing features of the Higgins 8-S model. First, skills as an element in the McKinsey 7-S model is deleted and replaced by resources in its place in the Higgins 8-S model. Second, Higgins (2005) also added strategic performance to help focus on the process of strategy execution, results and objectives.

This study adopts the Higgins 8-S model, which is used by management and organisational scholars to understand the internal elements which constitute an organisation. Table 1 below provides a brief meaning of each component of the Higgins 8-S model.

**Table 1:** Elements and their definitions in Higgins (2005) 8-S Model

<i>The element of the Higgins model</i>	<i>Brief meaning</i>
	<i>Hard elements</i>
Strategy and Purpose	Strategic purpose includes strategic intent, vision, focus, mission, goals and strategic objectives. There are four types of strategies, which are corporate, business, functional and process strategies.
Structure	The organisational structure consists of five parts: jobs, the authority to do those jobs, the grouping of jobs in a logical fashion, the manager's span of control and the mechanism of coordination.
Systems and Processes	This element depicts formal and informal processes and procedures used to manage the organisation (e.g., management control systems, information systems, performance measurement and reward systems, quality control systems, and budgeting and resource allocation).

The element of the Higgins model	Brief meaning
	<i>Soft elements</i>
Shared Values	The core set of values that are shared widely in the organisation and which serve as guiding principles on what is essential. The core or fundamental set of shared values serves as guiding principles on what is essential.
Resources	Resources are all assets that are available to the organisation for use during the operations and implementation of activities to achieve the objectives of the organisation, e.g. human, monetary, technological and raw materials.
Staff	The number and type of employees, and their backgrounds, competencies and approaches to recruiting and developing people. Equally important are issues around staff training, career management, and promotion of employees.
Style	A pattern of the behaviour of leaders and managers exhibited when relating to subordinates and other employees.
Strategic Performance	A holistic and balanced view to reflect various dimensions of organisational performance (e.g. effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation). Organisations can measure performance at any level of the organisation. However, an expanded, balanced scorecard approach is best.

Source: Adapted from Higgins (2005)

### 3.1 Justification for using Higgins 8-S Model in a TVET Institution

Firstly, it is noteworthy that the internal elements highlighted by the Higgins 8-S model are evident in many contemporary organisations in South Africa. For example, a public TVET campus or college has internal elements such as teaching and learning strategy, systems, and structures as the hard elements of the organisation. A TVET campus in South Africa also has staff, styles of leadership and management, organisational culture and skills which form the soft elements of an organisation. The hard and soft elements of a public TVET campus or college are interdependent. In a nutshell, a TVET College or campus has spider web-like inter-relationships between the various elements, as suggested by the Higgins 8-S model. These elements reinforce each other positively or negatively in ways which shape the internal functioning of a TVET institution. The eight elements identified by the Higgins 8-S model as shaping the internal functioning of an organisation, are all relevant to gain an understanding of how a TVET campus functions in South Africa. When all elements of the organisational architecture are aligned, they work towards the same direction of strategic performance, as shown in Figure 1 below:

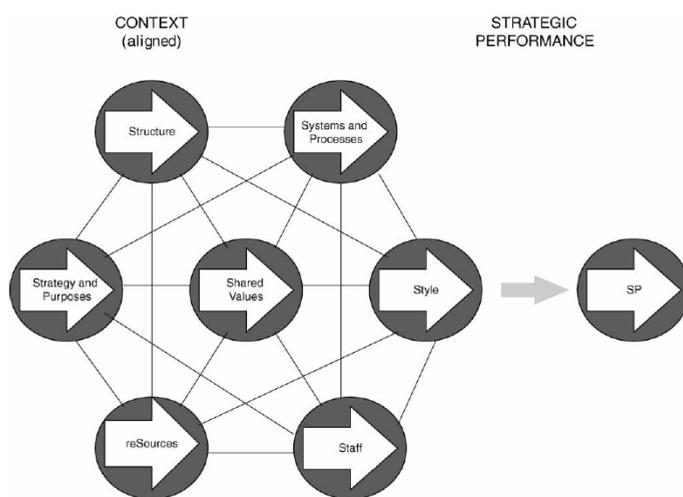


Figure 1: Internal alignment and interdependencies in an organisation

Source: Higgins (2005, p.6)

