STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AT POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING STAFF AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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ABSTRACT

This study measured engagement levels among students; determined the impact of resources usage and established to which extent students experience demands on their study. The study further explored the implications of engagement levels and resource usage to curriculum design, teaching staff and academic performance. A survey design was used, with questionnaires distributed to a randomly selected sample of 123 students. Data was analyzed using the SPSS 18.0 program (SPSS, 2009). Data was organized into three different strands such as Student Engagement Levels, Resources Usage and Study demands. Student engagement levels were classified into three categories, namely those who were highly engaged; those who were moderately engaged and those who were slightly engaged in their study. The main finding was that the levels of engagement among students were moderate. The study also found that resources such as Library, Computer Laboratory and Lecturers were generally put to good use. Some of the resources that were not well appreciated by students were Student representative assistance and Student Counsellors assistance. It was also found that most students experienced high demands and pressure from their study. These findings have important and relevant implications on curriculum design, teaching staff and academic performance, as engagement and appropriate curriculum are critical elements in student's academic success and learning.

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Accomplishments are rarely achieved without assistance from others. I would like to thank the Almighty God for granting me this opportunity to conduct my research and complete my studies.

First and foremost I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Armas E.E Shikongo, who has supported me throughout my thesis with his patience and knowledge whilst allowing me the room to work in my own way. The level of this thesis is outstanding because of his encouragement and effort and without him this thesis, too, would not have been completed. I thank God for his wisdom. In addition, I would like to thank Prof S. Rothmann for his assistance with regard to the research instruments. Without this assistance, data collection would not have been possible. I thank him for dedicating his time during the course of this work.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my daughter Tuli Meameno Vatuva, who was born in the midst of my study. I remember carrying her to the University when I had to write my exams. My first course work examination started when she was only 2 weeks. I said to myself, when she grows up one day she may asks what kind of mother I was. I will always feel indebted to her, for not being there 100% during her first months of birth.

DECLARATION

I, Fiina Shimaneni, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution of higher education.

……. Date: April 2013

Fiina Shimaneni

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the orientation of the study, the statement of the problem, the study objectives, significance of the study, limitation of the study and delimitation of the study, including definitions of key variables.

1.2 Orientation of the Study

During the period of Second World War, the focus of Psychology was particularly on treating mental illness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Such a focus largely focussed on the negative dimensions of human nature. However, according to Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000), the last decade the study of Psychology took a paradigm shift in focus to look at how positive human functioning achieves a scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving individuals, families, and communities. This approach of looking at making normal life more fulfilling is referred to as "Positive Psychology". The field of positive psychology has therefore, identified character and virtue as some of the key topics of studies for the social sciences (McCullough & Snyder 2000). Over the past few years, the study of positive psychology has become an emerging approach for many social researchers (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Engagement of individuals is an important research theme in the positive psychology approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Student engagement can be defined as the level of participation and intrinsic interest which a student shows in studying (Akey, 2006). This thesis looked at engagement levels, particularly among students. That is further supported by (Kuh, 2009) when he defines student engagement as representing the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college. This also includes what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities. Kuh (2009) further stated that engaged students show high levels of self-efficacy which

results in setting up goals and challenges for themselves and show commitment in order to fulfil these challenges. Engaged students are curious, show desire to know more and display a positive attitude towards their studies. They make greater use of different learning strategies such as planning and organizing their academic activities, transforming instructional information using cognitive strategies to understand and remember material being taught, resisting distractions, motivating themselves to complete school work, structuring a conducive environment for study and participating in class in order to perform better (Schunk, 1990). “Student engagement” has, therefore, become a term frequently used to describe a compendium of behaviours characterizing students who are said to be more involved with their university community than their ‘less engaged peers with the assumption that such engagement involves activities and conditions likely to generate high quality learning (Krause, 2005).

Individuals become engaged if they are fully involved and enthusiastic about the task at hand (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Students learn more and retain the information being taught when they actively participate in the learning process and more importantly when they can relate to what is being taught in class (Akey, 2006). Apart from student effort, researchers have also determined that various factors in the educational context also play a role in enhancing student engagement (Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Peterson, 2005). These are increasing parental and stakeholders’ involvement, offering extracurricular activities and improving institution safety, which may enhance student engagement in the classroom.

Garcia-Reid et al (2005) further indicated that the success of what happens in the classroom is not entirely in the hands of the students, but largely depends on the teachers’ skills and effort to engage students. According to Abu-Hilal (2000), one method of enhancing student engagement is using instructional strategies during teaching activity that are challenging and create a class environment in which students feel comfortable asking questions and are challenged to do more.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

From several platforms, the author has noted that quite often the Namibian academic institutions are blamed for failing to prepare students for job markets and to equip them with necessary skills to face everyday's challenges. Higher Education such as University of Namibia and Polytechnic of Namibia are expected to develop the productive forces for our economic development (*The Namibian, 2011*). However, positive student engagement in the classroom has not been discussed or researched intensively in general (Jones, 2008 & Merwin, 2002).

Based on the discussion above, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

Firstly, scientific information is lacking regarding the engagement levels among students at the Polytechnic of Namibia. As a result it is not clear what the levels are of student engagement among students. In addition, it is noted in several cases that students often do not adopt the high academic aspirations imposed on them. Secondly, it is also unclear how this lack of scientific information can impact on the academic achievement of students. Thirdly, it is unclear how demand and resources usage impact on students' engagement.

Taking cognisance of the research problems set out above, the research question is formulated as: "What implications do the levels of student engagement; students demand and resources among Polytechnic students have on academic performance and teaching staff"?

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1.4.1 Measure the levels of student engagement at the Polytechnic of Namibia

1.4.2 Determine the impact of resources usage on student engagement

1.4.3 Determine the extent to which students experience demands on their study

1.4.4 Explore implications of student engagement levels and resources usage to academic performance , teaching staff and curriculum design

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aimed at exploring implication for academic lecturers (especially at Polytechnic of Namibia) of the difficulties and challenges students face with regard to their learning so that lecturers can understand students better.

The research findings are expected to help academics to actively seek and create the conditions that can foster learning, show the students the skills they need in order to succeed by clearly and systematically demonstrating these skills themselves and demonstrating engagement in learning as a valuable aspect of their personalities. Many researchers have argued that students who are engaged perform better than their counterparts (Akey, 2006; Merwin, 2002; Garcia et al, 2005; & Heller et al, 2003). If this is true, then the study potentially contributes to the body of knowledge in this particular field.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study was that the data were cross-sectional. This means that data were collected from the respondents on only one occasion. It might be that the students' level of engagement varies with age. One can only fully understand this if one follows the student's life from a younger age. Another limitation was that the role of parents was not studied, which can also be a factor in determining students' engagement in learning, hence performance. The researcher has recommended further study with regard to these limitations.

A third limitation was the sampling method and generalisation of the results. Given the number of students and their learning commitments, a convenient sample, which might not be representative of the population, was taken. The researcher used a sufficiently large sample ($n > 123$) out of a total population of 450 to deal with this limitation in order to draw valid conclusions.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study focused on student engagement levels, student usage of resources and student study demand. However, the implications of these concepts on academic performance were

not directly studied because the institution felt that the student records on academic performance are confidential. Nevertheless, the implication for teaching staff and general academic performance were explored.

1.7 Definition of Key Variables

1.7.1 Student Engagement

A conceptual definition of student engagement is that student engagement occurs when students make a psychological investment in learning. Students take pride not simply in earning the formal indicators of success (marks obtained), but in understanding the material and incorporating or internalizing it in their lives. It is seen as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In this study student engagement was operationalized as the extent students are involved in their academic work by recognising and using resources the institution offers.

Specifically, student engagement was measured using an instrument called Ultrecht Work Engagement Scale, Student Version (UWES-S) developed by Schaufeli & Bakker (2003). It has 17 statements asking about how students feel regarding their studies.

1.7.2 Student Resources Usage

There are many resources available to students. The study mainly focused on the following resources: place of residence, sources of funding, capacity of lecture rooms, library, computer laboratory services, student representatives, academic staff, student counsellors, the clinic and the writing centre. This was measured using the Student Resources Questionnaire designed by Rothmann (2011), which consists of different items such provision of residence sources of tuition, academic staff and various academic resources.

1.7.3 Student Study Demand

This refers to different experiences encountered by students during their studies (Schaufeli, & Bakker, 2004). These include study workload, how often they work under pressure and if they work extra hard to complete their work. This was measured using the Experiences of your studies Questionnaire Rothmann (2011), where students express their feelings on various statements rated on a Likert scale.

1.7.4 Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their lecturers (Akey, 2006). In institution of higher learning success is measured by academic performance or how well a student meets the standards set by the institution. Academic performance was not measured directly due to the institution' refusal to give academic performance records because of the issue of confidentiality.

1.7.5 Curriculum Design

Curriculum design refers to the development of curricula for students. It is the structure, scope, sequence, content, and skills taught by an educational body (Bovill, Bulley, & Morss 2011). Curriculum design was not measured by this study, however the study findings seems to have implication for curriculum design.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews critical pieces of current knowledge, relevant to the study, under the following headings, student engagement in higher learning institutions, student resources, the role of academic teachers and faculties in enhancing student engagement and the implication of student engagement on academic performance.

2.2 Student Engagement in Higher Learning Institutions

As pointed out earlier in the previous chapter, various factors in the educational context have an influence on student engagement (Garcia-Reid et al, 2003). Schools are concerned with persistent educational problems facing students today. Among those notable are under achievements, behavioural as well emotional difficulties (Akey, 2006). Nevertheless, academic institutions continue to do their best by creating a supportive network of relationships (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). It is worth noting that institutions of high learning in Namibia have been seeing many challenges, which may force them to compromise on paying attention to student engagement. Some of these challenges are high enrolment pressure, insufficient budget from the government, slow faculty hiring and emerging new technologies *(The Namibian 2011).*

Regardless of those challenges, our institutions of higher learning are expected to enhance our national capacity to learn *(The Namibian 2011).* They could only do so through engagement, by setting universities' aims, purposes and priorities, relating teaching and learning to the wider world and maintain constant dialogue between researchers and practitioners. *The Namibian (2011)* further stated that the learning capability will be high in systems where there are networks of collaboration, open interaction and mutual trust. This suggests that unnecessary institutional competition, absence of culture of resource sharing, and programme duplication in our institutions of higher learning are counterproductive to the building of the national learning capability.

