

TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION REPORT 29 MARCH 2024

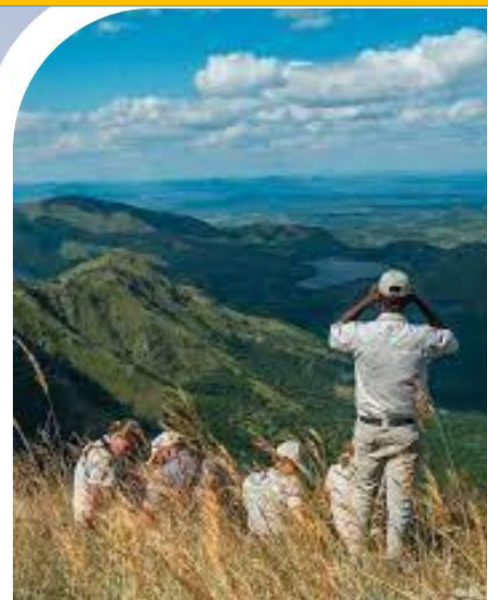


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ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Annual Report
CATHSSETA	Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
COVID 19	Corona Virus of 2019
CHE	Council of Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education
FET	Further Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ID	Identity Document
MS	Micro Soft
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NDP	National Development Plan 2030
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan 2030
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OPIR	Organisational Performance Information Report
PSET	Post School Education and Training
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades & Occupations
QMR	Quarterly Management Report
SDA	Skills Development Act 97 of 1998
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UOT	University of Technology
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

This study investigated the implementation of the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) programme. The study sought to determine the effectiveness, relevance, successes, and challenges as well as the sustainability of the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme. This intervention is primarily aimed at enhancing access to workplaces and assist learners to complete their compulsory WIL programme which is an integral part of completing the TVET National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) and National Certificate Vocational (NCV) qualifications. This is achieved through supporting learners with stipends and the TVET colleges with administration and monitoring oversight to successfully facilitate the implementation of the programme.

Methodology

The study was guided by the implementation evaluation approach and the Kirkpatrick four-level model, a globally recognised method of evaluating the results of training and learning programmes. It assesses both formal and informal training methods and rates them against four levels of criteria: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. Data collection was conducted through a mixed methodology approach. The study collected data from 220 TVET WIL learners through an online survey from TVET colleges across all the nine South African provinces. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 11 TVET WIL College Directors and Coordinators, 12 Host employers and three (3) CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme facilitators across eight South African provinces to solicit their views towards the TVET implementation programme. Furthermore, five (5) Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) implementing the TVET WIL programme to enable a comparative benchmarking exercise to assess potential best practices across different SETAs. The SETAs documents such as the Strategic Plan (SP), Annual Performance Plan (APP), Annual Reports (AR) and comprehensive reports databases were also analysed. Descriptive data analysis was used to analyse quantitative data, and content analysis was utilised for qualitative data.

Results

The findings were presented according to the study objectives as indicated below:

Research objective one (1) sought to determine the programme relevance, the extent to which the programme is aligned with curriculum outcomes. The study found strong evidence that the TVET WIL programme is achieving its desired outcomes. Learners reported that they

are gaining valuable job-related skills and employers see graduates with the necessary competencies for their workplaces. This suggests a strong alignment between the programme and the curriculum goals.

Research Objective two (2) aimed to assess the effectiveness of the TVET WIL programme, and the study's findings paint a picture of overall satisfaction among participants. According to the survey results, learners expressed high levels of contentment across various aspects of the programme. Majority of the learners felt adequately supported by their mentors, fostering a conducive learning environment, and overall, satisfaction with the programme. Furthermore, employers' feedback indicated a positive impact on employment outcomes, with a majority confirming the absorption of TVET WIL students following programme completion. These findings underscore the effectiveness of the WIL programme in meeting the needs of both learners and employers, highlighting its role in facilitating successful transitions into the workforce.

Research Objective three (3) aimed to identify the **programme successes** encountered within the TVET WIL programme. The secondary data analysis through document review indicated that CATHSSETA is currently intervening beyond its set targets, the SP has a set target of 60% over the strategic period and the annual achievements of the past three years indicate that there has been over 100% achievement to date with a national footprint across the CATHSSETA subsectors.

On the other hand, some of the **programme challenges** encountered were regarding the administration of the financial support received from CATHSSETA, even though the TVET colleges and learners appreciate funding received from CATHSSETA as it enables them to complete the WIL programme and their qualifications. The colleges reported that CATHSSETA's Tranche payments were not always paid timeously which is a major challenge for the learners and a threat to programme completion and sustaining long-term relationships with employers. As this can result in drop-out and lack of trust from the employers. Moreover, the funding allocation period was noted as one of the major challenges and hindrance to effectively implement the programme. Thereby indicating that the beneficiaries are happy with the financial support however despondent with the administration issues that comes with the facilitation of the funding provided.

Research Objective four (4) focused on assessing the sustainability of the programme. TVET College directors affirmed their proactive approach to securing placements for learners. They confirmed the establishment of partnerships with Host Employers to ensure a readily available pool for learner placements. Additionally, all host employers expressed their willingness to

continue hosting TVET learners in the future, indicating ongoing support and commitment to the sustainability of the programme.

Recommendations

Key recommendations are as follows:

1. The study identified that the primary programmes implemented by TVET Colleges predominantly revolve around Hospitality and Travel and Tourism sectors. However, respondents have cautioned that this concentration may lead to market saturation. Therefore, there is a need for the SETA to advocate for diversification, encouraging both employers and TVET Colleges to explore opportunities in other sub-sectors. This approach aims to ensure a more balanced and sustainable distribution of resources and opportunities within the TVET sector and equally funding learners from other CATHSSETA subsectors;
2. The respondents strongly advocated for the creation of a CATHSSETA TVET College Forum. Some TVET colleges, particularly those situated in rural areas, voiced concerns about occasionally missing out on vital information released by the SETA, such as notifications about open Discretionary Grant windows. Consequently, they urged the SETA to establish a dedicated forum for TVET colleges. This platform would serve as a space for colleges to engage in discussions on best practices and ensure real-time dissemination of information released by the SETA. The aim is to ensure that all TVET colleges are kept informed and updated with the latest information from the SETA, fostering collaboration and alignment with SETA initiatives and opportunities;
3. The respondents voiced concerns about the provision of opportunities for learners from rural areas. They highlighted the disadvantage faced by rural-based learners who often have to travel outside their localities to access host employers, unlike their urban counterparts. This discrepancy exacerbates the financial burden on rural learners, particularly considering that the allocated R3500 is insufficient to cover their expenses. Consequently, the respondents strongly urged for the implementation of a rural allowance to address these disparities and provide financial support to rural learners;
4. The respondents indicated a significant challenge in the programme related to the requirement for signing learner agreements by learners, host employers, and TVET colleges. They explained that host employers and learners are often scattered across the province, making it difficult to convene them in the same location to sign the

agreements. This logistical issue becomes especially problematic for learners, as the agreements are typically signed at the start of the programme when they lack the funds to travel. Additionally, many host employers which are SMMEs are reluctant to leave their businesses to travel long distances to the TVET college for learner agreement sign off. Respondents requested CATHSSETA to make provision for electronic signoff learner agreements;

5. The respondents emphasised the need for incentivising employers to encourage their participation in the programme. They suggested that providing incentives would motivate host employers to open their workplaces and share industry knowledge with learners.
6. Employers have emphasised the need for CATHSSETA to supply Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to learners, particularly in hazardous environments like kitchens. They indicated a deficiency in PPE provision and highlighted its importance with regard to ensuring the safety of learners during practical work. Additionally, employers suggested that equipping learners with PPE, such as professional attire like chef's clothing, would not only enhance safety but also instil a sense of pride and professionalism in the learners as they engage in their vocational training.
7. The respondents advocated for an increase in the duration of the NCV programme to 18 months. They argued that since minimum employment requirements often demand 12 months or more of experience, extending the programme duration would provide learners with a competitive edge in securing employment after completion. Consequently, stakeholders have urged CATHSSETA to consider extending the NCV programme beyond the standard 12-month duration to better align with industry demands and enhance learners' employment prospects.
8. In relation to monitoring site visits, respondents emphasised the need for stakeholders to receive a month's notice prior to these visits. They underscored similar concerns raised regarding the signing of learner agreements. Consequently, they urged the SETA to provide sufficient time for preparation, highlighting that site visits should not aim to catch stakeholders unaware but rather be perceived as an opportunity to improve the programme for the benefit of the learners.
9. The TVET Colleges are urging the SETA to reconsider the implementation timeline to better align with business operations. Specifically, they recommend revising the

timeframe for implementing TVET Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes to run from April to August. During this period, host employers are typically less busy and more willing to dedicate time to providing experiential learning opportunities to TVET learners. However, the current practice of CATHSSETA tends to allocate large numbers in the third quarter of the financial year, which coincides with December, a peak season in CATHSSETA sub-sectors. Additionally, respondents noted that CATHSSETA does not allocate sufficient time to implementing agents for proper programme implementation. This leads to demands from CATHSSETA for TVET Colleges to place learners within a short timeframe, causing the colleges to infringe on their processes to meet CATHSSETA's demands.

10. Furthermore, the SETA benchmarking exercise conducted in this study revealed that CATHSSETA, still pays a stipend of R3500 to learners enrolled in their learning programmes which is below what other SETAs are offering. The SETA therefore needs to consider increasing the stipend allocation in the programme.
11. The respondents also advocated for the implementation of a nationwide tracking system to prevent learners from double dipping. Employers highlighted this as a significant challenge, as it prevents other learners from benefiting from the programme. Many learners tend to move between different programmes and across various SETAs, creating inefficiencies and hindering the fair distribution of opportunities. This is particularly the case where one SETA provides better remuneration or benefits as compared to the other.
12. Finally, the survey findings revealed that most learners are unaware that CATHSSETA is the funder of the programme in which they are enrolled. Host employers and TVET Colleges echoed this sentiment, indicating that CATHSSETA is not actively involved in the monitoring of the programme. They expressed a desire to see the SETA's presence on the ground, allowing partners to interact with the funders and gain knowledge about the opportunities provided by the SETA. This visibility would validate the programme and enhance awareness among other employers regarding the opportunities facilitated by CATHSSETA.
13. Respondents highlighted a significant challenge faced by TVET Colleges regarding learners falling pregnant during the programme. To address this issue, they emphasised the necessity for the SETA to make provision in their policy for cases of pregnancy in the duration of the WIL programme. This policy would provide guidance

for implementing the programme, particularly concerning the prescribed time allocations for the NATED programme. Additionally, respondents noted concerns about the employer's ability to accommodate a learner who becomes pregnant after other learners have completed the programme. Moreover, the policy would need to consider the legal constraints against discrimination. Therefore, the development of a pregnancy policy by the SETA is seen as crucial to effectively manage this challenge while ensuring fairness and compliance with legislation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, CATHSSETA plays a critical role in aligning its interventions with the goals outlined in the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030. The NSDP 2030 places significant emphasis on TVET colleges as pivotal institutions for addressing critical skills shortages and achieving sustainable economic growth. Through various outcomes outlined in the NSDP, such as identifying high-demand occupations, linking education with the workplace, increasing access to occupationally directed programmes, and supporting the growth of public colleges, CATHSSETA aims to enhance the TVET sector's responsiveness and effectiveness.

Throughout the study, the research objectives and questions were addressed to evaluate the TVET WIL programme's effectiveness and sustainability. Firstly, the study examined the programme's relevance by assessing its alignment with desired curriculum outcomes. Secondly, it evaluated the programme's effectiveness in meeting its set goals and objectives over a five-year period. Furthermore, the study identified both the successes and challenges encountered in the implementation of the programme, shedding light on factors contributing to its effectiveness and areas requiring improvement. Lastly, the study aimed to determine the programme's sustainability by assessing the level of commitment from all stakeholders involved.

Overall, the findings from this study underscore the importance of continuously evaluating and improving the TVET WIL programme to ensure its alignment with national skills development goals and its ability to address the evolving needs of learners and industry sectors. Moving forward, it is imperative for CATHSSETA and other stakeholders to remain dedicated to enhancing the programme's effectiveness and sustainability to contribute effectively towards South Africa's economic growth, employment creation, and social development goals outlined in the NSDP 2030.