Secondly, it is noteworthy that scholars have used the Higgins 8-S model as a tool to understand alignment in a variety of social and public sectors. For instance, Van Donselaar (2012) used the Higgins 8-S model to analyse alignment during strategy execution in the not-for-profit sector in the Netherlands. Within South Africa, the Higgins 8-S model was used to assess the degree of alignment in a district municipality in the Eastern Cape Province as it implemented a decentralised water services provision model (Kyangale and Dyasi, 2018). Given the above examples, organisational architecture is useful to help managers of any organisation, including a TVET campus to understand the degree of internal alignment or misalignment.

#### 4. Research Methodology

This qualitative study adopted a social constructivist philosophy to get multiple perspectives on reality from the viewpoint of research participants. Among the various stakeholders of a TVET campus, the focus of this study was on students primarily to get an emic and student-centric perspective illuminating dynamics and interdependencies that reveal inadequacies, degree of internal alignment and misalignment in the organisational architecture of a TVET campus.

##### 4.1 Sampling

Simple random sampling was used to select one of the nine accredited public TVET Colleges with multiple campuses in KZN province. Within the selected TVET campus, simple random sampling was also used to initially select the department of office administration, and later select the subject of applied accounting.

Subsequently, purposive sampling was useful to identify individual students of applied accounting as research participants. A total of twenty-two students of applied accounting at level four in a public TVET campus were selected for this study. Ten of these students were males, while twelve were females. The criteria for participants' selection included (1) the student's lived experience of academic and social life and administrative procedures in the selected TVET campus. Other aspects of the criteria were the experience of (2) teaching and learning, formative and summative assessment at the campus for at least two years, and (3) ability and willingness to express day-to-day life on the TVET campus based on own experiences or that of other students.

##### 4.2 Data collection

Semi-structured, individual, face-to-face, audio-recorded interviews were conducted with twenty-two students in 2019. Prior to each interview, the researcher obtained informed consent which served to assure each participant of confidentiality, anonymity, and that the collected data would only be used for academic purposes. An interview guide based on Higgins 8-S focused on:

1. Positive and negative critical incidents on each element, arising from actions and activities to implement TVET programmes on campus
2. Specific interactions and activities by various actors regarding each element in the identified critical incidents
3. Clarity on how each of the eight elements supported or impeded others in the course of implementing TVET programmes
4. Changes in the degree of alignment or misalignment of internal elements of the campus
5. Positive and negative consequences of what was implemented in the TVET programmes.

A pilot test of the interview guide was conducted before being used in this study. Each interview took an average of forty minutes. Triangulation of data through constant comparison of views from different students helped to achieve data saturation, but also improved data quality.

#### 4.3 Data analysis

Meaningful patterns reflecting the functioning of each component of the Higgins 8-S model in the campus were delineated using thematic analysis of the transcribed interview data. Themes developed from patterns of actions, interactions, and consequences of activities in the TVET campus to reveal the variety of elements and degree of alignment or misalignment within the organisational architecture of the TVET campus.

#### 4.4 Research quality

Member checking allowed participants to give feedback on the accuracy of transcriptions and enhance the integrity of data. The details of the research process and direct quotes from participants in this study provide an audit trail to enhance dependability and credibility.

### 5. Findings

Overall, the organisational architecture of a TVET campus from the standpoint of students had a sound twin strategy of active learning and assessment-led teaching that was predominantly misaligned. It was also undermined by nonchalant institutional and classroom management styles, unsupportive systems and processes, inadequate staff to reinforce vocational learning and vocational identity, inadequate and inappropriate resources, low enrolment, low throughput and high student dropout rates. Predominantly, the campus environment was not conducive to effective learning by students who had already failed their modules and were cultivating a student dropout culture among those still registered for the course. The lack of workplace learning by students was a significant weakness in the organisational architecture of the TVET campus. Below are the details of these findings:

#### 5.1 Process Strategy: Active learning and assessment-led teaching

In this study, lecturers emphasised the discussion of problems not only in pairs and small groups but also in open and guided interactions by the entire class. The variety of learner activities and interactions enhanced the level of students' involvement within the classroom.