The idea of engagement should be particularly appealing to higher education system in our country. This is critical as institutions in nowadays are faced with increasing pressure to improve student outcomes such as retention, persistence and completion (Zepke & Leach, 2005). There has been a public outcry for accountability within the higher education system and to ensure the effectives of the quality of education. Not only this, but to produce students with critical thinking skills needed to be discerning consumers of information, the curiosity needed to make sense of the world and the problem-solving skills need to succeed in an ever-changing world (Becker, 2011). The quality of education can be measured by student engagement as the more students are engage with the institution, the more likely they are to persist and complete their education (Kuh, 2009). Similarly, these are the students who are more likely to have a deeper understanding of their learning and graduate with the critical thinking skills required of the outside world. The author feels that student engagement can be used by institutions of higher learning in Namibia as an alarm clock, to wake students who are sleepwalking.

Student engagement also reflects the recurring issue of access to education (Kazmi, 2010). Kazmi (2010) stated that we have to move beyond thinking of access solely as enabling people to gain entry into higher education to seeing access as providing individuals realistic opportunities to earn a four year University degree. Seeing many students on campus shuffling from one classes to the next, can be deceiving. It implies that students are awake, active and alert, when often they are not (Kazmi, 2010). He, further, noted that students may be physically awake but may be disengaged with their learning process, their institution and the opportunities around them. This is further supported by an article in the local newspaper that students tend to enter tertiary institutions merely to acquire qualifications and diplomas *(The Namibian, 2011).* The belief out there is that educational certificates are key to obtaining the best-paid and most secured jobs. It is not necessarily their fault; education is marked as a means to an end, there is little focus on the journey or the learning process to get there (Kazmi, 2010). This, however, calls for academic institution to disseminate relevant knowledge and to further explore in a vigorous manner the potential use of new technologies in order to enhance the teaching and learning process.

2.3 Student Resources

By definition, success in academic world means fulfilling academic requirements. Academic and social supports play a significant role in study achievement (learning outcome). This calls for institutions to identify various ways of providing academic and social support requirements (Nancy & Firestone, 2008).

Every course should incorporate support to help how student can approach different aspects of degree-level work, such as thinking critically, researching, writing, working in groups and giving presentations. This support is delivered not only by academic lecturers but also by the Academic Librarians, IT technicians and the Student Academic Support advisors (Badley 2009). Bradley, further, states that academic institutions are equipped with broad range of student services aiming at assisting students to achieve academic as well as personal goals; to prepare graduates to be engaged citizens and successful members of the workforce in an increasingly diverse competitive world. It is, then, up to the student to embrace this whole range of resources e.g. Library, Computer Services, Wellness Centres, Writing Centres, and Career Guidance Officers and uses them optimally.

2.4 The Role of Academic Teachers and Faculties in Enhancing Student Engagement

Teachers are key players in fostering student engagement (Akey, 2006; Garcia-Reid., Reid, & Peterson, 2005).Yet, keeping students interested in school and motivating them to succeed are challenges that present themselves year after year, to even the most experienced teachers. Teachers work directly with students and can be influential in students' educational experience. What happens in the classroom, the quality of teaching that sparks engaged student learning, is critical. When faculties are familiar with the research on how people learn, including pedagogies that have an impact on student success, they become more effective and confident teachers (Newmann, 1996). However, the author has noted that for many of the academic lecturers, subject knowledge is their only strength. They are experts in their subjects, but teaching pedagogies has never been part of their academic training. We spend massive resources in never-ending improvement in curricula while the real payoff comes from how we ask students to learn (Becker, 2011). However for learning to be transformational, we must train our teaching academic staff on how to teach. (Kazmi, 2010)

re-emphasize this by saying that it is not always how much one studies (quantity) but rather how one studies (quality) that makes the difference. This is because the value-added for education has shifted. The premium we must seek from education is skills, literacy and numeracy of course, but also 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and collaboration (Becker, 2011).

Enhancing student learning and engagement can be a challenge for many academic teachers. Quite often they do not have time to engage fully with students, but have to prepare for classes and finish the curriculum. This pressure may have negative implication for academics. Burnout and decreasing commitment has also been noted as major problems in teaching professions (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). If conducive learning environment at higher institutions are to be fostered, the issue of academic well–being, health and commitment should not be overlooked. According to the study of Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli (2006), the primary concern for institutions should be to suggest efforts aiming at reducing job demands and preventing burnout among academics. When efforts such as these are put in, academics will be able to create a culture of achievement, develop interactive and relevant lessons and activities and will be supportive to students (Akey, 2006).

In their study of what constitutes a master teacher (Smart, Kelley and Conant, 2003) concurred that teaching success requires strong communication skills, a real-world perspective, caring/empathy, and involvement orientation and organisation/preparations. Furthermore, their study indicated a number of other attributes they believed were crucial to effective teaching and student learning, e.g. interactive lecturing, considerable questioning to lift student involvement and assessment pieces that require critical, integrative thinking. This is, further, supported by (Becker 2011) who stated that institutions of learning must stop telling and explaining, rather ask questions instead. Challenging students to find their own answers, through active and collaborative learning, help them to develop skills required by the business world. Active learning should involve open-ended questions rather than just seeking the ‘right answer’ (Errey & Wood, 2011). Businesses want to employ people who have the ability to manage rather than merely having knowledge about management concepts (Cunningham, 1995). Moreover, engagement helps students develop skills valued by

employers, including the ability to work well with others, contribute new ideas and align themselves with the goals of the organization (Yazzie-Mintz, 2010).

The culture of education is changing and institutions must change along with it to keep up (Kazmi, 2010). Academic staff and all stakeholders must realize that learning institutions are sliding toward irrelevance (Becker, 2011). People have always learned everywhere, not just in schools. Becker, further, stated today students problem-solve as they play video games, they communicate and collaborate via facebook, they create content via websites. The world now operates through engagement, with limitless opportunities to create, express and share. This is the world students must master. So why would we anesthetize them in the classroom? This calls for institutions not only to develop programs that equip students with necessary skills, but equally important to encourage more innovative and creative ways of achieving optimal outcomes in both learning and teaching. Output is what students leave university with, examples include, newfound values, beliefs, skills and knowledge (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). It is these outputs that our education system must instil in students if we are prepare them for the future that we cannot grasp and have no clue what the world will look like in the next five years (Robinson, 2006). If education cannot provide students with the answers for negotiating the future, it must provide them the skills to figure it out for themselves (Becker, 2011).

2.5 Student Engagement and Academic Performance

Despite the above mentioned challenges, researchers indicate that students who are engaged tend to perform better than their counterparts (Akey, 2006; Merwin, 2002; Garcia et al, 2005; & Heller et al, 2003). Newmann, (1996), p242: as cited in Akey (2006), attributed the high performance to “students who devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value”. As a result, academic institutions and stakeholders alike have searched to find ways to increase student achievement in their institutions (Merwin, 2002). Research also indicated that engagement is one indicator of achievement (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour,

dedication and absorption. Vigour is defined as high levels of energy and mental resilience while working and the willingness to invest effort in one's work. "Dedication refers to deriving a sense of significances from one's work, by feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job, and by feeling inspired and challenged by it". "Absorption is characterised by being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it" (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010, p:3).

Extensive evidence exists that engagement and motivation are critical elements in student success and learning (Akey, 2006; Fredricks & Eccles, 2003; Weiss & Pasley, 2004; Heller et al, 2003, & Jones, 2008). Motivation is considered a key factor in students' level of interaction with their studies and perceptions of self-efficacy (Russell & Slater, 2011). The two factors (i.e. engagement & motivation) have consistently been linked to reduced dropout rates and increased levels of student success (Skinner & Belmont, 1993 & Yair 2000.) These authors, further, agree that engaged students learn more, retain more, and enjoy learning activities more than students who are not engaged. Disengaged students are passive, do not try hard, and give up easily in the face of challenges. They can be bored, depressed, anxious, or even angry about their presence in the classroom. They can be withdrawn from learning opportunities or even rebellious towards teachers and classmates (Merwin, 2002).

The study undertaken by Akey (2006), in New York on 449 students revealed that over the long term, students are more likely to be engaged in the classroom when they are asked to conduct experiments, participate in debates and role-playing, create models, and complete projects. Evidence also suggests that when classroom instruction draws on students' pre-existing knowledge, culture, and real-world experiences, it becomes more meaningful to them (Abu-Hilal, 2000). This was, further, reinforced by Fredricks & Eccles, (2006) who stated that students enjoy learning more and learns better when that which they are studying is of personal interest and relates to their lives. Akey (2006), therefore, concluded that studies have shown a direct link between levels of engagement and achievement.

2.6 Summary

While engagement is associated primarily with the efforts of students, academics are responsible for shaping learning environment and creating favourable conditions that encourage students to be motivated and involved (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Universities are challenged to provide support, in particular, a welcoming campus environment, sufficient infrastructure and resources for learning (Krause & Coates, 2008). In addition, both academics and Universities are seen as contributing to student engagement in terms of effective organization of the curriculum and the allocation of resources and services (Burdett & Crossman, 2012).

Universities are further encouraged to design and formulate strategies that support improvements in student learning outcomes, persistence, retention and graduation rates (Burdett & Crossman, 2012). While doing this, Universities have to be aware of the changing lifestyles and work patterns that have led to competing demands on students' time and these have caused a shift in the way they view their university experiences (Sheard, Carbone & Hurst 2010). Student engagement is more likely where the institution is supportive of students and has an effective organizational culture (Russell & Slater, 2011). Such a culture would welcome and respect students from diverse backgrounds, provide a wide range of appropriate support services and be willing to adapt to the changing needs of students (Porter, 2006). Russell et al (2011) continues to state that a sense of belonging will be achieved where tertiary institutions provide adequate learning support and pastoral care. Supports that could be said to directly relate to learning are such as library, learning support, systems and getting help. Knowing how the system work, knowing where to get help, knowing how to use the library or access learning support are some areas of institutional support which might be valued by students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research designs, participants, measuring instruments, research procedures and how data were analysed. It also deals with how ethics were adhered to in the research process.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, a quantitative approach was used. A survey design was utilized. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), this type of design is suitable for studying the relationships between different variables. Furthermore this approach is more empirical, as it produces measurable data and results.

3.3 Population and Sample Size

In 2010, the Polytechnic of Namibia had about 13000 registered students. Out of this, about 450 students are enrolled for Entrepreneurship at the Polytechnic of Namibia for the 2010 academic year (*ITS Systems, Polytechnic, 2010*). The target population for this study was 3rd and 4th year students, full time, part time and distance students from all Schools of the Polytechnic of Namibia registered for Entrepreneurship module.

A sample of one hundred and twenty three (n = 123), using a convenience sampling was drawn from the above-mentioned population. This sampling method was selected because the subjects were of convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. This included participants who were available and willing to complete the measuring instruments.