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

This report serves to outline the research objectives and methodology that was utilised to conduct the implementation study. This report has four (4) chapters: firstly, the project background its aims and objectives; secondly the literature review on the TVET college sector. Thirdly, the methodology section detailing the research approach used in conducting this research project. Finally, the findings and recommendations are detailed in the last chapter of the report.

As per the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA) as amended, it is crucial for the CATHSSETA to evaluate the impact of its interventions to ascertain the extent of its contribution to various sectors. CATHSSETA is guided by the NSDP, 2030 which is similarly derived from the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. The NDP 2030 aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030, whereas the NSDP 2030 as a sub-plan to the NDP 2030, places focus on skills development and seeks to ensure that South Africa has adequate, appropriate, and high-quality skills that contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development by 2030.

The NSDP, 2030 places emphasis on TVET colleges which were restructured and prioritised by the government as an instrument for addressing the critical skills shortages, particularly artisans, to achieve sustainable economic growth in the country. Four (4) Outcomes in the NSDP are solely dedicated to improving the TVET sector.

- Firstly, Outcome 4.1: Identifying and increasing the production of occupations in high demand, it is meant to improve the responsiveness of the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector which is also inclusive of the TVET sector.
- Secondly, Outcome 4.2: Linking Education and the workplace, aims to improve the relationship between education and workplaces. TVET colleges are highlighted as key institutions in preparing students for the world of work.
- Thirdly, Outcome 4.3: Increasing access to occupationally directed programmes, because the country's skills base is low to support the socio-economic development goals, the Quality Council for Trades & Occupations (QCTO) has developed new occupational qualifications to be offered in TVET colleges to address the skills base issue.

- Finally, Outcome 4.4: Supporting the growth of the public college, highlights TVET College's ability to link intermediate technical education to the labour market, (NSDP, 2019).

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1.2. Background

According to the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training 2013 (WPPSET), TVET colleges are critical for skills development and enhancing employment through skills that are aligned with the requirements of various sectors with an element of experiential learning. This is critical as it equips learners with both theoretical and practical skills that they can apply a. their prospect. As a result, CATHSSETA sought to conduct the CATHSSETA TVET WIL implementation evaluation study as part of the 2023/24 Research Agenda to evaluate the implementation of the TVET WIL programme within the six CATHSSETA sub-sectors.

1.3. Project Problem Statement

The TVET WIL programme was initially developed to assist learners with the financial burden associated with attending the WIL programme and facilitate a connection between employers and TVET colleges to assist learners to acquire the practical component of their course to assist them to complete their qualification. Funding and placement opportunities plays a major role in the successful implementation of WIL programmes. Programme funding is often required for administrative costs, monitoring activities, stipends, resources (equipment), mentoring, supervising the students and linking learners to employers (Patrick et al., 2009, Jackson, 2017 & DHET, 2020).

Jackson (2017) argued that a lack of funding allocated to promoting WIL can result in a shortage of suitable learners being available for work placement opportunities. This affects the quality of education provided to students and limits their opportunities for practical training. The lack of resources and WIL placement opportunities may lead to the learner's inability to

complete their qualifications and thus affect skills development and the number of graduates successfully completing TVET programmes (DHET, 2020). These are generally factors that are often associated with the implementation of the TVET WIL programme.

CATHSSETA has been providing funding to TVET colleges for funding the WIL programmes to assist learners to complete the WIL component and subsequently complete their studies since the inception of the NCV and NATED programmes in January 2010. However, it is not clear whether it has yielded the desired results as no study has been carried out within CATHSSETA to determine the implementation and outcomes of the programme and there is no Theory of Change (ToC) guiding outcomes. This evaluation was conducted to respond to the deficiency in the programmes evaluation and aid the SETA in assessing whether the programme is implemented in a manner that will yield the intended outcomes hence this implementation evaluation was conducted to determine:

- The problem and solution tree analysis associated with the TVET WIL programme;
- The mapping of the ToC which will be used to guide future outcomes and impact evaluations;
- The programmes logic matrix;
- The programmes monitoring and evaluation plan; and
- Determine the effectiveness, relevance, challenges and successes of the programme and the sustainability thereof.

Implementation evaluation strengthens the ability to report on the programme and improve future activities. Moreover, implementation evaluation enables the tracking of programme information related to who, what, when and where questions as well what the barriers/facilitators to the implementation of programme activities are (Wilson, 2012; BHEF, 2013; PwC, 2016; Jackson, 2017 and DHET, 2020). It is against this backdrop that this study sought to evaluate the extent that the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme has been well implemented. This is to assess how well the programme has been carried out and to determine what is working well, what is not and whether there are any changes that need to be made to improve the programme.

1.4. Purpose

The rationale for conducting this study was to evaluate the implementation of the TVET WIL programme and determine whether the programme activities have been implemented as intended. This exercise was done to enable CATHSSETA to formulate a ToC and Logic

Framework for the CATHSSETA TVET WIL Programme. CATHSSETA has a ToC in place for the Work Based Learning (WBL) programmes including CET Internships, HET–WIL, Graduate Internships, Learnerships, Skills, and TVET-WIL programmes as per the diagram below however there is no specific ToC for the TVET WIL programme. The findings from the study have further assisted in documenting the ToC and Logic framework specifically for the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme which will enable the SETA to assess the programme outcomes and impact in the future.

Figure 1: CATHSSETA WBL TOC

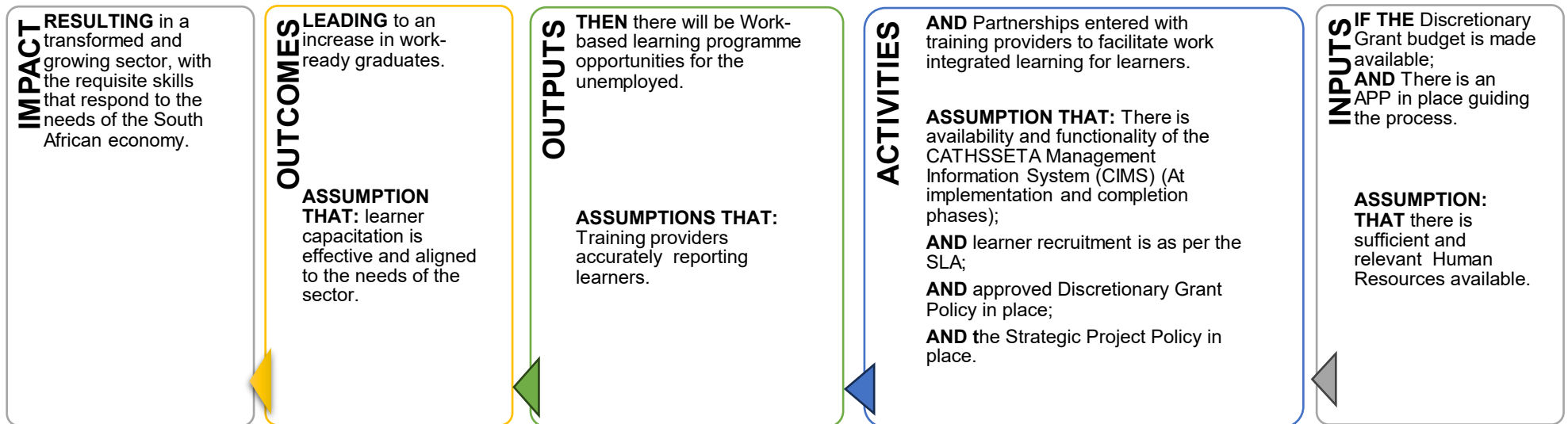
1.5. Research Objectives and Questions

The study sought to determine the objectives below;

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. To determine the programme relevance (The extent in which the TVET programme implementation is aligned to its goals and objectives and national strategic objectives)	How is the CATHSSETA TVET WIL implemented?
2. To determine the programme effectiveness (The extent in which the TVET- WIL programme has been able to meet its set goals and objectives over the five-year period)	What is the effectiveness of the CATHSSETA TVET programme
3. To identify the programme success and challenge thus far	What challenges have been encountered in implementing the TVET programme? What success factors have been observed in the implementation of the TVET programme?
4. To determine the sustainability of the programme (Assessing the level of commitment by all stakeholders)	What is the commitment of TVET coordinators and WIL/host employers in implementing the TVET programme?

Figure 2: CATHSSETA WBL TOC

1.6. The CATHSSETA Work Based Learning Theory of Change



2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. South African Higher Education Institutions

According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the South African higher education system comprises of comprehensive universities, and universities of technology. While the higher education system is differentiated in the sense that various institutions offer different types of qualifications at different levels of the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) (CHE, 2011). By 2015, the public Post School Education Training (PSET) system in the country had 26 public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), 50 TVET colleges, and 9 Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) (DHET, 2016). while the private PSET sector comprises 124 HEIs (registered with the DHET) and 252 private colleges (registered with the department). All these institutions have different admission requirements and offer distinct qualifications at different NQF levels. (& McGhie and du Preez, 2017).

TVET colleges in South Africa were established in 2002, in terms of the TVET Act No. 98 of 1998 with the purpose of providing theoretical and practical training that equips the learner for the labour market. (WPPSET, 2013). TVET colleges are required by the Continuing Education and Training Act No.16 of 2006 to offer the NCV and NATED programme, the two programmes are described below.

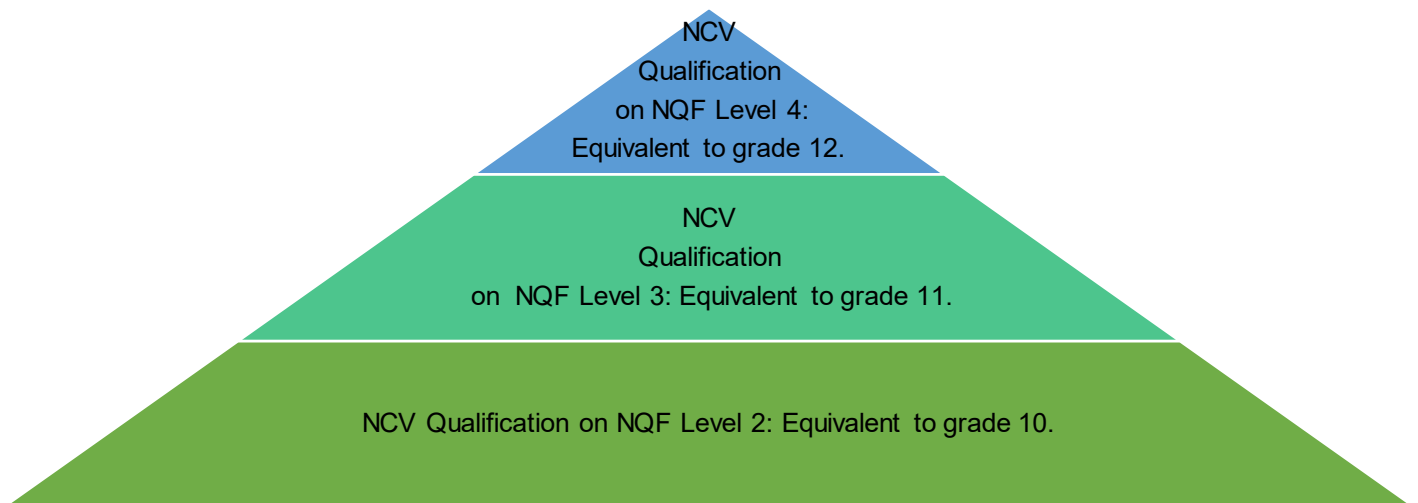


2.1.1. The TVET NCV Programme

The NCV programme is tailored to produce work ready graduates and enhance the learners' probabilities of finding work in their chosen field of study (Needham 2013). The NCV programme is an alternative to the academic grades 10–12 offered by senior secondary schools in the mainstream education system (Buthelezi, 2016). The programme is structured in such a way that learners obtain a certificate for each year of the three (3) year programme at NQF levels 2, 3 and 4. This programme is offered in parallel with the National Senior Certificate (NSC). A learner is required to have a minimum of a Grade 9 level or equivalent or ABET Certificate or NQF level 1 Certificate). NCV 2 to 4 are equivalent to grades 10 to 12 and correspond to NQF levels 2, 3 and 4 as indicated in the figure below (Government Gazette No.41082, 2017).