*Our lecturer always makes sure that we are involved actively, involved by letting us work in pairs and groups, sharing ideas amongst ourselves. Our accounting lecturer does not allow us to just sit in class. We always have class activities such as solving problems, doing a calculation, or being involved in group discussions (Student 1).*

As a coping mechanism, students met in their study groups after classes to share their understanding and fill each other's knowledge gaps. One of the interviewees illustrated this type of social capital within the organisational architecture to shape peer learning as follows:

*When I have missed something from the lecturer, I always ask for clarity and explanation from fellow students after the class. Sometimes I understand much better when it is another student explaining to me in my study group (Student 7).*

Assessment-led teaching was another cardinal aspect of the strategy, which focused on building the familiarity of students with the format and style of the final examination.

*There is a fixed number of tests we do before we sit for our external examination. We are happy as this gives us sufficient time to practise and get familiar with the examination style before the final examination in November (Student 6).*

Only a few students used the past external examination papers given by their lecturers as a diagnostic tool of self-assessment at home. Instead, students preferred the revision of examination papers in class, with guidance by the lecturer.

*Lecturers must not just give us past examination papers to do on our own, with no follow up to check whether we used them. Few solve the problems in the past exam paper. Most of us face many different issues at home. It is better when we revise these past exam papers with our lecturer together in class (Student 1).*

### 5.2 Nonchalant institutional and teacher leadership styles

The leadership styles at the institutional, administrative and classroom levels of the organisational architecture at the TVET campus were less supportive to students. One of the interviewees focused on how the campus manager was not responsive to students' problems and how the administrative staff failed to address the problems presented to them by students, as shown in the quote below:

*Our problems never get the attention and response of the campus manager. The administrators are not sure of what they tell you. The administrators lack the power to help us. They cannot do anything about errors on the system once the system is closed. The administrators cannot solve problems on their own (Student 11).*

In a slightly different vein, students blamed institutional managers for being disconnected from the classroom reality and not familiar with challenges faced by students, and not able to provide any hope, as illustrated below:

*The campus manager or any of his fellow managers has never visited our class. He does not know the challenges we are facing here in the various subjects and what happens in our classes. Our hopes are in our lecturers only; no one else is there 'for' us (Student 6).*

Another interviewee illuminated on how the laid-back style of teacher leadership ignored students' indiscipline and disruptive behaviour in the classrooms.

*When in class, some of the students disturb [disrupt] lessons, instead of listening. Many lecturers are not strict; they just watch. We wish the lecturers could be more stringent at times. It seems like lecturers avoid conflict as they are scared by some of the students (Student 16).*

### 5.3 Beliefs shaping adverse push and pull out behaviours of peers

Predominantly, the belief that some courses are for intelligent students had consequences not supportive of every student studying those subjects. Inadvertently, this belief shaped adverse push-out behaviours, forcing weak students to disengage tactically in their classroom interactions with lecturers. In providing TVET to students, the lecturers used the vernacular language to help weak students to understand concepts in the subjects as exemplified below.

*We see lecturers focusing on those students who are already competent in the course. You feel pushed away, but things change when the lecturer uses the vernacular language. It helps us a lot because we are also able to understand better and ask questions. This is very common on this campus (Student 18).*

Interestingly, a culture of dropout that was pervasive on the campus was cultivated by students who had already dropped out from their courses, as exemplified below:

*Our friends who have dropped out of applied accounting joined New Venture Creation, offered as an alternative subject. They are always discouraging us. They say New Venture Creation is not difficult...not demanding as applied accounting. They have ample time. They put pressure on us to also drop [out of the*

subject] and chill with them. The same happens with students in other departments, being discouraged by peers to drop out (Student 22).

However, awareness of the utility of the course and career opportunities in the world of work enabled some students to overcome peer pressure to drop out, as elaborated below:

*Friends here and at home discourage me, [saying] that applied accounting is difficult. However, I value applied accounting so much. I want to further my studies in accounting and work for companies like KPMG, as an auditor. My best friend wants to become a civil engineer (Student 19).*

In some instances, it is the clear understanding of the value of the course in self-employment, which motivated students to continue with their studies and endure pressure from detractors. One of the interviewees revealed this in this way:

*Some of us are also planning to start our businesses after college. We have noticed that one needs some technical knowledge to be successful in business as a plumber or mechanic. My friend tell detractors that he need to get the technical knowledge if he is to be good as a mechanic. I cannot drop accounting because it [will help] me when I start my business (Student 13).*

#### 5.4 Unsupportive systems and processes

In the organisational architecture of this campus, four types of unsupportive systems and procedures impeded teaching and learning through the failure of the administrative system, the system of student support and timetabling, and the coordination of student assessment.