3.4 Measuring Instruments

The following measuring instruments were used:

A Biographical questionnaire, self-designed, was used to gather information on the demographic characteristics of the participants such as sex, age, year of study, student number and course of study. The questionnaire consists of multiple – choice questionnaire to simplify its completion. Participants ticked appropriate blocks, and a space was provided for answers that might not have been included in the list (See *Appendix A).*

The Study Demands-Resources Scale (*Appendix B & C*) was used to measure the causes of student engagement. This instrument was developed by Rothmann (2010) and was adapted by the researcher. For instance there were items that are not applicable to our context such as academic development officer (replaced with Student Representative Council), Directors of Schools (replaced with Deans and Head of Departments). The researcher also added some resources such as Campus Health and Wellness Centre and Writing Centre which were not on the original questionnaire. Demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e., cognitive or emotional) effort and are, therefore, associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). School demands in this study may include study workload, disruptive behaviour from other students and poor physical environment. Resources refer to those physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that may (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, (2) are functional in achieving work goals, and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Demerouti, et al., 2001). In the learning context resources aspects may include teachers' support, innovative school climate and access to information.

The Demand Resources (D-R) model was used in South Africa in the study by Demorouti & Baker (2011) published in the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*. At the heart of the JD-R model lies the assumption that whereas every occupation may have its own causes of employee well-being, these factors can be classified in two general categories (i.e., job demands and job resources)

The Utrecht Student Engagement Scale (UWES Study & Well-being Scale), developed by Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) was used to measure levels of student engagement. This instrument consists of 17 items with three sub- scales and includes statements such as: "*When I'm doing my work as a student I feel bursting with energy" (vigour), "I find my studies full of meaning and purpose" (dedications) and "Time flies when I am studying" (Absorption).* (See *Appendix D).* UWES is scored on a seven – point likert rating scale, varying from 0 (Never) to 6 (Always). This instrument also allows for more targeted people to be reached and is faster and convenient. With the emergence of positive psychology, the concept of engagement has been receiving increased attention.

With regard to the use of UWES Scale, 23 studies have been conducted between 1999 and 2003 in 9 countries, in which South Africa is included. These studies were either done in single organisations or in multiple sites (Schaufeli & Baker, 2003).

3.5 Procedure

Consent was firstly obtained from the participants. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participants prior to their completion of the questionnaires. Participants were free to withdraw from the research process if they felt uncomfortable in any way. Furthermore questionnaires were administered in one setting during/after the Business Simulation Seminars. These are compulsory seminars for Entrepreneurship students from different schools. Research participants were informed about the process before hand. They were also been assured that the information would only be used for research purposes.

The researcher explained the instruments and excused herself from the room while participants completed the questionnaire. This was done so that participants may not feel intimidated by the presence of the lecturer in the room. In addition, the amount of time to be spent on the research by each participant was communicated truthfully and was strictly adhered to.

3.6 Data Analysis

The statistical analyses were carried out by means of the SPSS 18.0 program (SPSS, 2009). Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis were used to analyze the data. Factor analyses were used to determine the construct validity and reliability of the measuring instruments. Depending on the distribution of the data, Pearson or Spearman correlations was used to specify the relationships between the variables.

A cut-off point of 0.30 (medium effect) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1998).

Canonical correlation analysis was used to determine the relationships between the constructs which causes student engagement as measured by the Study Demands-Resources Scale. The goal of canonical correlation is to analyze the relationship between two sets of variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Regression analysis was employed to determine which components (constructs) play a stronger role than the others, or whether all of them are equal in contributing to academic achievement.

Student engagement levels were classified into three categories, namely those who were high engaged (who scored from often to always), those who were moderately engaged (who scored sometimes) and those who were slightly engaged (who scored never to rarely) on their study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overall research findings and data analysis using formats such as tables, charts, and graphs. The chapter analyses all information gathered and ensures that all research questions are answered in the process.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Figure 4.2.1: Gender

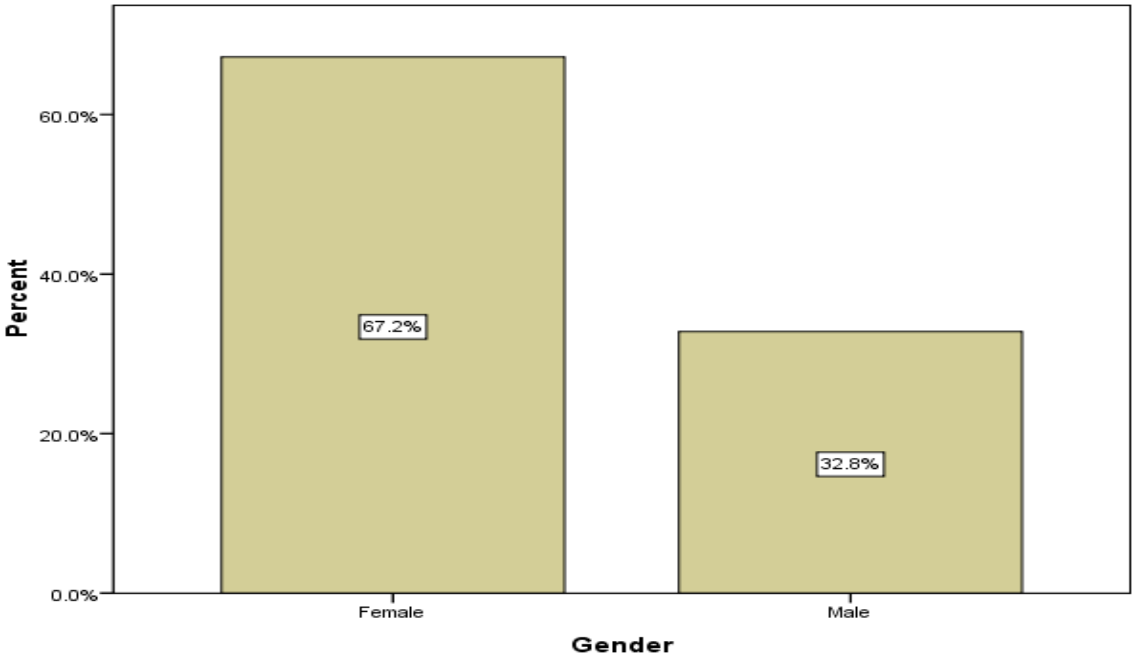

Figure 4.2.1 above shows that female students participated were more than their male counterparts with the proportions of 67.2% and 32.8% respectively.

Figure 4.2.2: Marital Status

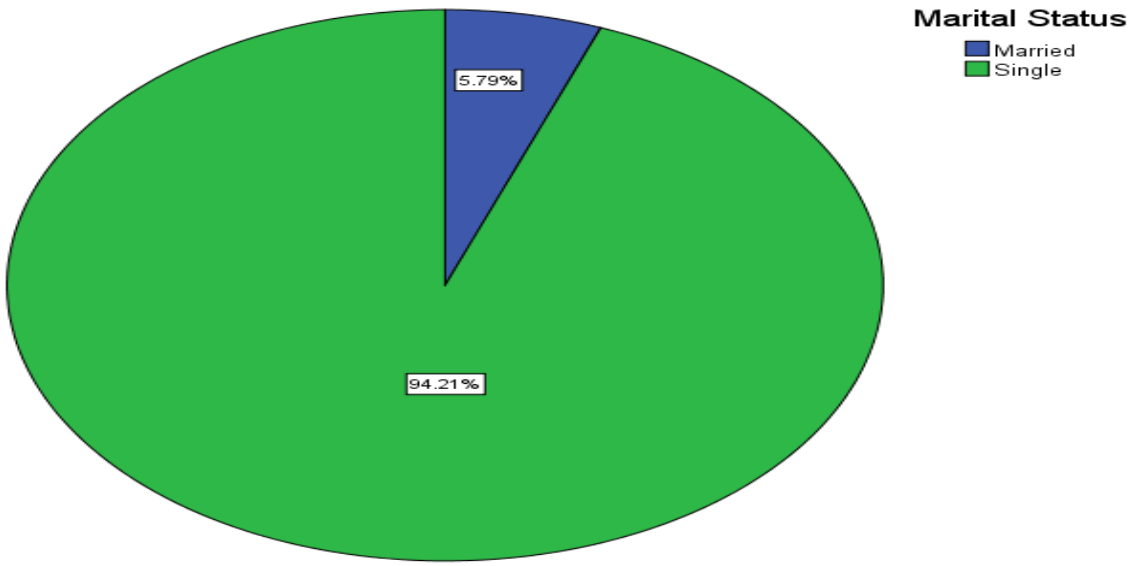

Figure 4.2.2 above shows the greatest proportion (94.21%) of the students participated in the study was of single students.

Figure 4.2.3: Age

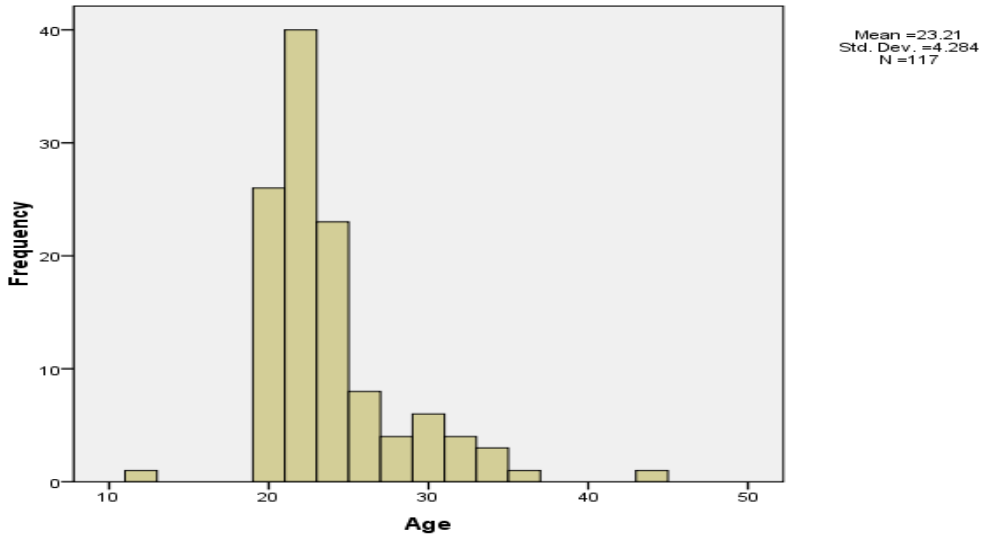

Figure 4.2.3 above shows that 85% of the students who took part in the study were aged between 20 and 30 years. On average the students were 23.21 years old and the average deviation of each student from the mean age was 4.28 years.