**NATIONAL
CERTIFICATE
VOCATIONAL
(NCV)**

Figure 3: NCV Programme Levels



2.2. The NATED Programme

The NATED programme is aimed at providing learners with technical, theoretical; practical; and workplace skills required in their chosen occupational or vocational areas. The NATED programme is distinct from other higher education and training Diploma and Bachelor programmes as it includes a great deal of practical experience. The programmes' structure is 60% theory and 40% practical in a particular vocational field.

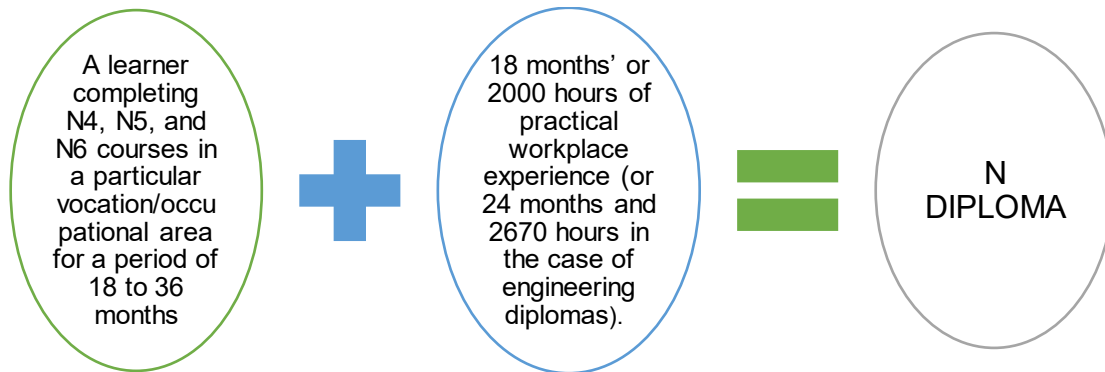
The practical experience may be offered in the workplace or in a simulated workplace environment. However, this qualification does not prepare students for immediate entry into the workplace. After a learner completes the NATED programme, they are required to complete approximately two (2) years of work experience, which qualifies them to complete the national trade test skills in a specialised field (Government Gazette No.41082, 2017). In a nutshell, the NATED programme is designed to provide students who have completed National Certificates the chance to earn a further qualification through gaining practical experience in their chosen career.

A student needs to have completed Grade 12 to qualify for a NATED qualification. The NATED Programme begins with a National N4 Certificate which enables learners to master the fundamentals of a specific field they choose to pursue. Learners who have successfully passed the National N4 Certificate are eligible to enrol in the N5 National Certificate, and finally, the N6 National Diploma with the completion of an 18 months' workplace experience. (Human Resource Development Council for South Africa, 2014).



The NATED programme involves a combination of the following:

Figure 4: N- Diploma completion requirements



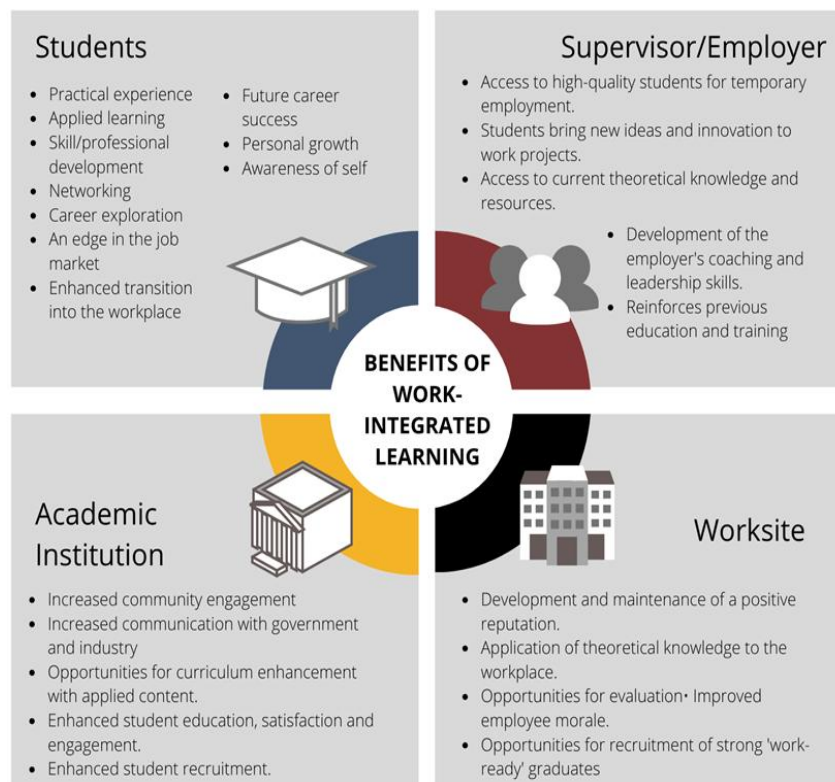
2.3. The role of SETA's towards the WIL programmes

The NDP 2030 emphasises the importance of workplace-based training in job creation and the need for TVET colleges to become preferred institutions for vocational education and training. The NDP calls on SETAs to support the development of relationships between educational institutions and employers.

This diagram demonstrates the importance of the WIL programme and the different role players involved in the implementation of the programme. The SETAs TVET WIL programme is essential in ensuring the facilitation of what is demonstrated in the figure.

Figure 5: The benefits of the WIL programme

(CPUT - <https://www.cut.ac.za/work-integrated-learning-and-skills-development>)



3. CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Evaluation Design

This study was guided by the Implementation evaluation, described by the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF, 2011) as a type of assessment that focuses on assessing how well an intervention is being implemented in practice. This type of evaluation aims to understand whether the activities and strategies outlined in the programme design are being carried out as intended and whether they are achieving the desired outcomes.



In addition to the implementation evaluation to determine the TVET WIL programme effectiveness and relevance, the Kirkpatrick Model was used to guide the compilation of the data collection instruments. The Kirkpatrick four-level model is a comprehensive and systematic approach to aligning criteria for educational effectiveness with specific indicators of achievement of these criteria and it provides four (4) levels that can be employed when evaluating programmes. The four (4) levels are outlined in the figure below:

Figure 6: Overview of Kirk Patricks Model

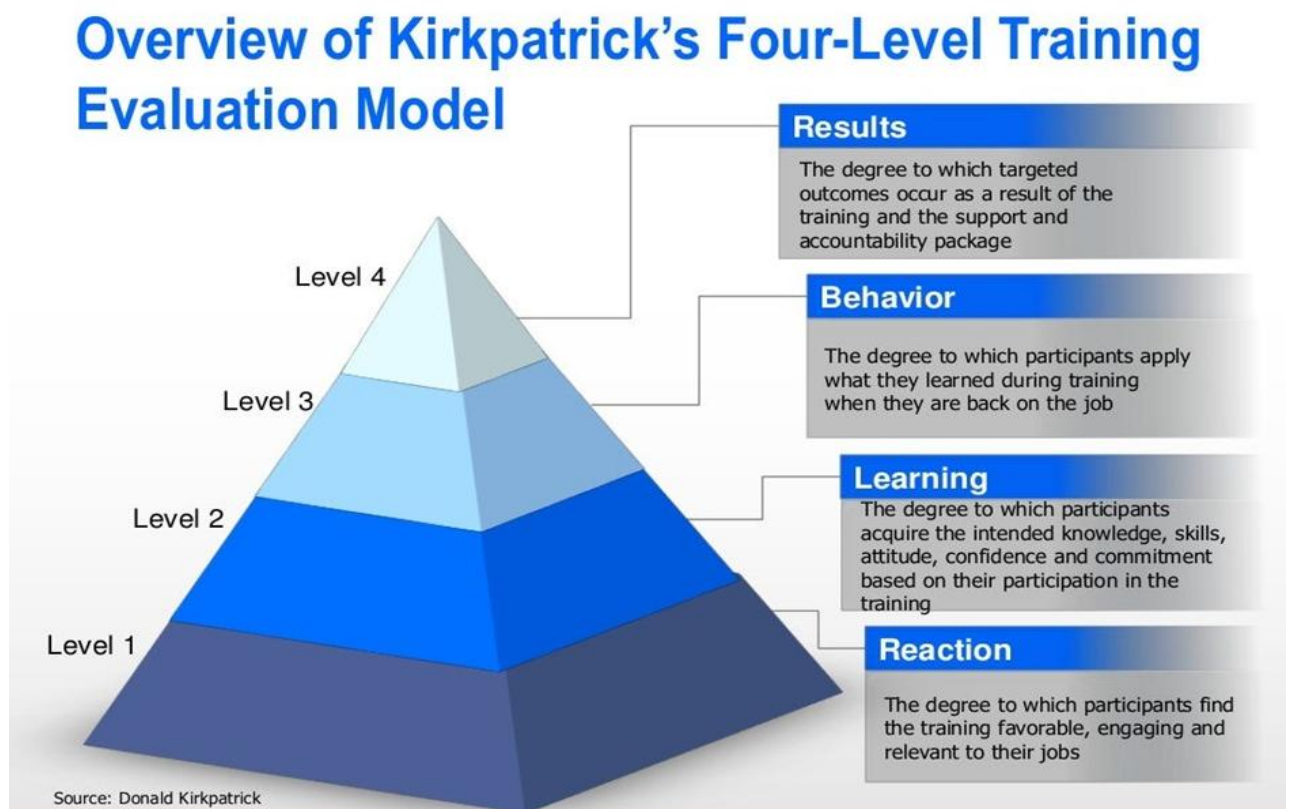
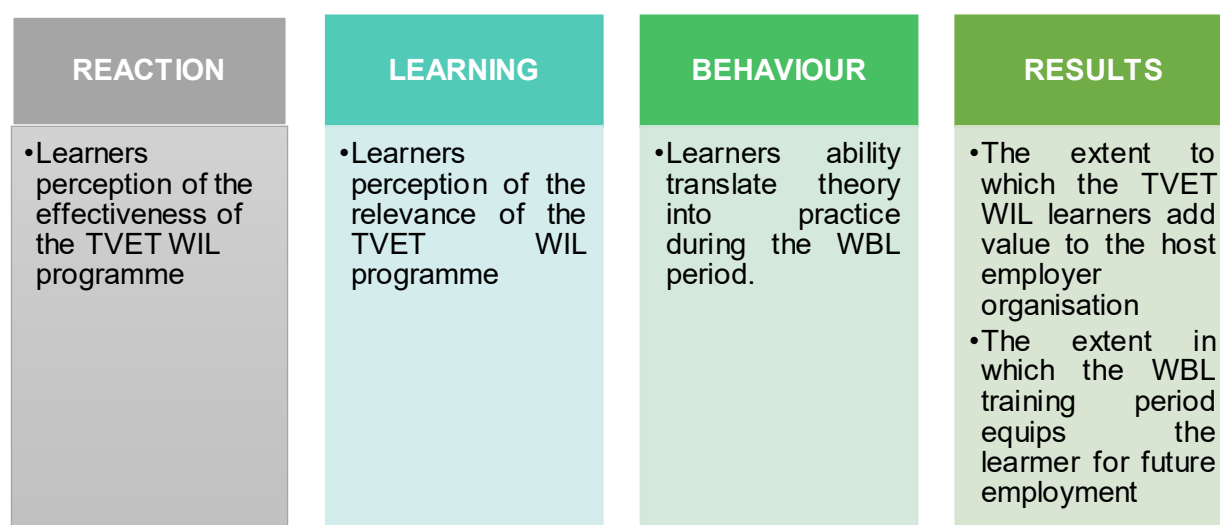


Figure 7: Kirkpatrick four-level Model



3.2. Methodology

This study employed a mixed method approach which involved the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather comprehensive data and insights. This approach permitted a more robust understanding of the TVET programme's implementation process and effectiveness. Hammersley (2013) defines qualitative research as a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasise the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis. Qualitative research was employed in this study to gather and analyse non-numerical data to understand the various aspects of the programme, including participants experience, identify the programme's success factors and challenges as set out in the study's research objectives.