Firstly, the weak system of managing students' facilities and equipment failed to integrate Information Communications and Technology with vocational pedagogy for students to develop skills by using the computer laboratory. Outdated software and computers impeded the development of accounting skills using contemporary software, as revealed below:

*Not all computers have Version 14 Pastel [accounting] software. Most computers still have the old version of Pastel installed on them. Some of the computers do not work correctly to use [them effectively] or engage in meaningful research (Student 7).*

Secondly, the persistently late delivery or lack of learning materials was inconsistent with a student-centred organisation architecture of a TVET campus. One of the interviewees had this to say:

*We always receive textbooks very late at the beginning of the year. As for the workbooks, we only had them at level two (2-years ago). We do homework without workbooks. Our lecturers try to photocopy the textbook for us, but it is not easy. This is a problem which affects every student here (Student 9).*

Thirdly, the system of scheduling classes impeded the learning of some students who were too tired and hungry to concentrate during the afternoon lessons. One of the interviewees complained about this aspect within the organisational architecture of the TVET campus as follows:

*The scheduling of classes with calculations in the afternoon is also not convenient. It would help if they were in the morning. In the afternoon, we are [too] tired and hungry to concentrate on these calculations and formulas (Student 16).*

Lastly, the congestion of deadlines for assessments around the same period reflects a lack of coordination by lecturers regarding formative assessment. One of the interviewees illuminated how the lack of coordination resulted in stress for students and pressure on the limited space in the computer laboratory, as shown below:

*There are clashes between assessments of different subjects all of which require the use of the same*

resources. Several assignments are due at the same time and require the use of the same computer laboratory. We fight for limited space in the laboratory to do assignments (Student 4).

Additionally, students were unhappy with the use of a disruptive venue for the final examination, which is inconsistent with the proper conduct of an examination.

*The problem is that people who use the public footpath [located near the examination venue], talk...laugh and make noise while we are writing the examination. We cannot even concentrate and focus on the questions. Many students do not finish writing the exam (Student 17).*

### 5.5 Inadequate staff to reinforce vocational learning and identity

The organisational architecture in the TVET campus was characterised by frequent transfers and the inadequate number of good lecturers which affected the quality of teaching and learning by students, as portrayed below:

*There are [only] a few competent lecturers in many courses such as accounting and maths. In addition to this, these lecturers come and go anyhow in the middle of a semester. [Just] as you get used to the teaching style of a lecturer, he or she gets transferred to another college. I know that students of marketing also face the same problem as well (Student 8).*

Consequently, students performed poorly at the lower levels, leading to frustration and lack of desire to further study at the higher levels. The lack of teachers and poor performance by students as part of the organisational architecture was highlighted by one of the students as follows:

*The pass rate at level four is better than level three. However, you can see that the pass rate at lower levels is terrible. Students get discouraged there. The problem is that there are not enough good lecturers. I have seen this in applied accounting (Student 6).*

Notably, students complained of missing the socialisation into the vocational culture and identity of their occupation through learning from work, as elaborated below:

*As students of applied accounting, we have never had excursions, such as a visit to an accounting firm or the JSE, to see and learn from people doing accounting jobs in the workplace. At the campus, we rely too much on the textbook and miss the actual filling-in of a company cheque...just to experience the real accounting work. We do not understand why we do not have work placements, yet there are many companies here. Our friends from other departments also complained about lack of work placements (Student 6).*

### 5.6 Inadequate and inappropriate resources

Insufficient human and physical resources (e.g. limited space in the computer laboratory, lack of suitable examination venues, outdated technology) illustrate some of the resource-related difficulties encountered by students within the organisational architecture of a TVET campus.