Figure 4.2.4: Number of years at Polytechnic of Namibia

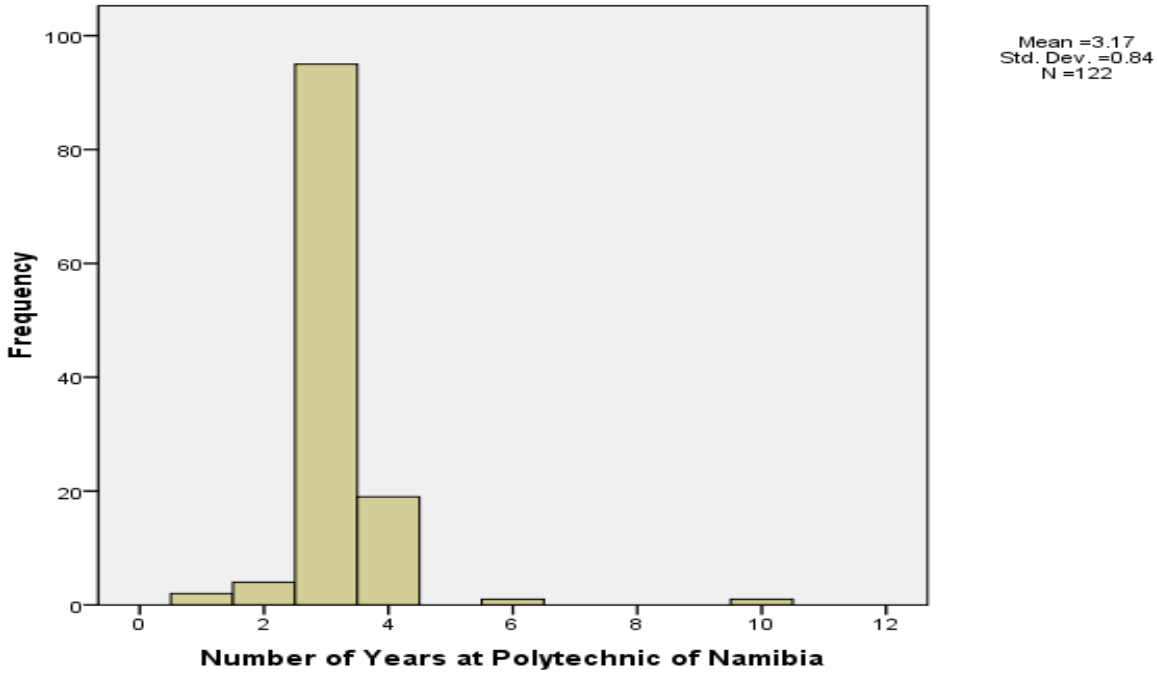

Figure 4.2.4, the histogram above, shows that the majority of the students participated in the study has been learning at this institution for 2 to 4 years now. On average a student has been at the institution for 3.17 years.

4.3 Student Resources

Figure 4.3.1: Place of Residence

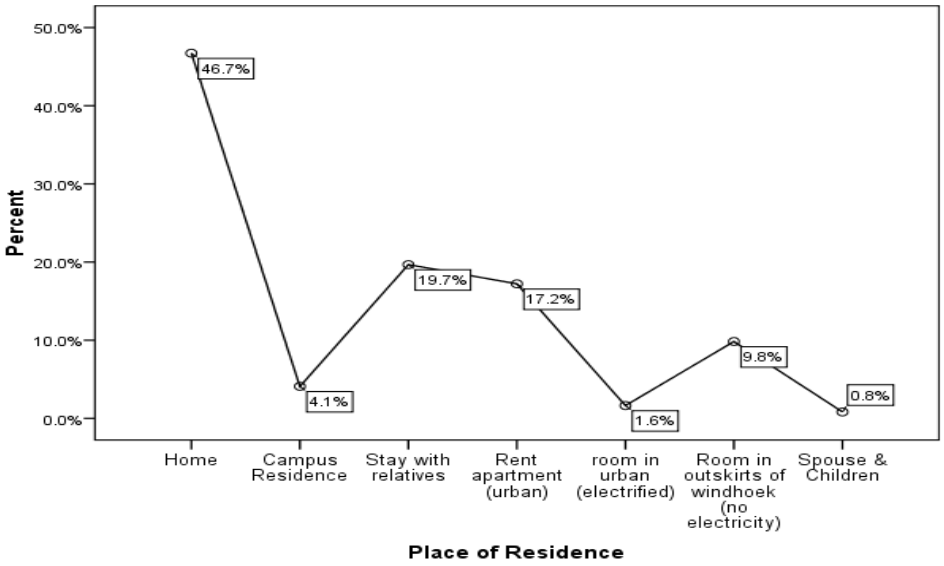

Figure 4.3.1 above presents students' place of residence. It is clear from the line graph above that 46.7% of them stay at their homes, 0.8% stay with their spouses and another 19.7% stay with relatives. Only 4.1% were residing in campus residence, 17.2% rent apartments in the urban area, 1.6% stay in a room with electricity in the urban area and about 9.8% stay in a room without electricity in the city outskirts.

Figure 4.3.2: With whom do you live with during studies?

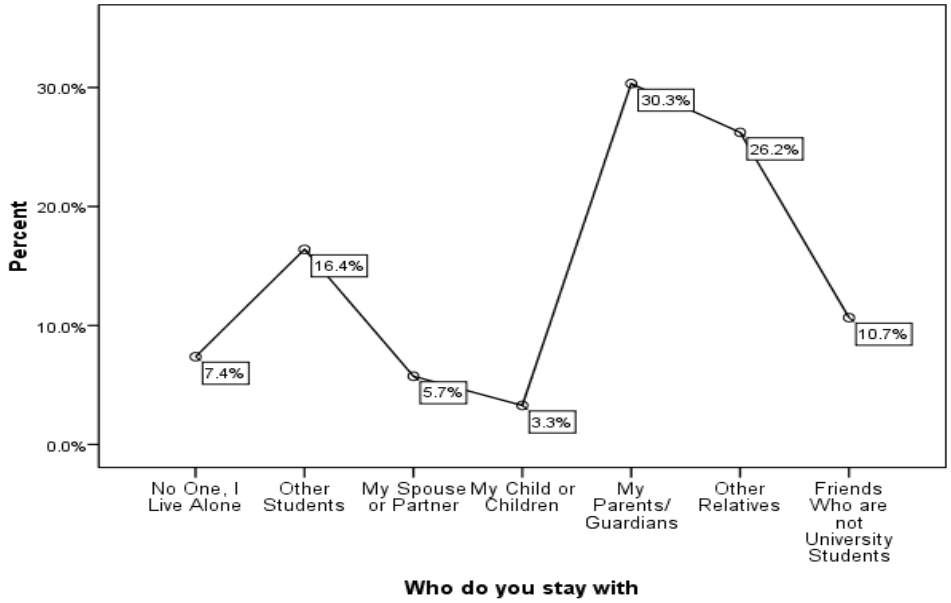

Figure 4.3.2 above shows that the majority (30.3%) of the students stay with their parents or guardians whilst 26.2% stay with other relatives. A relatively huge proportion of 16.4% of the students stay with other students and another 10.7% stay with friends who are not university students. Only 7.4% of the students stay on their own. About 5.7% stay with their spouses or partners and lastly 3.3% of them stay with their children.

Table 4.1: Extent of Payment

Payment of studies	Percent
100% funding	46.6%
Tuition only	31.0%
Tuition and Books only, Residence excluded	23.3%
Tuition and Residence Only, No Books	7.8%

Table 4.1 above shows that 46.6% of the students engaged in the study had 100% funding for their studies. About 31% had funding for tuition only. Another 23.3% had funding covering their tuition and books only with residence excluded. About 7.8% received funding only covering their tuition and residents only excluding books.

Table 4.2: Funding

Sources of Funds	Percent
Both Parents	17.3%
Single parent	17.3%
Guardian	1.9%
Bursary	5.8%
Loan	36.5%
Self	25.0%

Table 4.2 above shows sources of funding. For those who stated that they receive 100% funding, the greatest proportion (36.5%) get it through a loan. The second largest proportion of the students (25%) pays for themselves. It is also shown that 17.3% of them get it from both parents and another 17.3% from a single parent. Only 1.9% of them receive this money for guardians and about 5.8% of them get from bursaries.

Table 4.3: Tuition Only

Study payments	Percent
Both Parents	2.8%
Bursary	5.6%
Loan	83.3%
Self	8.3%

Table 4.3 above shows that for the students who receive tuition only, 83.3% of the get it from loans, 5.6% from bursaries, 2.8% from both parents and lastly 8.3% pay for themselves.

Table 4.4: Tuition and Books Only

Study Payments	Percent
Both Parents	11.1%
Single parent	7.4%
Bursary	14.8%
Loan	55.6%
Self	11.1%

T*able 4.4* above shows that those students who receive funding to cover for their tuition and books only, 55.6% of them get it from loans. About 14.8% of them receive it from bursaries whilst 11.1% get from both of their parents. Another 11.15% pay for themselves whilst 7.4% of them get it from a single parent.

Table 4.5: Tuition and Residence Only

Sources of funds		Percent
Study payments	Single parent	42.9%
	Guardian	28.6%
	Relatives	14.3%
	Loan	28.6%
	Self	14.3%

Table 4.5 above shows that for the students who receive tuition and residence fees only, the majority of them (42.9%) get it from a single parent, 28.6% receive it from guardians, 14.3% from relatives, 28.6% from loans and lastly 14.3% pay for themselves.