Quantitative research is defined by Creswell (1994) as a type of research that explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics. Quantitative research was employed to draw statistical conclusions regarding the programme's various aspects such as learner satisfaction and programme effectiveness.

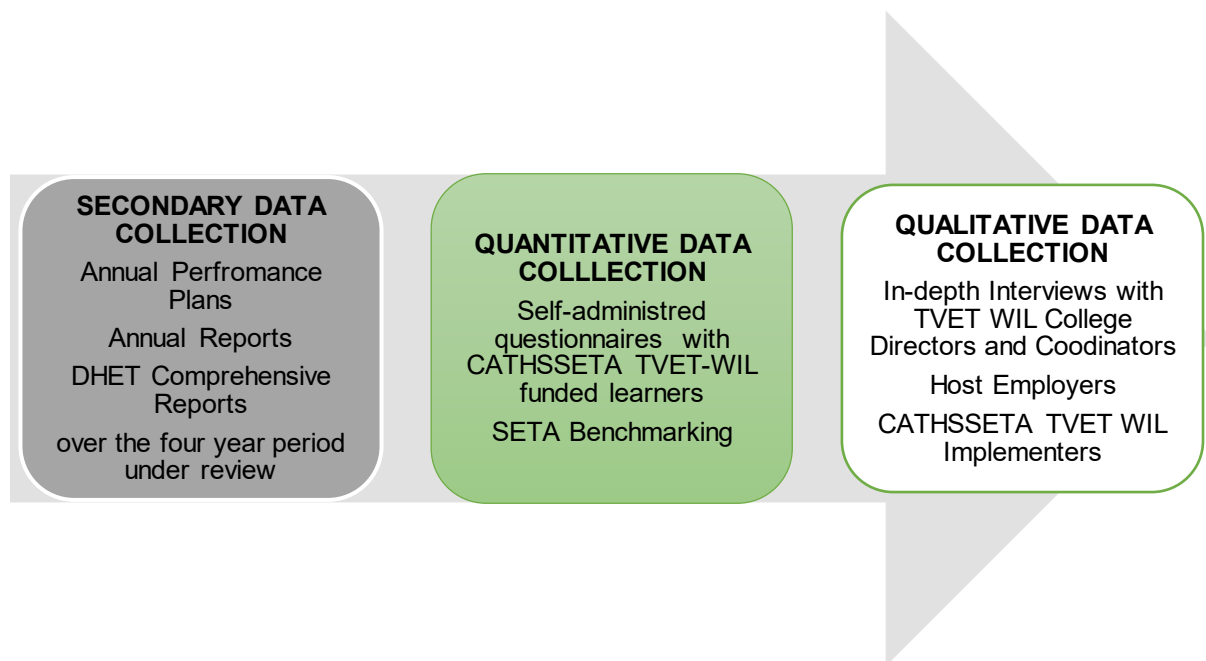
3.3. Data Collection

Two (2) means of data collection were utilised in the study, namely secondary and primary data collection. The secondary data collection entailed the review of previous CATHSSETA Comprehensive Reports, Annual Reports (AR), Annual Performance Plans (APP) and TVET

Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs). This permitted us to understand the conceptualisation and implementation of the TVET WIL programmes thus far.

Primary data collection entailed raw data collection of quantitative and qualitative data as indicated in the figure below.

Figure 8: Data Collection Methods



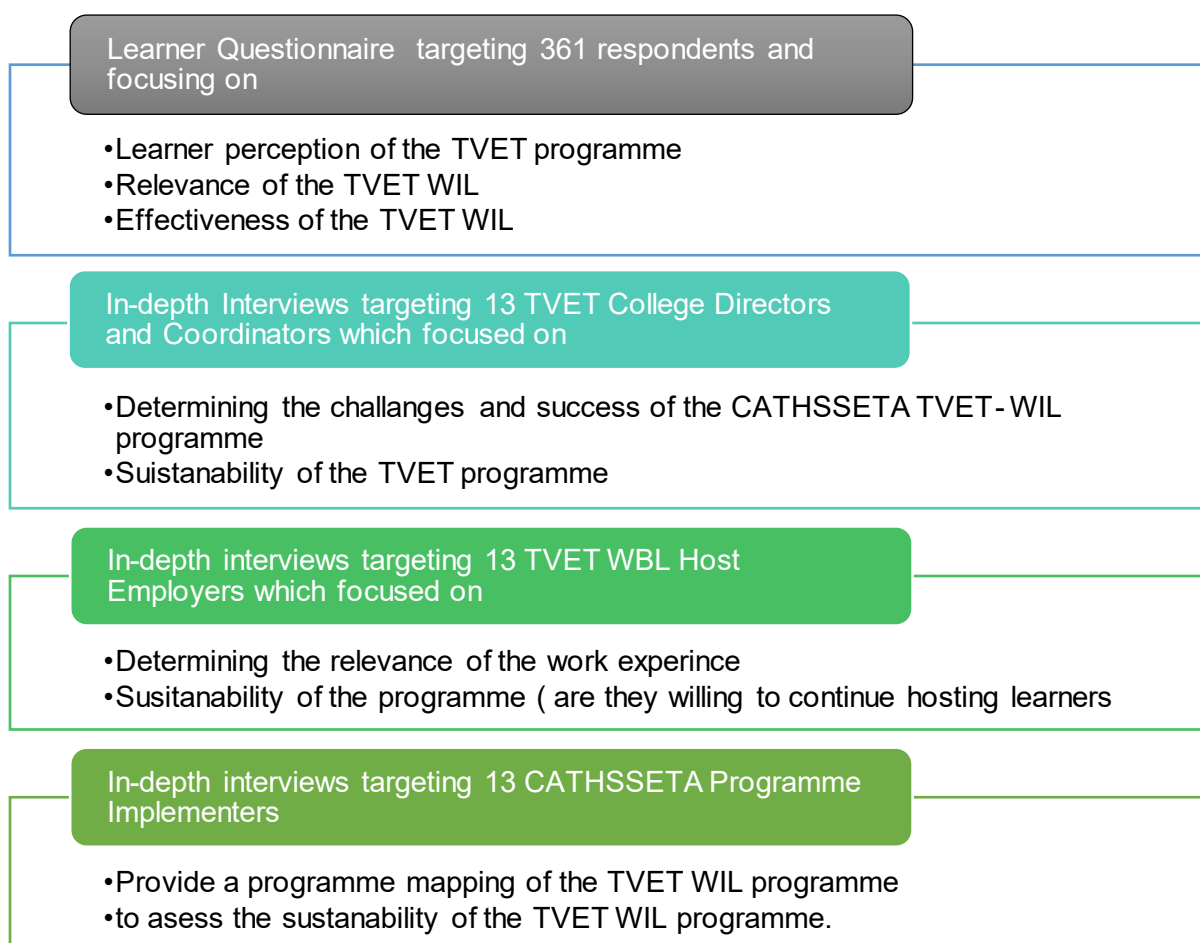
3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments were guided by the two data collection methods identified above, namely, quantitative and qualitative. For quantitative research, self-administered questionnaires were developed to determine the perception, effectiveness and relevance of the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme amongst TVET College learners funded by CATHSSETA to either gain work experience after completing their NCV qualification or NATED learners who required 18 months working experience to qualify to be certified for a N-Diploma. The self-administered questionnaires were programmed using Google forms and a survey link was sent to the learners via email and a bulk Short Message Service (SMS).

In-depth semi-structured interview guides were developed to collect data from CATHSSETA TVET WIL Implementers, TVET College Directors and Coordinators, and Host Employers in the context of qualitative research. The in-depth interview guide was designed to elicit open-ended responses from participants. The guide included questions tailored to the specific roles and perspectives of CATHSSETA TVET Implementers, TVET College Directors and Coordinators, and Host Employers, ensuring a nuanced understanding of their experiences in implementing the TVET WIL programme. Probing questions were incorporated to encourage

detailed responses and facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the identified themes (Hatry, Wholey, and Newcomer, 2010).

Figure 9: Data Collection Instruments



3.5. Sampling

The study embarked on a purposive sampling strategy. This strategy involved selecting participants that possessed specific qualities relevant to the evaluation objectives. In the context of the TVET implementation evaluation, this sampling method was recommended to select stakeholders who had a direct involvement in the programme, such as TVET learners, TVET College Directors and Coordinators, as well as employers to establish their perception and experience with the TVET WIL learners and the sustainability of the programme. This sampling method permitted for a focused and targeted approach, ensuring that stakeholders with the most relevant knowledge and experience were included in the evaluation (Emmel, 2013).

The primary data collection was sampled from the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years databases which included the NATED and NCV learners who received funding from

CATHSSETA. The TVET colleges and employers involved in the implementation of the programme were all be sampled.

The table below illustrates the preliminary sample sizes per population group:

Table 1: Quantitative Data Sample breakdown

Quantitative data collection through electronic self-administered questionnaires				
Programme	Population	Planned Sample size	Achieved Planned sample	Response Rate
NATED	711	250	187	85%
NCV	154	111	33	15%
Total	865	361	220	61%

The above sample size was calculated on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

The table below illustrates the preliminary sample size for the qualitative data collection:

Table 2: Qualitative Sample breakdown

Qualitative data collection through electronic self-administered questionnaires				
Population	Population	Planned Sample size	Achieved sample size	Response Rate
TVET Directors and Coordinators	28	13	11	85%
Employers	28	13	12	92%
CATHSSETA Implementers	6	3	2	67%
SETA Benchmarking	21	6	6	100%
Total	83	35	31	89%

3.6. Data Analysis

The secondary data analysis was based on the 2020/21 to 2023/24 Comprehensive Reports, ARs and APPs to assess the enrolments and completions of the TVET programme from the beginning of the strategic period to the time of the writing of the report to gauge the implementation activities and inputs of the programme.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were paramount to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants and the integrity of the study. Informed consent was obtained

from all participants involved in the primary data collection, including Learners, CATHSSETA TVET Implementers, TVET College Directors and Coordinators, and Host Employers. Participants were provided with detailed information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, and benefits, and they were provided with the option to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The actual interview process involved obtaining informed consent from participants, explaining the research purpose, and emphasising confidentiality. Interviews were recorded, with participant consent, and detailed notes were taken to ensure accurate data capture.

3.8. Limitations of the study

While this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme through a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods, several potential limitations were anticipated.

Study Limitations and Mitigations	
Limitations of the study	Mitigations
Lack of participation and inability to reach the planned sample size	To mitigate this challenge, proactive steps were taken to enhance participation, participants were asked to participate via email and bulk SMSs were sent to all learners on the database and finally the TVET Colleges were requested to contact the CATHSSETA funded learners through their marketing department to enhance participation. The mitigation aided data collection tremendously increasing data collected by 60%.
Data analysis further indicated a need to benchmark and review how other SETAS are implementing the programme to better understand the responses received from the participants	A cohort of five SETAS were added to the study for further analysis.

3.9. Significance of the Study

This study on the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme implementation proved to have significant value by providing understanding of the specific issues the research sought to

address, such as the effectiveness of the programme and whether the programme is adequately positioned and implemented to yield the desired outcomes, considering that the implementation evaluation had not been conducted since the inception of the programme.

3.10. Ensuring Rigor in the Study

This study prioritised robust research methodologies of triangulation and rigorous data analysis to ensure the validity, generalisability, and reliability of its findings. This commitment to research quality was essential for producing trustworthy insights that can inform effective programme improvement and contribute to broader knowledge on WIL programmes.

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, we employed data triangulation by combining quantitative data with qualitative data to gain a multifaceted understanding of the programme implementation and its outputs. This multi-method approach reduced reliance on any single data source and strengthened the overall validity of our conclusions.

While the study focused on the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme we took steps to ensure its findings have broader relevance and applicability through anchoring the study in relevant theoretical frameworks on WIL programmes and skills development frameworks, such as the NSDP 2030.

Finally, the study prioritised transparency and rigorous data management procedures to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of its findings through detailed documentation. We meticulously documented all research procedures, data collection methods, and analytical techniques. This level of detail will allow for transparency and replication of the study by other researchers in future.

4. CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This section of the research report presents the findings of the study. WIL programme. The analysis will be presented as per the outline below:

- Profile of the respondents who participated in the study;
- Secondary TVET WIL database analysis;
- Project mapping through the outline of the problem analysis and solution tree;
- Outline of the theory of change (ToC);
- Outline of the logic matrix and monitoring plan;
- Outline of the TVET WIL programmes relevance (The extent in which the TVET WIL programme implementation is aligned to the desired curriculum outcomes);
- Outline of the TVET WIL programme effectiveness (The extent in which the TVET-WIL programme has been able to meet its set goals and objectives over the five-year period);
- Outline of the TVET WIL programme successes and challenges thus far;
- Review of the sustainability of the TVET WIL programme (Assessing the level of commitment by all stakeholders); and
- TVET WIL benchmarking with other SETAs.

Quantitative data analysis was guided by descriptive statistics using Ms Excel through the identifications of patterns and trends using cross tabulation methods. The analysis was guided by the four research objectives commencing with the respondent's profile and project mapping. Qualitative data, obtained through in-depth interviews, was analysed using content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses. The integration of findings from both primary and secondary analysis, employing triangulation for validation, offered a holistic understanding of the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme, facilitating informed decision-making and programme enhancement (Milton, 2009).

4.1. Profile of the respondents who participated in the study

A sample of learners (n=361) was drawn from a population of 865, with a final response rate of 220 (61%) for the online survey on TVET WIL experiences. Similarly, a sample of TVET College WIL Directors and Coordinators (n=13) participated at a rate of 11 (85%). To gain the TVET WIL College perspective, 12 out of 13 sampled employers (92%) participated in the research. In-depth interviews were conducted with CATHSSETA TVET WIL implementers to gain further insights. Based on the responses and information obtained from the various stakeholder groups, the research was expanded to include other SETAs facilitating TVET WIL

programmes. Finally, based on the data collected, representatives from other five (5) SETAs were contacted to explore their approaches to TVET WIL programme implementation, and five (5) SETAs participated in the research. This approach enabled a comparative analysis and identification of potential best practices across different SETA implementations.

4.2. Secondary TVET WIL Database Analysis

CATHSSETA has been funding the TVET WIL programme for over a decade, however, this database analysis will only focus on the current strategic period, commencing from the 2020/21 financial year to the 2024/25 financial year. The analysis is based on the CATHSSETA Annual Performance Plan (APP), Annual Reports (AR) and Comprehensive Quarterly Monitoring Reports (QMR) of the TVET WIL programme for the four (4) financial years (2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively). The analysis demonstrates the programme planned and achieved outputs over the financial years.

CATHSSETA has supported 2599 learners to embark on their WIL programme in the period of four (4) financial years.

Table 3: TVET WIL Planned vs Achieved Targets

Financial Year	Entry			Completion		
	Planned	Target	Achieved	Target	Target	Achieved
2020/2021	250	276	110%	150	330	220%
2021/2022	263	319	115%	158	159	101%
2022/2023	500	500	100%	166	174	105%
2023/2024	525	525	100%	174	316	182%
Total	1538	1620	106%	498	979	130%

Over the years, the SETA has demonstrated a strong track record in achieving and even exceeding its targets for the TVET WIL learner entries and completions. The SETA's overall performance in facilitating the TVET WIL programme has been commendable, consistently meeting or surpassing the set targets by over 6% during the financial years under review..

Table 4: Funding by TVET WIL completion and enrolment type and financial year

	NATED		NCV	
Financial Year	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
2020-21	257	16%	19	1%
2021-22	308	19%	11	1%
2022-23	387	24%	113	7%
2023-24	490	30%	35	2%
Overall	1442	89%	178	11%

This table depicts the enrolment figures for the NATED and NCV programmes over the past financial years. CATHSSETA funds mostly NATED programmes which accounts for over 80% of the funding.

Figure 10: NCV Enrolments by qualification

Top 5 NCV funded programmes	(n)	(%)
FETC: Hospitality Reception	185	59%
National Certificate: Vocational: Hospitality	94	30%
FETC: Travel and Tourism	10	3%
National Certificate: Vocational: Office Administration	10	3%
Higher Certificate: Hotel Management	10	3%
Others	3	1%

With regards to the NCV programme, the most funded qualification is the FETC: Hospitality reception with 59% (185) learners funded. Followed by the National Vocational Certificate.

Table 5: Top Ten Nated Qualifications

Top 5 NATED Qualifications	(n)	(%)
National Diploma: N6: Hospitality and Catering Services	973	42%
National Diploma: Tourism	555	24%
National Diploma: N6 Management Assistant	170	7%
National Diploma: N6: Art and Design	74	3%
National Diploma: N6 Business Management	72	3%
Others	459	20%

For the NATED programme, the most funded qualification is the "National Diploma: N6: Hospitality and Catering Services" with 973 enrolled learners (42%). Followed by the "National Diploma: Tourism" with 554 learners (24%)".

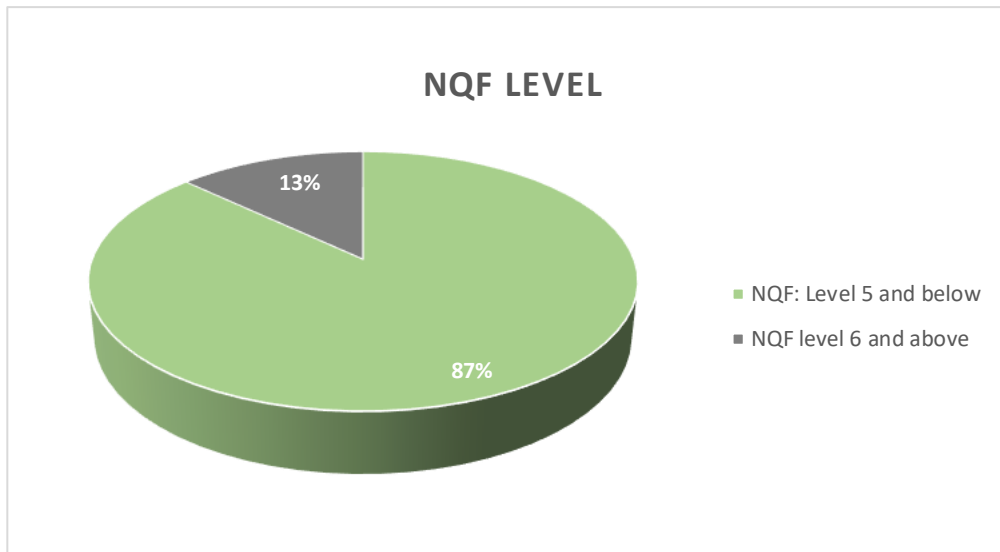


Figure 11: NQF Level by TVET programme

The figure below details the NQF Levels of learners enrolled in the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programmes, NQF level 5 and below accounted for (13%) while NQF level 6 and above accounted for 87%.

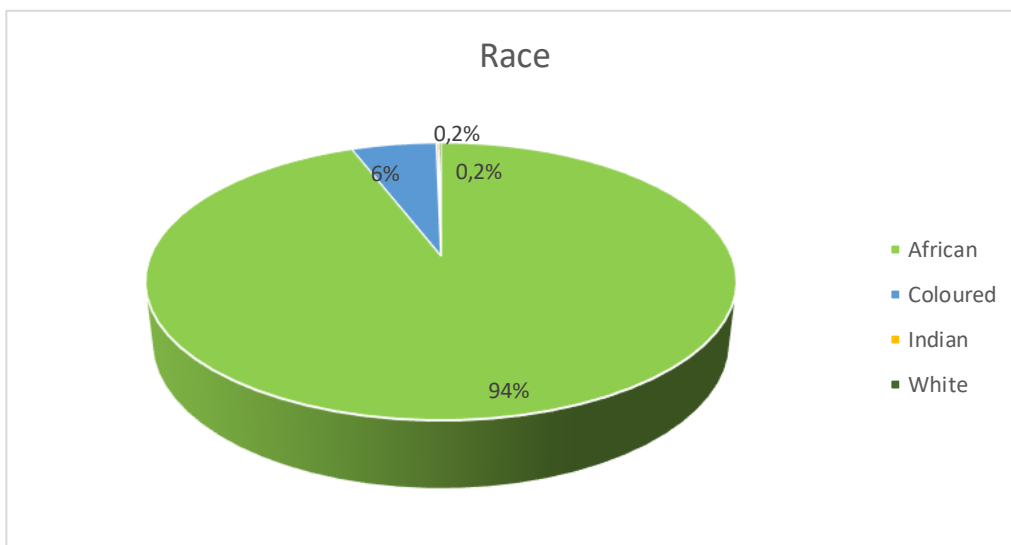


Figure 12: Racial Demographic of all CATHSSETA TVET learners

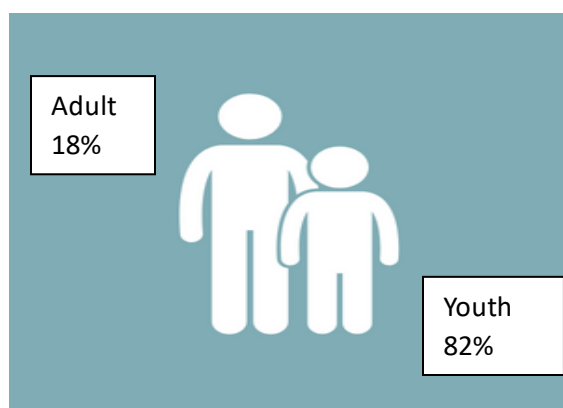
Within the context of South Africa's redress policies, it is pleasing to report that CATHSSETA's TVET WIL funding during the review period primarily

benefited African learners (2462 or 94%) in line with affirmative action goals. The Coloured racial group received the second-highest funding (145 learners or 6%),

The geographic spread analysis reveals CATHSSETA funded 1425 learners (54%) from urban areas and 1290 learners (46%) from rural areas for its TVET WIL programme. Notably, CATHSSETA's substantial rural reach of 46% is commendable and demonstrates its commitment to inclusive skills development across underserved areas. Nonetheless, consistent efforts are crucial to maintain and potentially enhance this rural footprint while ensuring complete learner data is recorded for effective monitoring and decision-making.



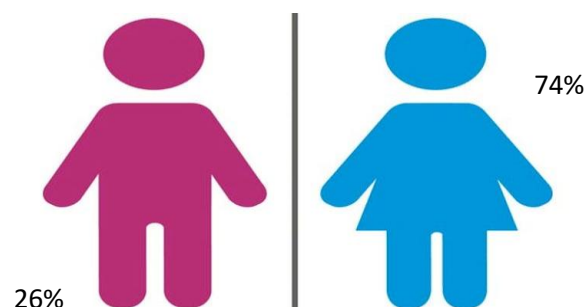
Figure 13: Learner Geographical area



The table below illustrates that majority of the learners who participated in the study were under the age of 35 2156 (82%). CATHSSETA places priority to the training of the youth for employment to help reduce the unemployment rate in those aged 35 and under. While those above the age of 35 accounted for 459 (18%)