*The computer laboratory at the college is [too] small for the students. The old computers switch off and on, on their own. You do not get enough time to practise on the latest Pastel accounting [software]. The printer is very slow when printing; you have to wait for your printouts before updating the Pastel work (Student 7).*

Another interviewee surmised how the absence of critical and physical resources, such as the library created difficulties for TVET students to study.

*It is difficult to study without a library and pass [the examination]. We cannot study at home. We cannot*

*study on campus because we do not have a library. We use a public library that does not have most of what we need as accounting students (Student 16).*

### 5.7 Poor strategic performance: low enrolment, low throughput and high dropout

Low pass rates, low enrolment and the dwindling number of continuing students in most courses reflect the consequences of the quality of TVET provision to students. Below is what one of the interviewees had to say about student performance as part of the organisational architecture at the TVET campus:

*The numbers of new students are deteriorating. Students are hesitant to enrol for courses such as applied accounting, knowing that many students are failing. In the same way, our classes for continuing students are already small, but people are still dropping out. You can ask students from other departments they will tell you the same story (Student 3).*

## 6. Discussion

Despite a sound strategy, the organisational architecture of the TVET campus was predominantly misaligned by unsupportive systems, inadequate staff, nonchalant leadership, and also under-resourced as a pathway for South African youths into to the world of work. In this study, the process strategy of active learning was a sound element of the organisational architecture of the TVET campus. In applauding active peer learning, Yu (1996, p.235) agrees that:

*“..... student's deep understanding suffers if they cannot share their different insights, reasoning process, discover weak points in reasoning, correct one another and adjust their understanding based on each other's understanding”.*

Peer learning as part of the organisational architecture occurs not only in the classroom guided by the lecturer. It also occurs outside the classroom as an emergent coping mechanism when students fail to grasp content within the classroom. The network of learners who assisted each other's learning outside the formal support system reveals how students in this study were creating bonding and bridging social capital for learning. However, this poses the challenge of ensuring the quality of peer learning which occurs outside the classroom beyond the guidance of TVET lecturers.

Notably, lecturers in this study were using the vernacular language to teach students to enhance learning by weak students. Arguably, the lecturers were inadvertently reinforcing the beliefs and values within the organisational architecture of a TVET campus that this type of education is for academically weak students, who can learn better in the vernacular language. Badenhorst and Radile (2018) warn of the problems of students who understand the lessons delivered in a vernacular language, but fail to follow the same material when presented in English during examinations.

This study is explicit that the lack of coordination among lecturers led to too many assessments at the same time. These assignments created stress for students but also placed pressure on the limited resources (e.g. computer laboratory). A study by Matlala (2005) confirmed that students do not perform well if given too much work to be completed within a short time. If managed carefully, the continuous assessment provides evidence of student achievement, but also key information to assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching (Nkalane, 2018).

The findings of this study reveal gaps such as the inadequate number of good lecturers as part of the organisational architecture in a TVET campus. Thus, well-qualified lecturers and the socialisation of students are essential to transmit dispositions and attitudes required of vocational students. Rudman and Meiring (2018,p.89) posit that “the real answer to improving outcomes from vocational education is in the classroom in understanding the many decisions teachers take as they interact with students”. However, the climate of insecurity on TVET campuses is not conducive for lecturers to deal with the social dimensions of students. It is posited that TVET students are immature, undisciplined and ill-

prepared for the high cognitive demands of the TVET curriculum (Buthelezi, 2018). Organisational climate is critical if employees are to execute their work properly.

Furthermore, the organisational architecture of a TVET campus failed to reinforce the tenets of vocational pedagogy, such as vocational task authenticity (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018). There was a lack of students' exposure to real work tasks and work-based learning. Badenhorst and Radile (2018, p.2) concur that "the vocational system suffers from inadequate partnerships with industry and as a result, vocational training institutions are less equipped to respond to the skills requirements of employers and the transition of young people into suitable jobs". It is paramount that TVET leaders, lecturers and administrative staff have the experience of working with industry to promote learning from the world of work (Ogbuanya, Njoku, Kemi & Ogunkelu, 2018).