Figure 4.3.3: Distance from Polytechnic

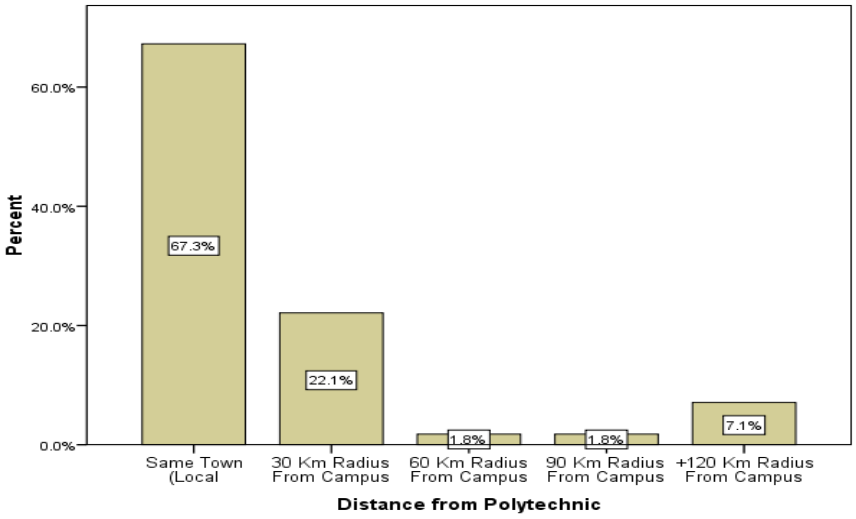

Figure 4.3.3 above shows the approximate distance travelled by students to go Polytechnic of Namibia. It is evident from the bar chart that the majority (67.3%) of the students stay in the city and travelling distance is limited. However, about 22.1% of them have to travel a

distance of about 30 km to get to Polytechnic of Namibia. About 1.8% of them travel about 60km and another 1.8% travel about 90 km. there are some students who travels about 120 km to reach the polytechnic of Namibia and these constitute 7.1% of the sample studied.

Figure 4.3.4: Home Visits

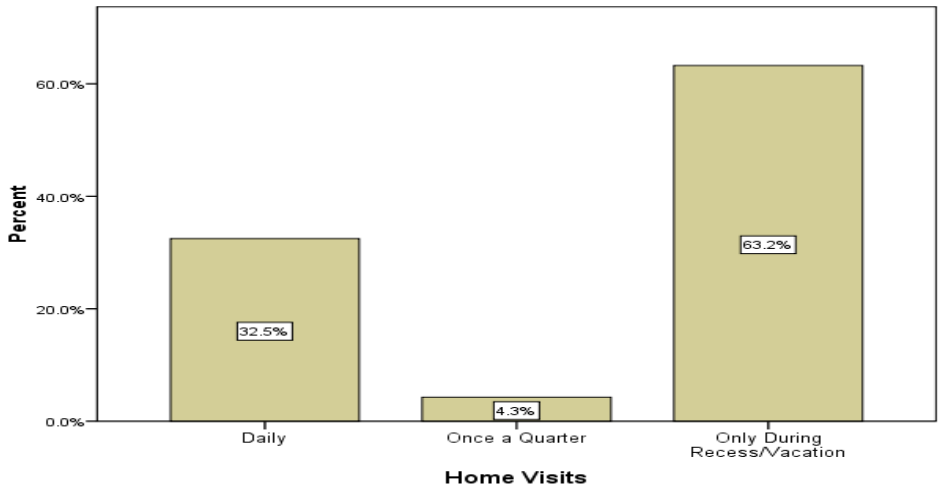

Figure 4.3.4 above shows that 63.2% of the students visit their homes only during vacation time. About 32.5% of them go home on daily basis whilst the remaining 4.3% only go back home quarterly.

Figure 4.3.5: Employment Status of Parents

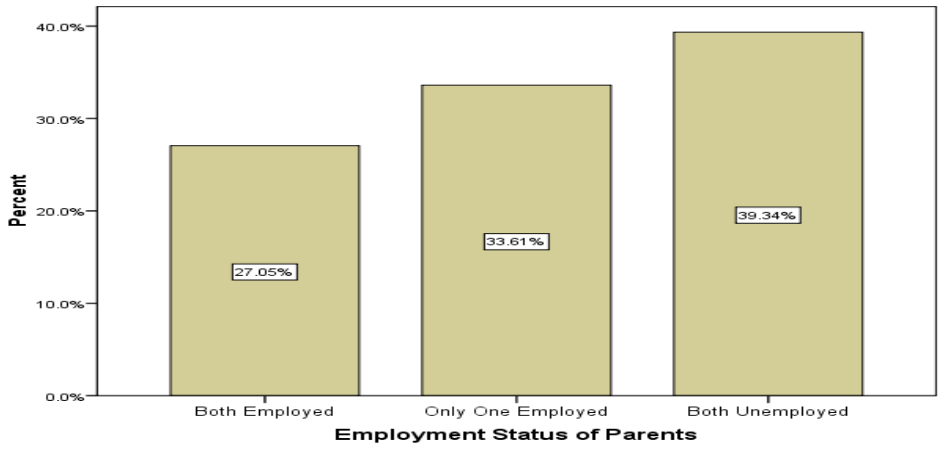

Figure 4.3.5 above shows that about 39.3% of students have both of their parents unemployed. About 33.61% of them only have one of their parents employed. Lastly, the remaining 27% of the students have both of their parents employed.

Table 4.6: Extent of Support Received

Sources	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Primary family	100	1	5	2.00	1.477
Extended family	93	1	5	3.42	1.549
Religious group	80	1	5	3.09	1.640
Sports group	74	1	5	4.12	1.334
Residence group	77	1	5	3.29	1.588
Study program group	80	1	5	2.79	1.605
Social club	74	1	5	3.78	1.519
Love partner	79	1	5	2.78	1.715

T*able 4.6* above shows the extent of support received by students which was rated on the scale ranging from very supportive (1) to not supportive (5). It is clear that an average score of 2 was found on the primary family which indicates that the primary family was supportive with regard to the students' studies. Other groups which proved to be supportive include love partners, and fellow students in the program of study which scored 2.78 and 2.79 respectively. The extended family, religious groups, sports groups, residence group and social clubs were rated towards not being supportive as evidenced by means of 3.42, 3.09, 4.12, 3.29 and 3.78 respectively.

Table 4.7: Seating Capacity of Lecture Rooms

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Seating Capacity	111	1	5	2.49	1.617

Table 4.7 above shows the evidence that the mean score on seating capacity was found to be 2.49 on the scale ranging from Not enough (1) to more than enough(5). This is an indication that that there were mixed feeling concerning the adequacy of the seats and the mean of 2.49 could mean than there is no crisis on seats but it is not the best possible situation.

Figure 4.3.6: Availability of Chairs

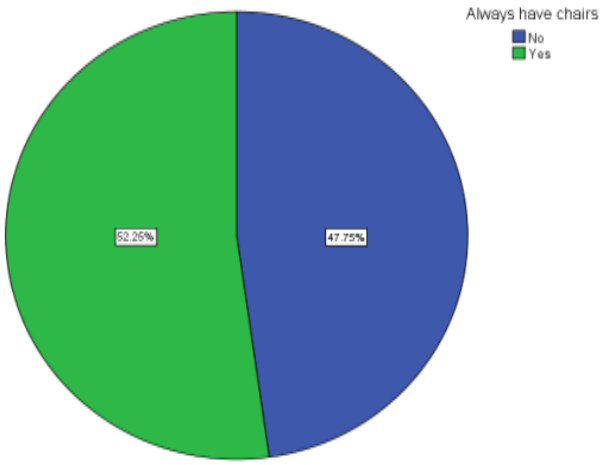

Figure 4.3.6 above shows that 52.25% of the students were of the opinion that the chairs were enough and they always had a place to sit and the other 47.75% were of the opinion that there were not enough and they sometimes do not have a chair to sit on.

Table 4.8: Optional Sitting Places.

Seats	Percent
Stairs	31.5%
Floor	7.4%
Own Chair	13.0%
No seating place/ standing	48.1%

Table 4.8 above establishes where some students sit in the event that they do not get a chair to sit on. It is shown that out of them, who may not have somewhere to sit on, 31.5% of them will sit on the stairs, 7.45 on the floor, 13% would bring their own chairs, and surprisingly 48.1% of them would be standing.

Figure 4.3.7: Availability of Public Address Systems in Lecture Rooms

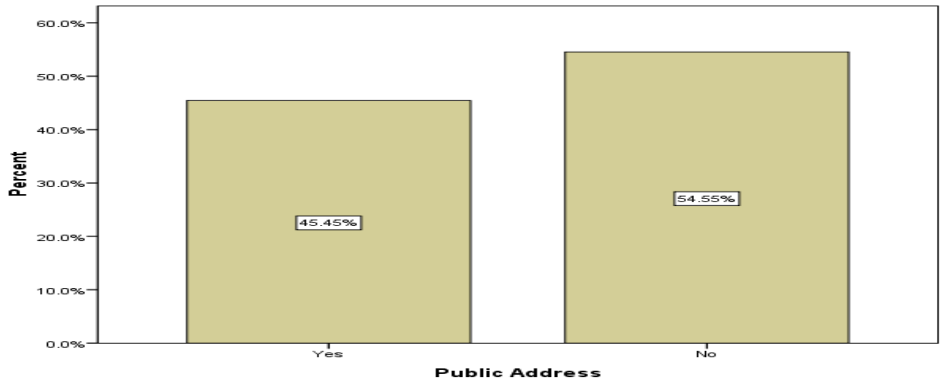

Figure 4.3.7 above shows that most the respondents, 54.55% were against the public address systems compared the rest who were in favour of it as evidenced by a 45.45% representation.

Figure 4.3.8: Use of Library Services

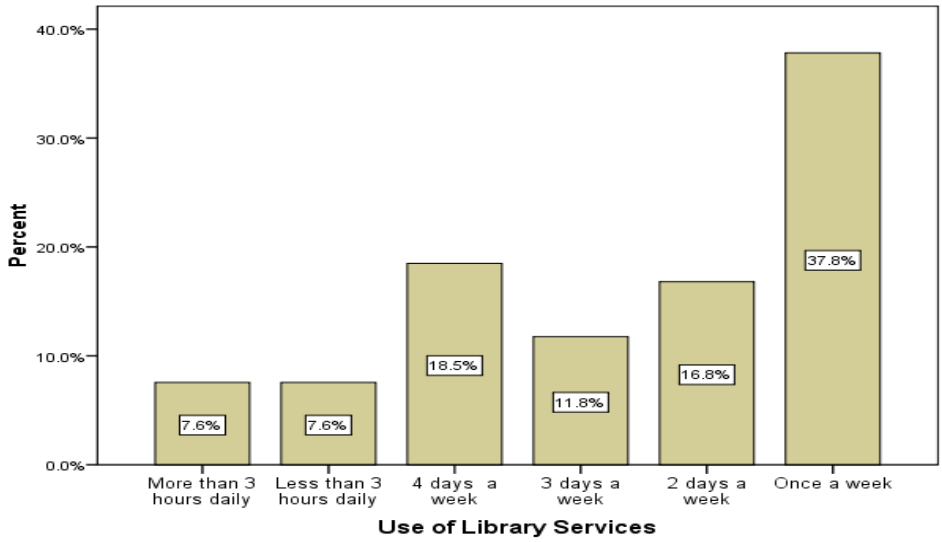

Figure 4.3.8 above determines the library usage. It was shown that most students (37.8%) rarely make use of the library, only once a week while a relatively bigger proportion was spread between 2 and 4 days a week. However, some students used the library more often like a 7.6% actually made use of the facility more than 3 hours daily.