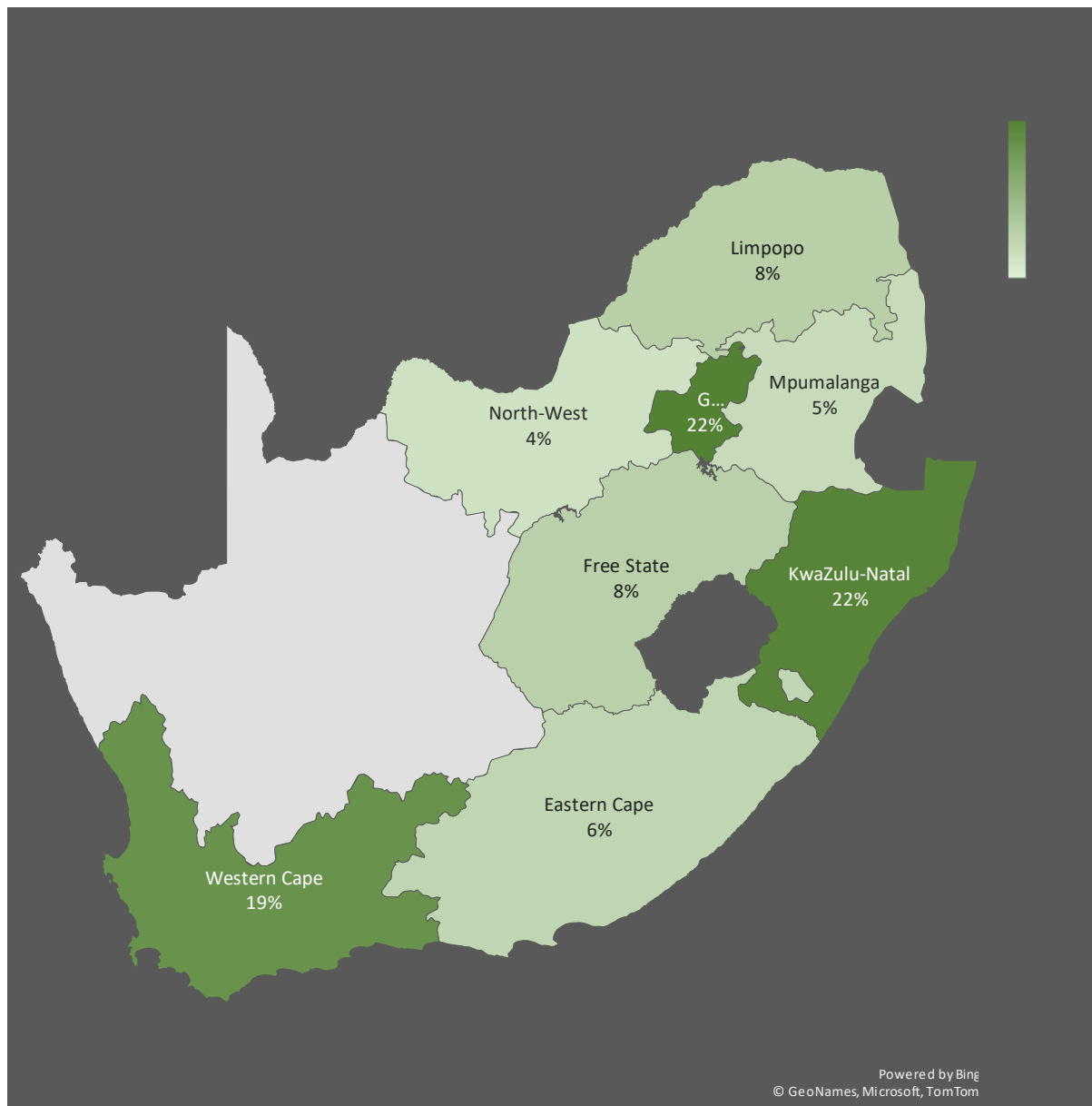
The figure below illustrates the TVET WIL gender demographic breakdown which indicates that 1943 (74%) were females and 673 (26%) male learners were supported over the four (4) year period.

Figure 14: Gender by TVET WIL programme



Most of the funded learners were located in Gauteng (22%), Kwa-Zulu Natal (22%) and Western Cape provinces (19%), while the least funded province was North-West (4%) and Northern Cape (4%)

Figure 15: Geographical spread of funded learners





CATHSSETA's contribution towards the TVET programme from 2020/21 to 2023/24

Over the four-year period under review, CATHSSETA enrolled 178 learners in the NCV programme, committing a total of R7,476,000 in stipend allocations. This figure is derived from a stipend of R3,500 per month for 12 months, totalling R42,000 per learner.

For the NATED programme, 1442 learners were enrolled during the same period, with CATHSSETA allocating R90,846,000 in stipends. This allocation is based on a stipend of R3,500 per month for 18 months, amounting to R63,000 per NATED learner.

CATHSSETA's allocation of R98,322,000 towards stipends for 1,467 TVET WIL learners across NCV and NATED programmes over the four (4) years represents a substantial investment in skills development. This value excludes administration fees as well as monitoring and evaluation costs. This financial commitment facilitates access to crucial work-integrated learning opportunities and provides financial support for learners during workplace training. By nurturing a skilled talent pool, this investment contributes to economic growth, job creation, and developing a competitive workforce – aligning with national priorities. The significance of this expenditure lies in CATHSSETA's recognition of TVET WIL's role in enhancing employability and practical competencies, while removing financial barriers to participation, ultimately yielding long-term dividends for the sector and South African economy.

4.3. Primary data analysis sample Overview

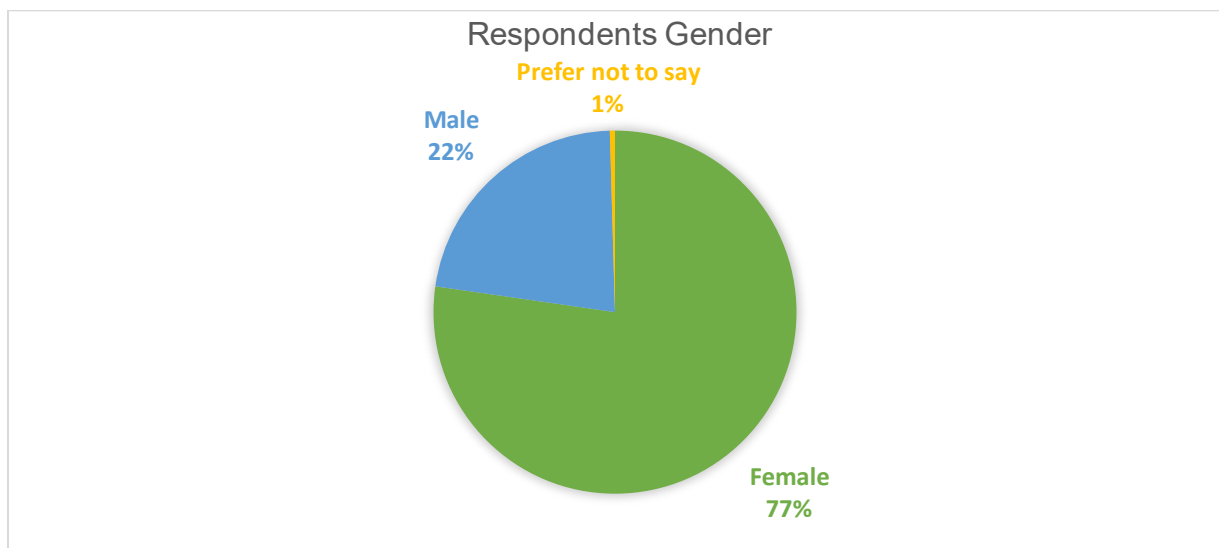
A sample of learners (n=361) was drawn from a population of 865, with a final response rate of 220 (61%) for the online survey on TVET WIL experiences. Similarly, a sample of TVET College WIL Directors and Coordinators (n=13) participated at a rate of 11 (85%). To gain the TVET WIL College perspective, 12 out of 13 sampled employers (92%) participated in the research. In-depth interviews were conducted with CATHSSETA TVET WIL implementers to gain further insights. Based on the responses and information obtained from the various stakeholder groups, the research was expanded to include other SETAs facilitating TVET WIL

programmes. Finally, based on the data collected, representatives from other five (5) SETAs were contacted to explore their approaches to TVET WIL programme implementation, and all five (5) SETAs participated in the research. This approach enabled a comparative analysis and identification of potential best practices across different SETA implementations.

4.3.1. Demographics

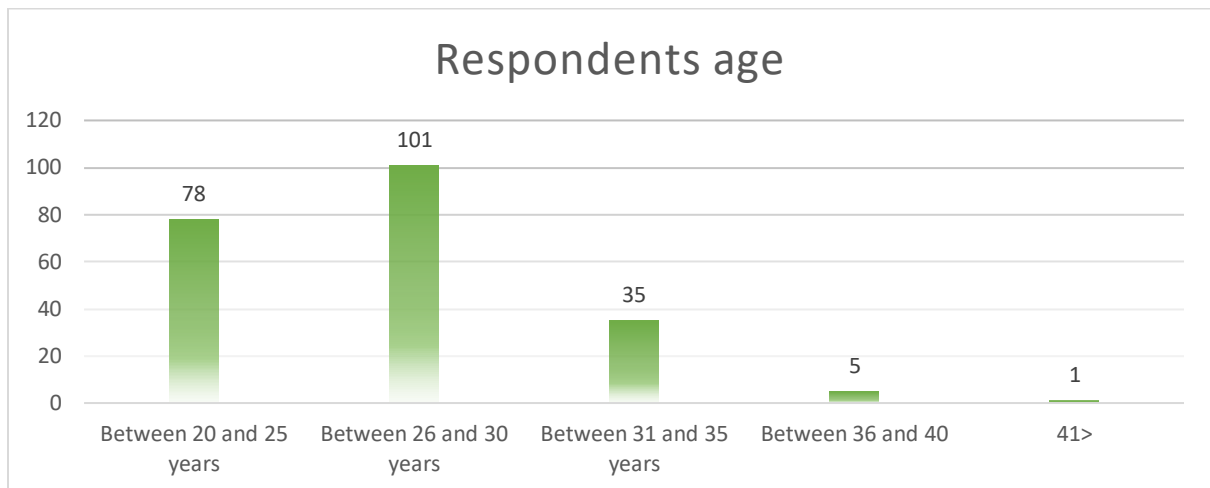
This section explores the demographics of the TVET WIL learner respondents.

Figure 16: Respondents gender



The gender distribution of the 220 TVET WIL learner respondents showed a predominance of females. Specifically, 170 respondents (77%) identified as female, while 49 respondents (22%) identified as male. One (1) respondent chose not to disclose their gender.

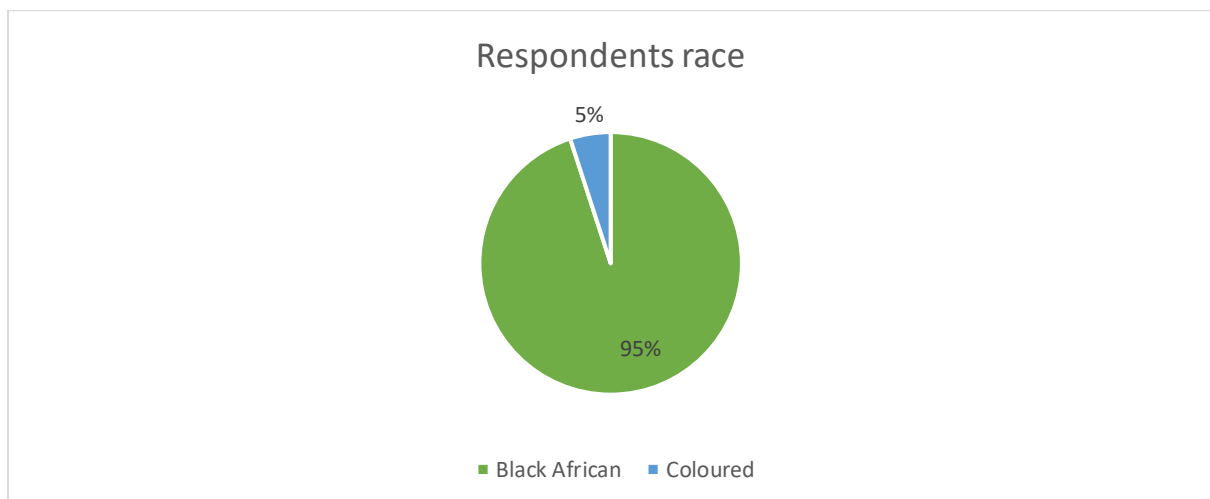
Figure 17: Respondents age



The figure above displays that majority of the learners were aged between 26 and 30 years of age, followed by those who are between 20 and 25 years of age and only one learner was above the age of 41.

Regarding the racial demographics of the learner respondents, an overwhelming majority of 209 respondents (95%) were African. The remaining 11 respondents (5%) were Coloured. Regarding the learner's disability status, only 3 (2%) from the 220 learners were living with a disability.