Another key finding reveals how the poor quality of service by administrative staff affected both various aspects of teaching and learning and also social support for students. The organisational architecture of a TVET campus manifests administrative failure to address students' complaints, persistent lack of delivery of learning materials, a dysfunctional ICT system and technology, and lack of social support necessary to retain students. The findings of a study by Mpanza, Green, Sentoo and Porches (2019) echo the call for administrative staff in TVET colleges in South Africa to be provided with customer service training to deliver high-quality services to internal customers.

Interestingly, the students who dropped out of a subject (e.g. applied accounting) cultivated a dropout culture by enticing peers to also pull out from the subject. As a result of the failure of the social support system, students who did not drop out from the course had difficulties in learning during the afternoon classes as they were hungry. Holistic support to students demands collaborative effort by institutional leaders, lecturers, and administrative support staff to also pay attention to peer relations (Gao, Yang, Wang, Min & Rozelle, 2019). It is helpful if lecturers and leaders are sensitive to the socio-economic circumstances of students (e.g. hunger, domestic or family matters, financial stress) which impede learning as a key aspect in the organisational architecture of a TVET campus (Rudman & Meiring, 2018).

The organisational architecture of a TVET campus is misaligned profoundly due to inadequate resources, a variety of unsupportive systems, nonchalant leadership at the institutional and classroom levels, gaps in skills and student dropout culture. Given the above issues reflecting the internal functioning of a TVET campus, re-alignment of the organisational architecture is imperative to improve institutional and student performance. In pursuit of re-alignment, any increased student enrolment needs to be accompanied by corresponding increases in human and infrastructural resources in the organisational architecture of a TVET campus. Additionally, relational work by TVET institutional leaders is required to create strategic consensus and garner support from internal and external stakeholders. It is paramount that TVET institutions build and sustain strong partnerships with the industry and labour markets. Badenhorst and Radile (2018) advocate for distributed leadership at different levels of TVET institutions to re-align the organisational architecture of a TVET college, while Robertson and Frick (2018, p.71) call for attention to the lack of a "strategically planned, custom-designed leadership development programmes for leaders in public TVET colleges" in South Africa.

A collaborative effort by institutional leaders, lecturers and administrative staff is critical to re-align the organisational architecture of a TVET campus. However, this is likely to be incomplete if leaders, lecturers and administrative staff do not address the variety of challenges of workplace learning. These challenges include the problems of misconception, irregular and inadequate coordination of supervision by institutions and industry, resources and funding for workplace learning (Ogbuanya et al., 2018). Overcoming the resistance of administrators and classroom lecturers to the idea that students learn much in the workplace what they cannot learn so readily in the classroom, is essential (Ogbuanya et al., 2018).

In reinforcing a student-centred organisational architecture, it is salient to ensure that the dynamics of student peer relations create a positive culture. Integrated student support (e.g. academic, social) for vocational learning is required to build not just technical competence, but also the vocational identity of TVET graduates who are employable or ready to thrive in self-employment.

## 7. Conclusion

Misalignment of the organisational architecture of a TVET campus cripples the pathway to work for the youth in South Africa. The twin strategy of active learning and assessment-led teaching in the TVET campus was sound. However, it was under-resourced and misaligned by the unsupportive systems, shortage of qualified staff, nonchalant institutional and classroom management and lack of adequate and integrated support to students by administrative staff.

This study reveals a compelling need for re-alignment of the organisational architecture of the TVET campus investigated, to improve organisational and student performance. A particular focus on student peer relations is vital to address the problem of student dropout behaviour and culture. Strengthening of the socialisation of TVET students through sound workplace learning is critical if TVET is to be an aligned and promising pathway to work for the youths in South Africa.

A limitation of this exploratory study is the use of students from one subject in a TVET campus who may not have adequate insights on the experiences of students from other courses. As such, the findings of this study are not generalisable, but preferably transferable to similar contexts of a TVET campus.

This exploratory study is a significant step towards a situated, emic and systemic understanding of internal alignment in the organisational architecture of a TVET campus as the foundation for informed changes to enhance institutional and student performance. Future organisational and TVET researchers should enhance the diversity of participating TVET campuses (e.g. urban and rural) and stakeholders (e.g. students from diverse subjects, lecturers, support staff, industry experts, TVET institutional leaders) in the research sample to build a robust organisational architecture with explanatory power across different contexts of TVET institutions in South Africa.

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