Table 4.9: Purpose of Using the Library

Purpose of using the Library	Percent
For Study	78.9%
To write assignments	67.5%
Read journals	28.9%
Prepare for tests	61.4%
Read newspapers	30.7%

Table 4.9 above shows that 78.9% of the students use the library for study whilst about 67.5% of them use it to write their assignments. Only 28.9% of the students visit the library to read journals and only 30.7% visit for newspaper reading. About 61.4% of the students visit the library when they are preparing for tests or examinations.

Table 4.10: Satisfaction with Library Services

Satisfied with library services	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	119	1	5	3.33	1.360

Table 4.10 above presents students' satisfaction with the library services. It is evident that there were mixed feeling about it as evidenced by a mean of 3.3 on a scale of very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). However, since the mean is above 2.5 it suggests that most of them were satisfied.

Table 4.11: Reasons for Satisfaction with the Library

Reason for Satisfaction	**Percent**
Library hours	51.5%
Service from staff	45.6%
Availability of books	48.5%
Availability of journals	22.3%
Quietness	49.5%

Table 4.11 shows that 51.5% are happy with the library hours of operation which allow them to do their studies at their convenient time. About 45.6% of the students liked the service rendered by the staff members. Furthermore, it was shown that 48.5% of them are motivated by the availability of books in the library. About 49.5% liked the quietness of the library environment whilst 22.3% liked the availability of journals.

Figure 4.3.9: Use of Computer Laboratory Services

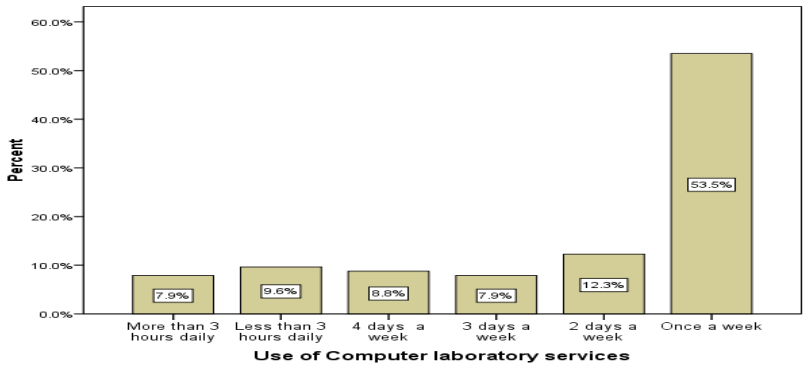

Figure 4.3.9 above shows that only a small percentage of the students use the computer laboratory for more than 3 hours daily while a further 9.6% make use of the laboratory for less than 3 hours. Further analysis has indicated a low laboratory visit as other students 8.8% use the library for 4 days a week while other 7.9% only use the facility for 3 days only. However, the biggest proportion rarely used the laboratory as evidenced by a 12.3% who only visited the laboratory 2 days per week and the last group consisted of a major 53.5% who used the laboratory once per week.

Table 4.12: Satisfaction with Computer Laboratory Services

Satisfied	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	119	1	5	2.45	1.400

Table 4.12 above shows that there were mixed feeling about the satisfaction of computer laboratory services as evidenced by a mean of 2.45 on a scale of very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5).

Table 4.13: Reasons for Satisfaction with the Computer Laboratory

Reasons for Satisfaction	Percent
Laboratory hours	40.2%
Service from staff	21.6%
Availability of Computers	62.9%
Availability of printers	26.8%
Quietness	25.8%

Table 4.13 above shows the reasons of satisfaction with computer laboratory. It was established that 40.2% of them enjoys the long hours the laboratory operates. About 62.9% enjoy the availability of computers whilst 26.8% enjoy the availability of printers. Equally important, 25.8% stated that they like the quietness of the environment.

Table 4.14: Purpose of Using the Computer Laboratory

Purpose of Using the Lab	Percent
Study	44.1%
Write Assignments	70.3%
Read journals/ news	18.0%
check latest music/fashion	6.3%
read and send e-mails	55.9%

Table 4.14 above shows that about 44.1% of the students use the computer lab for studies whilst about 70.3% of them use it when writing assignments. Furthermore, it was shown that only 18% use this facility to read journals and again only 6.3% to check fashion. A relatively huge proportion of 55.9% use it to read and send their emails.

4.4 Academic Assistance

Table 4.15: Student Representatives' Assistance

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Understand what I need	108	1	5	2.41	1.238
Provide valuable assistance	108	1	5	2.31	1.243
Are friendly	109	1	5	3.07	1.432
Valid N (listwise)	106				

Table 4.15 above presents the kind of assistance rendered by the student representative and how it is delivered. A minimum ranking of 1 representing never and a maximum ranking of 5 representing always were used. The analysis has revealed a low overall mean of 2.41 citing dissatisfaction of how the student representatives understand the students' problems. Another factor which was investigated is whether student representatives provide valuable assistance to the general counterparts. Again, the responses given by the responses were negatively skewed meaning more inclined to never rather always. The 2.1 mean score indicates that the most students did not really get the kind of assistance they were looking for from the student representatives. Finally, it was found that the student representatives were friendly when dealing with other students as witnessed by a high mean of 3.07.

Table 4.16: Lecturers' Assistance

Descriptive Statistics

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	109	1	5	3.12	1.406
Understand what I need	108	1	5	3.09	1.286
Are friendly	111	1	5	3.07	1.333
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table 4.16 above shows the analysis of the responses given in regard to the assistance rendered by the lecturers to the students. A set of questions were posed and answered by the respondents giving a clear indication of the relationship between the two groups. In a bid to establish if lecturers were available when needed, responses given showed that in most cases lecturers were there when needed as indicated by a 3.12 overall score. A further investigation into whether the lecturers really understand the student's needs, a minimum ranking of 1 against a maximum of 5 were used and a mean score of 3.09 was attained meaning that in most incidents student's needs were understood by lecturers. Lastly, it was found that lecturers were also friendly when dealing with the students and the responses were positively skewed as evidenced by a 3.07 mean attained.

Table 4.17: Student Counsellors' Assistance

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	103	1	5	2.50	1.335
Understand what I need	104	1	5	2.51	1.337
Provide valuable assistance	104	1	5	2.68	1.388
Are friendly	102	1	5	2.85	1.505
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 4.17 above presents the duties and behaviour of student counsellors towards the general students. The availability of counsellors' responses varied from never up to always with rankings 1 and 5 respectively. Results shown indicated that the counsellors were hardly available when needed by the students and poor mean score of 2.5 was attained. A further investigation and analysis has also revealed that students' needs were rarely understood by the counsellors as indicated again by negatively skewed mean of 2.51. In a bid to assess the importance and value of the assistance rendered, it was discovered that a responses were fairly spread between a low ranking of 1 to a high ranking of 5 and a mean score of 2.68 was achieved. Finally, the counsellors scored positively high on rankings indicating that they were friendly when dealing with the rest of the students.

Table 4.18: Career Guidance Officer's Assistance

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	104	1	5	2.64	1.427
Understand what I need	102	1	5	2.69	1.342
Provide valuable assistance	102	1	5	2.75	1.412
Are friendly	103	1	5	2.93	1.497
Valid N (listwise)	99				

Table 4.18 above presents the service delivery of career guidance and how it is delivered. A minimum ranking of 1 representing never and a maximum ranking of 5 representing always were used. The analysis has revealed a better positive overall mean of 2.64 citing satisfaction of how the career guidance officer understands the students' problems. Another factor which was investigated is whether career guidance provides valuable assistance to the students. Again, the responses given by the respondents were negatively skewed meaning more inclined to never rather always. The 2.69 mean score indicates that the most students got the kind of assistance they were looking for from the student representatives. Finally, it was found that the student representatives were friendly when dealing with other students as witnessed by a high mean of 2.93.

Table 4.19: Heads of Departments' Assistance

Descriptive Statistics

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	117	1	5	2.81	1.508
Understand what I need	110	1	5	2.85	1.415
Provide valuable assistance	110	1	5	2.88	1.438
Are friendly	112	1	5	2.91	1.455
Valid N (listwise)	109				

Table 4.19 above shows the analysis of the responses given in regard to the assistance rendered by head of departments to students. A set of questions were posed and answered by the respondents giving a clear indication of the working relationship between the two groups. In a bid to establish if heads of departments were available when needed, responses given showed that in some cases heads of departments were not there when needed as indicated by a 2.81 overall score. A further investigation into whether the heads of departments really understand the student's needs, a minimum ranking of 1 against a maximum of 5 were used and a mean score of 2.85 was attained meaning that in most incidents student's needs were understood by heads of departments. Lastly, it was found that heads of departments were also friendly when dealing with the students and the responses were positively skewed as evidenced by a 2.91 mean attained.

Table 4.20: Deans of School

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	111	1	5	2.64	1.419
Understand what I need	106	1	5	2.58	1.387
Provide valuable assistance	107	1	5	2.78	1.423
Are friendly	110	1	5	2.92	1.539
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table 4.20 above shows the role played by the deans of school. A minimum ranking of 1 representing never and a maximum ranking of 5 representing always were used. The analysis has revealed a low overall mean of 2.64 citing satisfaction of how the deans of school understand the students' problems. Another factor which was investigated is whether deans of school provide valuable assistance to the general counterparts. Again, the responses given by the responses were negatively skewed meaning more inclined to never rather always. The 2.58 mean score indicates that the most students did not really get the kind of assistance they were looking for from the student representatives. Finally, it was found that the Dean of Schools were friendly when dealing with other students as witnessed by a high mean of 2.92.

Table 4.21: Campus Health and Wellness Centre Assistance

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	110	1	5	3.05	1.590
Understand what I need	103	1	5	3.03	1.445
Provide valuable assistance	102	1	5	2.97	1.479
Are friendly	104	1	5	3.13	1.524
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 4.21 above presents if the health and wellness centre facilities were available when needed. As shown above there is a high 3.05 mean score. In addition, in trying to understand whether students were being understood of their needs by the fitness and wellness centre, the *Table 4.21* above shows that most of the respondents were satisfied as indicated by a high average score of 3.05 which is positively skewed. Further, there were mixed feelings about the valuable of the assistance rendered by the health and wellness centre as the responses were more inclined to the upper ranking than lower ranking. As a result a relatively higher mean score of 3.03 was produced reflecting high satisfaction by the students.