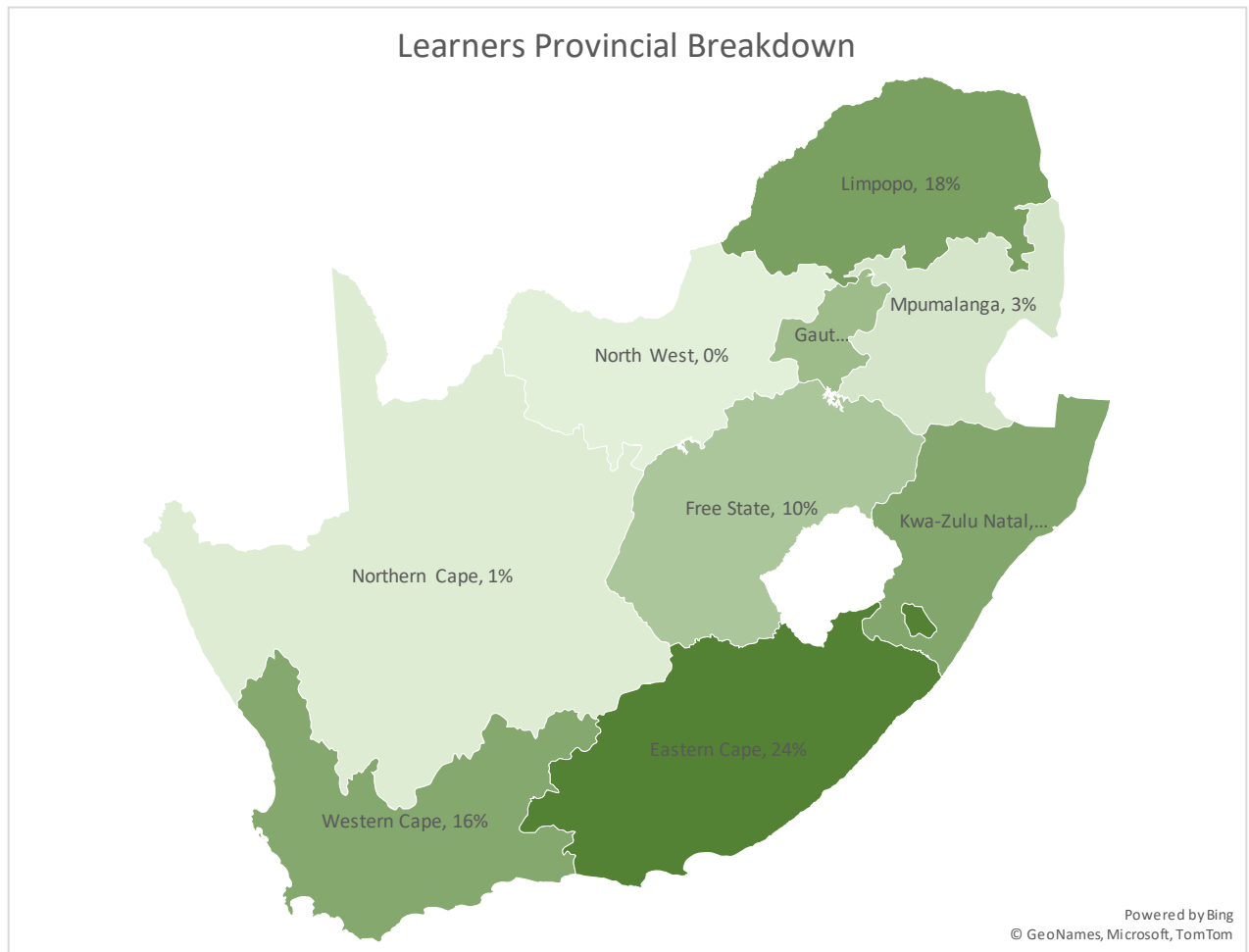
Figure 18: Respondents race



It is pleasing to report that learners from all nine (9) provinces respondent to the survey, which is a positive indicator of comprehensive representation. The Eastern Cape (EC) saw the highest participation rate with (24%) of respondents, followed by Limpopo (LP) at (17%). Conversely, the North-West province had the lowest representation with only one learner

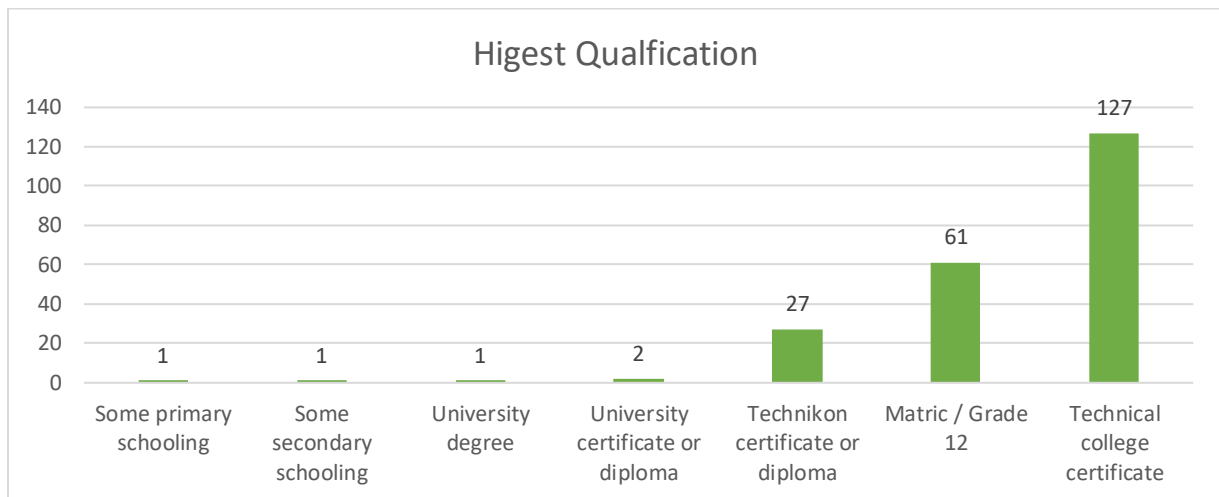
participating. This provincial breakdown provides valuable insights into the regional landscape of TVET WIL experiences.

Figure 19: Respondents provincial breakdown



Majority of the respondents indicated that their highest qualification is a technical college certificate, which is on NQF level 5.

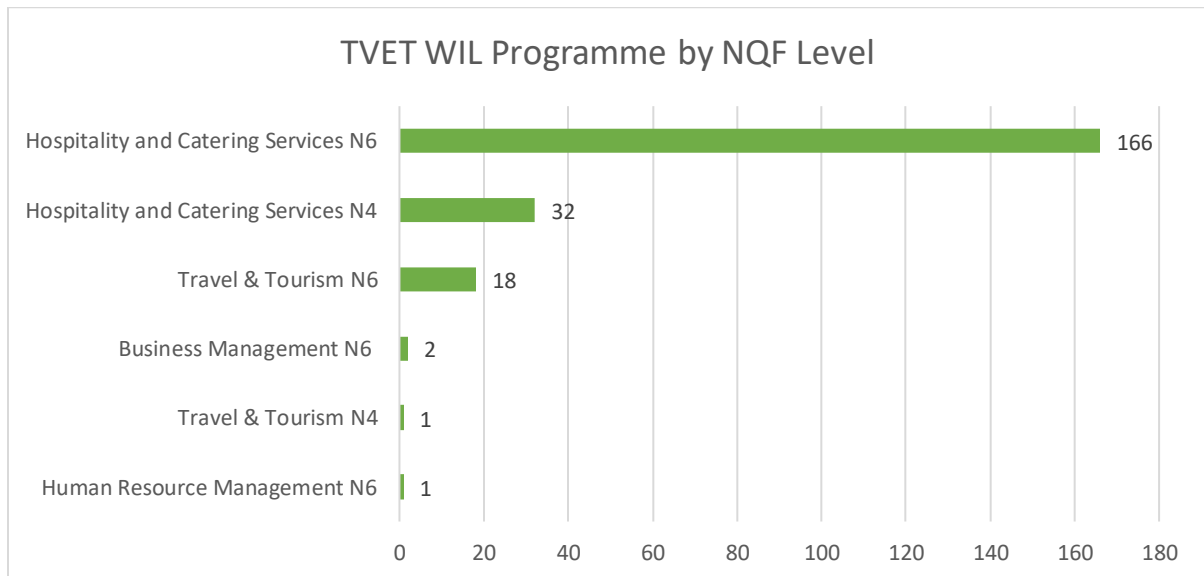
Figure 20: Respondents current highest qualification



4.3.2. WIL Background

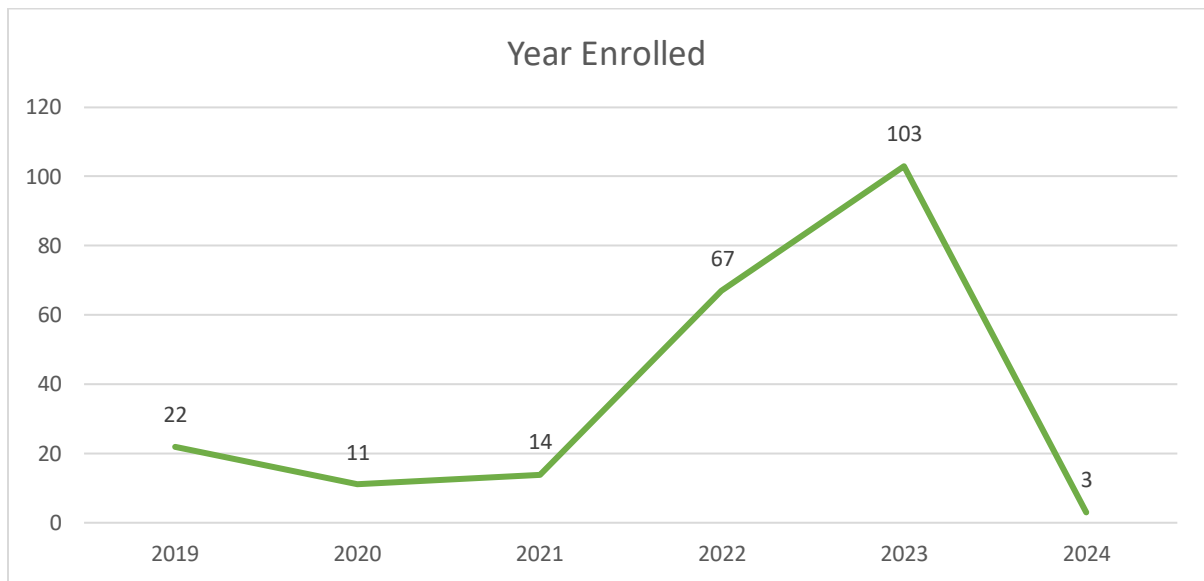
Regarding the qualifications pursued, the majority of respondents, that is, 187 learners (85%), were enrolled in the NATED programme, while 33 learners (15%) were enrolled in the NCV programme. The figure below provides a breakdown of the specific qualification names categorised by their NQF levels.

Figure 21: Qualification name

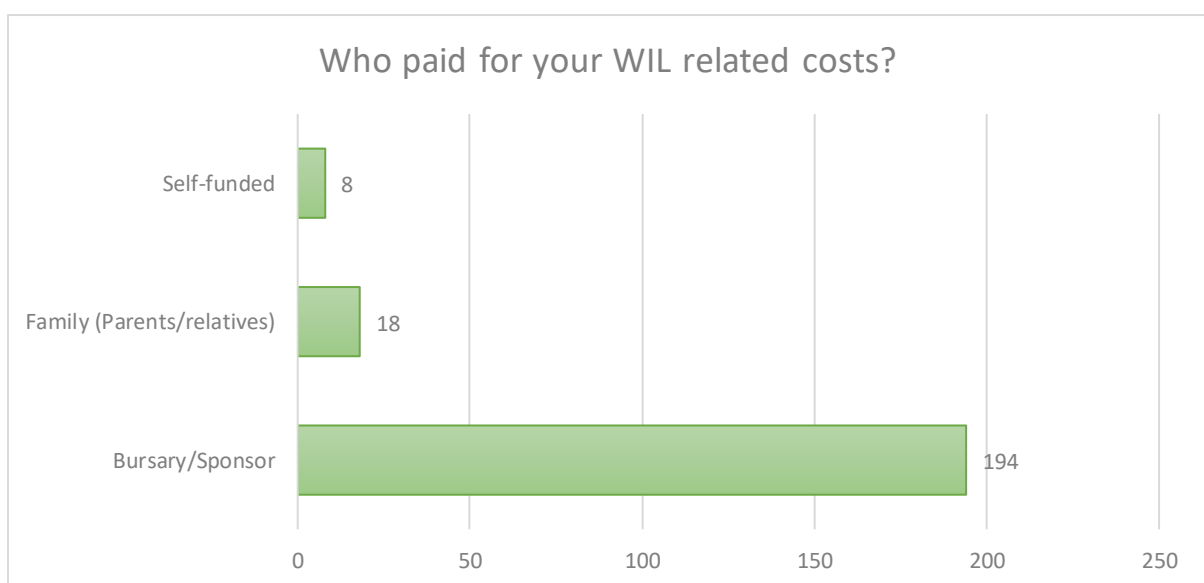


The figure below shows that 103 (47%) of the respondents were enrolled in 2023, followed by 67 (30%) in 2022, and the least number of learners enrolled in 2024.