Table 4.22: Writing Centres' Assistance

Assistance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Available when I need assistance	103	1	5	2.89	1.386
Understand what I need	97	1	5	2.87	1.328
Provide valuable assistance	101	1	5	2.98	1.356
Are friendly	99	1	5	2.91	1.341
Valid N (listwise)	96				

Table 4.22 above presents the effectiveness and importance of the writing centre. A minimum ranking of 1 representing never and a maximum ranking of 5 representing always were used respectively. The analysis has revealed a better positive overall mean of 2.87 citing satisfaction of how the centre understands the students' problems. Another factor which was investigated is whether the centre provides valuable assistance to the students. Further, the responses given by the respondents were positively skewed meaning more inclined to always than never. The 2.98 mean score indicates that the most students got the kind of assistance they were looking for from the student representatives. Finally, it was found that the staff at writing centre was friendly when dealing with other students as witnessed by a high mean of 2.91.

4.5 Experiences with your Studies (Study Demands)

Table 4.23: Experiences with Studies

Experiences	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Too much work to do	121	1	4	3.12	.909
Work under time pressure	121	1	4	3.06	.897
Work extra hard to complete something	122	1	4	3.20	.823
Attend many things at the same time	121	1	4	2.50	.896
Give continuous attention to studies	122	1	4	3.34	.799
Have to remember many things	121	1	4	3.35	.814
Studies require creativity	122	1	4	3.04	.904
Studies make sufficient demand on my skills and capabilities	118	1	4	2.98	.827
Enough variety in the studies	119	1	4	2.71	.837
Studies for opportunities for personal growth and development	120	1	4	3.18	.917
Studies gives the feeling that i can achieve something	122	1	4	3.33	.847
Studies offer the possibility of independent thought and action	122	1	4	3.00	.953
Valid N (listwise)	113				

Table 4.23 above shows the different experiences encountered during the studies. It was found that most students often had much work to do as indicated by an average score of 3.12.

A minimum record of 1 and a maximum record of 4 were recorded from different respondents. In addition, a sizeable proportion of those engaged were also of the opinion that they often worked under pressure most of the time as evidenced by a 3.06 average score. Furthermore, students worked extra hard to complete something was also under the spotlight and the analysis has it that the minimum ranking was 1 and a maximum of 4 while a total average of 3.20 was attained meaning a higher proportion often worked hard to complete something. Moreover, some students tend to sometimes attend to so many things at the same time as evidenced by a mean score of 2.5.

The mean score of student needing continuous attention to studies was 3.34. If they have to remember many things, the mean score was 3.35. If studies require creativity, the mean score was 3.04 and if studies demand sufficient skills and capabilities, the mean score was 2.98.

Further cases were investigated in the research and vital results were produced with a clear indication of different experiences encountered during time of study. If students have enough varieties in the studies, the mean score was 2.71, studies for opportunities for personal growth and development, the mean score was 3.18, studies gives the feeling that I can achieve something, the mean score was 3.33 and studies offer the possibility of independent thought and action, the mean score was 3.00

Table 4.24: Experiences with Studies *(continued)*

Experiences	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Can count on fellow students when face difficulties i studies	120	1	4	2.47	.978
Can ask fellow students for help	121	1	4	2.83	.853
Get on well with fellow students	119	2	4	3.17	.816
Can count on lecturers when with difficulties	119	1	4	2.83	.896
Get on well with lecturers	118	1	4	2.97	.905
Know lecturers expectations very well	119	1	4	2.87	.926
Know what lecturers think about my performance	119	1	4	2.08	.944
Receive sufficient information about study results	121	1	4	2.67	.907
Kept up-to-date with important information about the department and the school	121	1	4	2.30	.937
Decision making is clear to me	121	1	4	2.03	.921
Valid N (listwise)	109				

Table 4.24 above shows the different experiences encountered during the studies. Whether one could count on fellow students, the mean score was 2.47; when facing challenges, the mean score was 2.83; Can ask fellow students for help, the mean score was 3.17; could count on lectures when with difficulties , the mean score was 2.83; could get well with the lecturers, the mean score was 2.97’ knew the expectations of the lecturers, the mean score was 2.87; knows what the lecturers thought his/her performance, the mean score was 2.08; receives

sufficient information about study results, the mean score was 2.67; kept up to date with important information about the department and school, the mean score was 2.30 and has a clear understanding of the decision making process of the school, the mean score was 2.03. The following respective mean score were found; 2.47, 2.83, 3.17, 2.83, 2.97, 2.87, 2.08, 2.67, 2.30, 2.03.

Table 4.25: Experiences with Studies *(continued)*

Experiences	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Know where to address problems to	119	1	4	2.34	1.122
Can discuss academic problems with lecturers	120	1	4	2.39	.981
Family duties take much of much study time	120	1	4	1.82	.935
Family duties prevents me from doing better	118	1	4	1.74	.938
Studies do not allow me time with the family	120	1	4	1.85	1.018
Studies keep me from doing best for the family	120	1	4	1.78	.963
Studies keep me from spending time with the family as may like	120	1	4	2.22	.918
Studies keep me from doing the best for my family	120	1	4	2.08	1.022
Family suffer because of my studies	119	1	4	2.01	1.077
Miss important family events because of studies	115	1	4	2.54	1.037
Valid N (listwise)	102				

Table 4.25 above shows the different experiences encountered during the studies. The researcher further investigated the experiences of the students particularly on whether students knew where to address problems to, this got a mean score of 2.34; can discuss academic problems with lecturers, the mean score was 2.39; family duties took much of study time, the mean score was 1.82; family duties prevents from doing better, the mean score was 1.74;studies do not allow time with the family, the mean score was 1.85; studies keep students from doing best for the family, the mean score was 1.78; studies keep me from spending time with the family as I may like, the mean score was 2.22; studies keep students from doing the best for the family, the mean score was 2.08; family suffer because of my studies, the mean score was 2.01 and miss important family events because of studies, the mean score was 2.54

4.6 Engagement and Satisfaction with Study & Life

Table 4.26: Satisfaction with Life

Satisfaction	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My life is close to my ideal	121	1	6	4.38	1.490
Conditions of my life are excellent	121	0	6	4.17	1.583
I am satisfied with life	122	0	6	4.18	1.735
So far I have the important things that I want in life	121	0	6	3.85	1.764
If was to live my life all over again, I would change nothing	119	0	6	3.41	1.915
Valid N (listwise)	116				

Table 4.26 above shows the level of life and study satisfaction amongst students. Factors mentioned out in the study include, my life is close to my ideal, with a mean score of 4.38;

conditions of my life are excellent, with a mean score of 4.17; am satisfied with my life, with a mean score of 4.18; so far I have the important things I have in my life, with a mean score of 3.85 and if I was to live all over again I would change nothing, the mean score was 3.4.

Table 4.27: Study and Well-being

Studies Well – being	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
When doing my work , I feel like bursting	119	0	6	3.39	1.800
I find my studies full of meaning and purpose	119	0	6	4.72	1.340
Time flies when I am studying	120	0	6	4.53	1.593
I feel energetic when doing my studies	122	0	6	3.67	1.678
I am enthusiastic about my studies	121	0	6	4.07	1.613
When studying I forget everything else around me.	120	0	6	3.32	1.847
My studies inspires me	121	0	6	4.54	1.533
In the morning I feel like going to class	122	0	6	3.17	1.589
Valid N (listwise)	114				

Table 4.27 above shows the state of study and well – being of students. Some of the above mentioned responses were, When doing my work I feel like bursting, the mean score was 3.39; I find my studies full of meaning and purpose, the mean score was 4.72; time flies when I am studying, the mean score was 4.53 and I feel energetic when doing my studies, the mean score was 4.07. Further factors were also highlighted; I am enthusiastic about my studies,

with a mean score of 4.07; when studying I forget everything else around me, with a mean score of 3.32; my studies inspires me, with a mean score of 4.54; in the morning I feel like going to class, with a mean score of 3.17 and I feel happy when studying intensely, with a mean score of 4.01.

Table 4.28 Study and Well-being *(continued)*

Studies Well – being	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel happy when studying intensely	121	0	6	4.01	1.686
I am proud of my studies	121	0	6	4.81	1.410
I am immersed in my studies	118	0	6	3.75	1.542
I can continue studying for very long periods at a time	120	0	6	3.22	1.820
My studies are challenging to me	122	0	6	4.05	1.631
I get carried away when I am studying	122	0	6	3.08	1.654
I am very resilient mentally as far as my studies are concerned	122	0	6	3.35	1.600
It is difficult to detach me from my studies	121	0	6	3.40	1.671
As far as my studies are concerned , I always persevere	121	0	6	4.36	1.642
Valid N (listwise)	117				

Table 4.28 above shows the state of study and well – being of students. Some of the responses were as follows, I feel very happy when studying, with a mean score of 4.01’ I am immersed in my studies, with a mean score of 3.75; I can continue to study for long hours, with a mean score of 3.22; my studies are challenging to me, with a mean score of 4.05, I get carried away when am studying, with a mean score of 3.08; I am very resilient mentally as far as my studies are concerned with a mean score of 3.35; it is difficult to detach me from my studies, with a mean score of 3.40 and as far as my studies are concerned, I always persevere, with a mean score of 4.36.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the discussion of findings as analyzed and presented in Chapter 4. It also contains recommendations and conclusions. Recommendations aim at helping tertiary institutions to understand the implications of student engagement levels on curriculum design, teaching staff and academic performance.

5.2 Student Engagement Levels

The engagement levels of students were measured by the following factors: “When doing my work I feel like bursting”, the mean score was 3.39; “I find my studies full of meaning and purpose”, the mean score was 4.72; “time flies when I am studying”, the mean score was 4.53 and “I feel energetic when doing my studies”, the mean score was 4.07. Further factors were also highlighted; “I am enthusiastic about my studies”, with a mean score of 4.07; “when studying I forget everything else around me”, with a mean score of 3.32; “my studies inspires me”, with a mean score of 4.54; “In the morning I feel like going to class”, with a mean score of 3.17 and “I feel happy when studying intensely”, with a mean score of 4.01

Some of the responses were as follows, “I feel very happy when studying”, with a mean score of 4.01’ “I am immersed in my studies”, with a mean score of 3.75; “I can continue to study for long hours”, with a mean score of 3.22; “My studies are challenging to me”, with a mean score of 4.05, “I get carried away when I am studying, with a mean score of 3.08; “I am very resilient mentally as far as my studies are concerned” with a mean score of 3.35; :It is difficult to detach me from my studies”, with a mean score of 3.40 and “As far as my studies are concerned, I always persevere”, with a mean score of 4.36.

Student engagement levels were classified into three categories, namely those who were high engaged (who scored from often to always), those who were moderately engaged (who

scored sometimes to often) and those who were slightly engaged (who scored never to rarely) on their study.

Most of the responses in this category fell in the range of 3-4 (sometimes to often) revealing that the levels of engagement were moderate. This tells us that our students do not generally go beyond what is expected of them. The author further noted that many lecturers, who constantly observe this, blame students and argue that they could be better lectures if they work with a more engaged groups of students. Highly engaged students are committed to their own learning and actively participate in life-long learning opportunities after graduation, based on their experiences while at University (Skinner & Belmont, 1993 & Heller et al, 2003). Several researchers have established that engaged students are likely to perform well academically (Akey, 2006; Garcia-Reid et al, 2005 & Heller, Caderon, & Medrich, 2003).

5.3 Student Resources

5.3.1 Residence

It was quite interesting to note that 46.7% of students live at their homes and only 19.7% stay with relatives. A small percentage of 4.1% lives in campus residence. A relative huge proportion of 16.4% stay with other students. The majority (67.3%) of the students stay in the city and travelling distance is limited. However, about 22.15 of them have to travel a distance of about 30km to get to the Polytechnic of Namibia. Nevertheless, 63.2% of the students visit their homes only during vacation and only 32.5% go home on a daily basis.

Academics have in several occasions complained about high class absenteeism rate among students, student' drop-out and students failing to complete assessments in stipulated timeframe. A small percentage of 4.1% students who live in campus residence may be a clear indication that students are struggling as far as accommodation is concerned. Walking 30km to get to the Polytechnic of Namibia is challenging for students and this might contribute to high class absenteeism.

5.3.2 Funding and Family of Origin

Apart from where they stay, students have to pay for their study. 46.6% of students had 100% funding for their study. Out those who got 100% funding, the greatest portion of 36.5% get it through a loan from the Ministry of Education and only 25% of the student pay for themselves. In addition the primary family was indicated to be more supportive with regard to the students' studies with an average score mean of 2.00. This implies that a fairly number of students have adequate funding through a loan from the Ministry of Education.

5.3.3 Lecture Seats

With regard to seating capacity of lecture rooms the mean of 2.49 could mean that there is no crisis on seat, but it is not the best possible situation. 52.25% were of the opinion that the chairs where enough and they always had a place to stay while 47.75% were of the opinion that there were not enough and had to sometimes have no chair to sit on. Surprisingly, 48.1% of them say they would be standing during lecture rooms.

5.3.4 Library and Computer Laboratory

Library and computer laboratory scored positive results on their usage, although used few times a week by most of the students. 37.8% rarely make use of the library only once a week. Table 4.9 shows that 78.9% of the students use the library for study whilst about 67.5% of them use it to write their assignments. Only 28.9% of the students visit the library to read journals and only 30.7% visit for newspaper reading. About 61.4% of the students visit the library when they are preparing for tests or examinations. Despite few students using the library to read journals, majority of them (51.5%) are happy with the library hours of operation which allow them to do their studies at their convenient time. Using the library to only study and do assignment, does this tell us that students are only interested in acquiring a qualification at the end of the day? This can be supported by the argument that students tend to enter tertiary institutions merely to acquire qualifications and diplomas *(The Namibian, 2011).* It is not necessarily their fault; education is marked as a means to an end, there is little focus on the journey or the learning process to get there (Kazmi, 2010).

Although computer laboratory is also most widely used, large percentages (70.3%) of students use it when writing assignments. Another relatively huge proportion of 55.9% use it to read and send their emails. It is obvious, that most students (62.9%) enjoy the availability of computers and 40.2% enjoys the long hours the laboratory operates. This is however a call to academic institutions to further explore the use of technologies in order to enhance the teaching and learning process (Kazmi, 2010).

5.3.5 Student Representative Council

One of the resources that were not well appreciated by students was the Student representative assistance and Student Counsellors assistance. The analysis has revealed a low overall mean of 2.41 citing dissatisfaction of how the student representatives understand the students' problems and again a mean of 2.31 indicating that most students did not really get the kind of assistance they were looking for from the student representatives. Furthermore, results indicated that the counselors were hardly available when needed by the students and poor mean score of 2.5 was attained. A further investigation and analysis has also revealed that students' needs were rarely understood by the counselors as indicated again by negatively skewed mean of 2.51. In a bid to assess the importance and value of the assistance rendered, it was discovered that a responses were fairly spread between a low ranking of 1 to a high ranking of 5 and a mean score of 2.68 was achieved. Finally, the counselors scored positively high on rankings indicating that they were friendly when dealing with the rest of the students.

5.3.6 Lecturers – Student Relations

A set of question were posed to give an indication on the relationship between lecturers and students. In a bid to establish if lecturers were available when needed, responses given showed that in most cases lecturers were there when needed as indicated by a 3.12 overall score. A further investigation into whether the lecturers really understand the student's needs, a minimum ranking of 1 against a maximum of 5 were used and a mean score of 3.09 was attained meaning that in most incidents student's needs were understood by lecturers. Lastly, it was found that lecturers were also friendly when dealing with the students and the

responses were positively skewed as evidenced by a 3.07 mean attained. As echoed by the an article in *The Namibian 2011* learning capability will be high in systems where there are networks of collaboration, open interaction and mutual trust, not only among students but between student and lecturers too. This is further supported by several researchers (Akey, 2006, Garcia-Reid et al, 2005) that academic teachers are key players in fostering student engagement.

5.4 Student Study-Demands

It was found that most students often had much work to do as indicated by an average score of 3.12. A minimum record of 1 and a maximum record of 4 were recorded from different respondents. In addition, a sizeable proportion of those engaged were also of the opinion that they often worked under pressure most of the time as evidenced by a 3.06 average score. Furthermore, students worked very hard to complete something was also under the spotlight and the analysis has it that the minimum ranking was 1 and a maximum of 4 while a total average of 3.20 was attained meaning a higher proportion often worked hard to complete something. Moreover, some students tend to sometimes attend to so many things at the same time as evidenced by a mean score of 2.5.

The mean score of student needing continuous attention to studies was 3.34. If they have to remember many things, the mean score was 3.35. If studies require creativity, the mean score was 3.04 and if studies demand sufficient skills and capabilities, the mean score was 2.98.

Further cases were investigated in the research and vital results were produced with a clear indication of different experiences encountered during time of study. If students had enough varieties in the studies, the mean score was 2.71, studies for opportunities for personal growth and development, the mean score was 3.18, studies gives the feeling that I can achieve something, the mean score was 3.33 and studies offer the possibility of independent thought and action, the mean score was 3.00

This is further supported by Becker (2011) who stated that institutions of learning should engage in collaborative learning. Challenging students to find their own answers, through active and collaborative learning, help them to develop skills required by the business world.

The world now operates through engagement, with limitless opportunities to create, express and share. This is the world students must master (Kazmi, 2010).

5.5 Student Engagement: Implication for Teaching Staff and Academic Performance

Student engagement should be investigated from both staff and student perspectives. While many efforts come from students, academics are responsible for creating a conducive learning environment that encourage students to be motivated and involved. Academics have to design activities to direct students' energies towards more effective educational activities (Porter, 2006). These activities should start at curriculum design stage, where academics should develop curriculum that addresses the needs of modern students. Authors such as Bovill, Bulley & Morss (2011), believe that first-year curriculum design is a key driver and opportunity to ensure early enculturation into successful learning at university. Existing research identifies the curriculum as a key driver for improving student engagement, and thereby success from first year onwards. This means that Higher education is capable of making a significant contribution to the development of individuals by designing curriculum that are of value to students. There is also growing interest in enhancing ownership and choice, and thereby empowerments, through student participation in curriculum design (Bovill et al, 2011).

Student disengagement and apparent lack of commitment presents itself as a problem on a daily basis for academics (Sheard et al, 2010). When students do not go beyond what is expected of them, when there are falling levels of student engagement, teaching staff should get worried. More than anything teachers and what they do- matter. Students who are highly engaged indicates that supportive teachers aid learning, help them to be competent and active and creates meaningful learning that has relevance to real life (Russell et al, 2011).

Finally, interesting lecturers who are reasonably available, who challenge and who themselves engage in a teaching-learning dialogue with their students, foster student engagement (Russell et al, 2011). It is, therefore, important that academic staff find ways to integrate meaningful and supportive interactions within classes. The twenty-first century teachers must, therefore, find ways to engage and support student in order to increase retention rates, decrease withdrawals and improve the student experience (MacDonald, Gibson, 2011).

5.6 Recommendations of the Study

The study revealed that student engagement levels are moderate. This, however, may have negative implication on academic performance. When the levels of engagement are moderate, this may imply that students are not deeply engaged into learning. The author, therefore, recommends that academics have to find ways on how to increase the engagement levels of students.

The study revealed that certain resources are used for different reasons. Students' attitudes to Student Representatives (SR) for instance, specifically the Dean of Student (where this council falls) needs to be more pro-active with this issue. It clearly causes grief to students. Secondly, study results show that the majority of students use the library for studying and doing assignment only. This calls for the librarians to market the library as a place where knowledge awaits to be unveiled.

Student-study demand was also examined in this study and which addresses the issue of decreased commitment. The author here suggests that efforts aiming at the reduction of study demands should be of primary concern to academic institutions. On the other hand, activities to increase job resources which lead to high levels of study engagement should be further explored.

Lastly, student engagement has implication on academic performance. When students are motivated to learn, create meaning out of the learning process and develop critical thinking skills, these may leads to better academic performances.

5.7 Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that it is in the best interest of both students and academics to have highly engaged students. For academics, this gives them incentive to teaching practices and encourage more innovative and creative ways of achieving optimal outcomes in both learning and teaching. It also gives a sense of making a difference in one's life. For institutions wide, it will lift up the reputation of the institution as these students are not only likely to complete their studies, but to graduate with the necessary skills needed in the job market. For students, being engaged ensure optimal performance and is likely to generate grades that will enable their future career advancement. Less performing students means relatively scarce resources are wasted. This means high financial costs for themselves, study loan provided to students to cover tuition may be withdrawn and students must meet the opportunity cost of absences from the labour market that might be necessary for students to repeat modules.

Of course, this study had a number of limitations, particularly the difficulty in obtaining academic performances of the participants in order to compare them with engagement levels. The researcher attributes this to the protocols and procedures of the institution to release such results. Clearly, the study would need to be replicated in a wider sample before any generalisation could be made about the findings of this study. Finally this study recommends that further studies can be done to determine the relationship between student engagement levels and academic performance, hopefully in a way that does not compromise confidentiality.

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