Figure 22: Year Enrolled

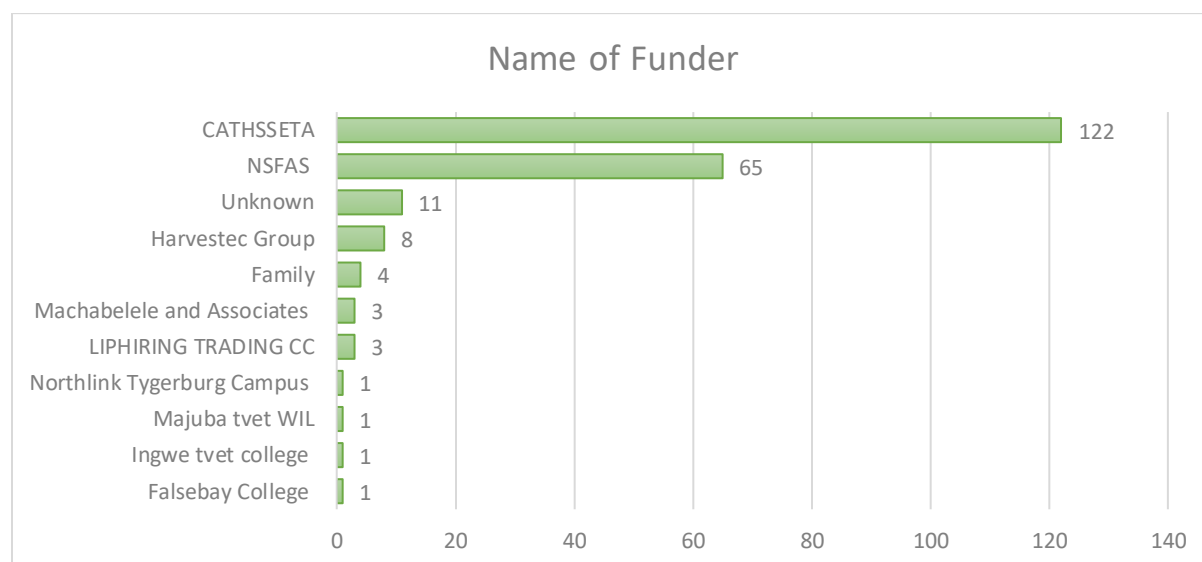


Students were asked to identify the source of funding for their TVET WIL-related expenses, and the answers are shown in the figure below. The majority, comprising 194 learners (88%), reported being funded by a bursar or sponsor. Following this, 18 learners (8%) indicated their parents as the funding source, while 8 learners (3%) stated they were self-funding. Notably, the responses from the 26 learners are concerning, as they are identified as CATHSSETA-funded learners based on their presence in the CATHSSETA-funded learner database. This information was sourced from the learner agreements they had signed, raising issues regarding their reported funding sources.



The respondents were asked to provide the name of the sponsor funding their TVET WIL programme. While all of these learners have been funded by CATHSSETA the responses revealed confusion. Majority of the respondents 122 (55%) confirmed CATHSSETA as their sponsor, as expected. However, 65 (30%) learners incorrectly indicated their funding came from NSFAS. The remaining (15%) responses erroneously stated the host employers or the TVET colleges themselves were providing the stipend funding.

Figure 23: Funder



The above data seems to point to an issue where many of the learners are unclear or confused about the actual source of their WIL programme funding, despite all of them being recipients of CATHSSETA funding based on the information provided. Their responses suggesting other sponsors like NSFAS, employers, or colleges are sponsoring them are inaccurate and reveal a lack of awareness that CATHSSETA is fully funding their TVET WIL participation and stipends.

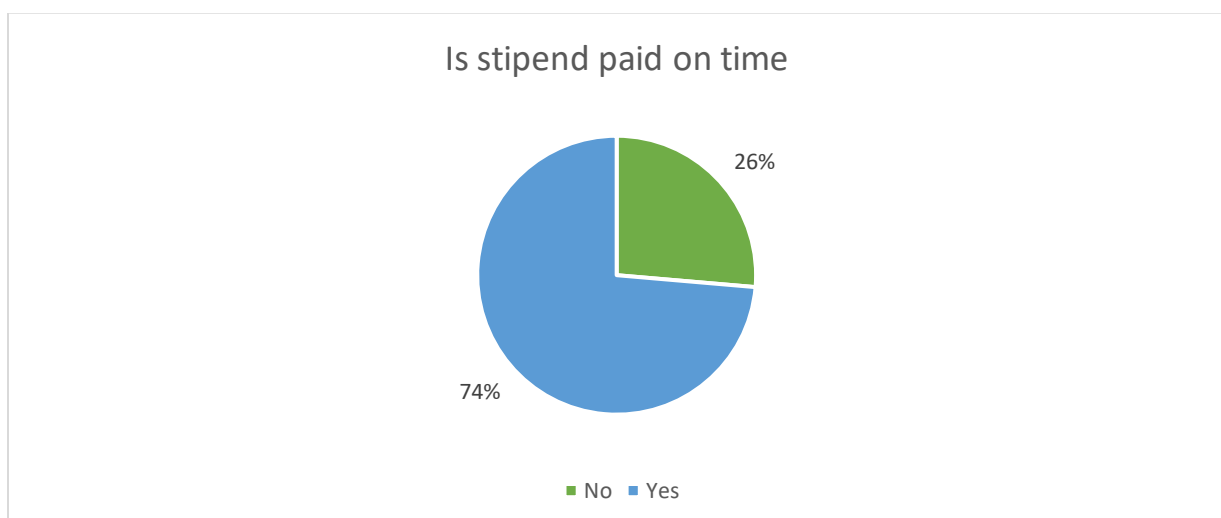
Learners were requested to confirm the stipend amount they are currently receiving. The below figure provides the results. Majority of the learners 190 (86%) stated that they receive R3500 consistent with the CATHSSETA stipend allowance for the TVET WIL programme, 30 learners indicated that they are being paid less than R3500. This data highlights a potential discrepancy for some learners who may not be receiving the standard CATHSSETA allowance.

Figure 24: Stipend amount

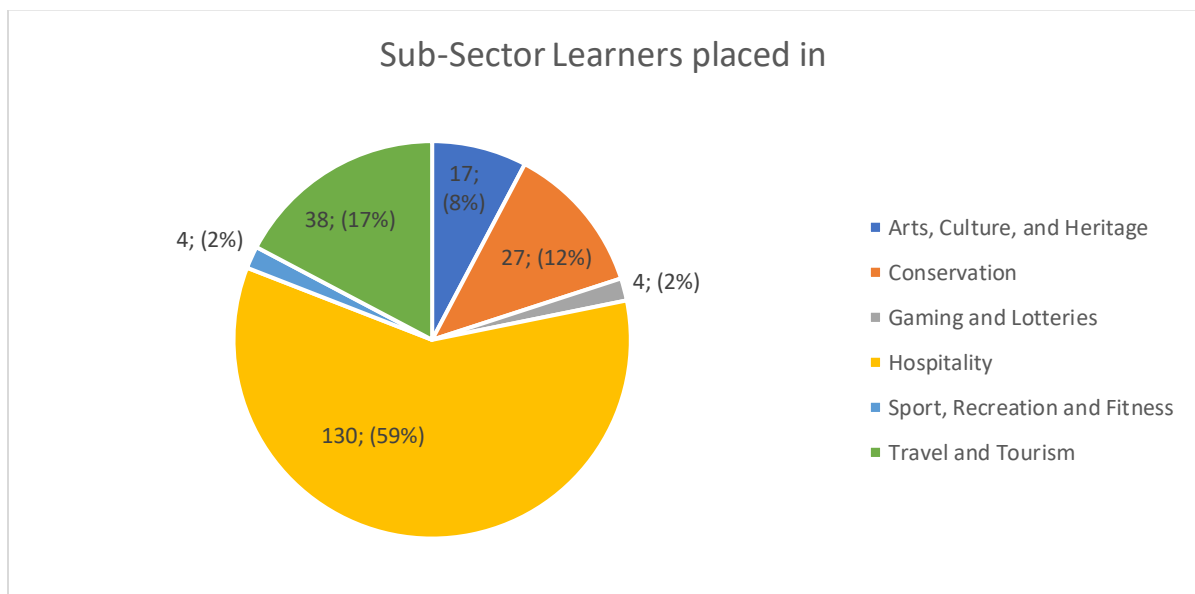


It is a positive finding that the majority of respondents (74%) stated they receive their stipends on time, or as agreed upon in their signed contracts for the TVET WIL programme. However, it is concerning that a significant portion (26%) of respondents reported that they do not receive their stipends in a timely manner according to the agreed schedule. The issue that over a quarter of respondents are experiencing delays or issues with on-time stipend delivery is a problem that needs to be addressed to ensure all learners are properly supported during their WIL programme. Delays in stipend disbursement can have various underlying causes, such as administrative inefficiencies, or communication breakdowns between stakeholders involved in the programme. These delays can significantly impact learners, potentially causing financial strain and disrupting their ability to fully engage in the programme.

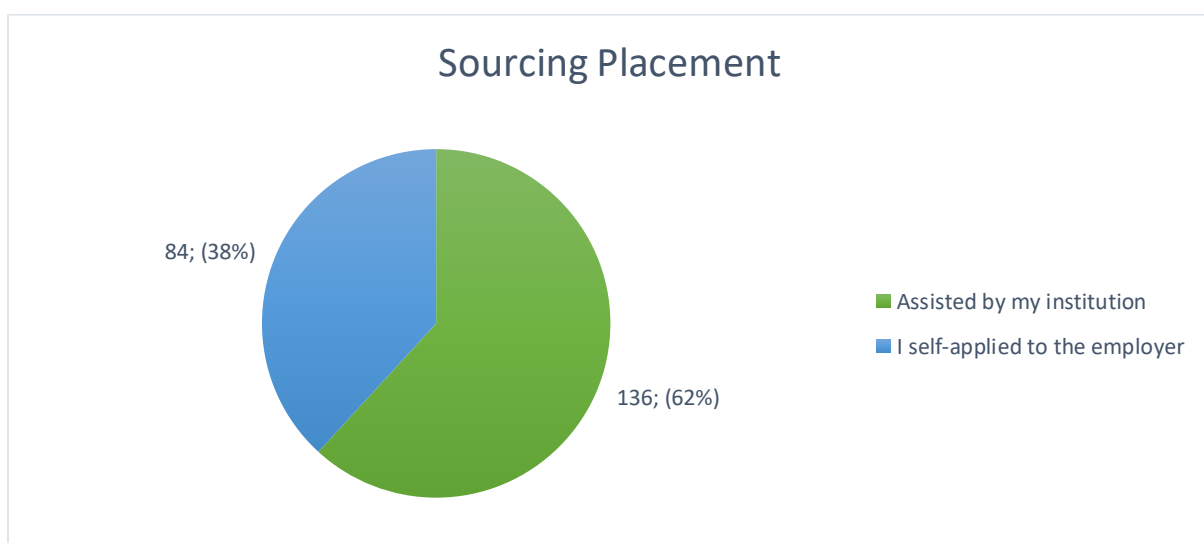
Figure 25: Stipend paid on time



Majority of the learners are placed with host employers 205 (93%) and 15 learners are placed within their TVET Colleges 15 (7%). Both the public and private sector are playing an active role in hosting the learners with a total of 98 employer names provided by the learners. Majority of the respondents indicated that they are placed within the Department of Health 109 (50%), followed by Jozini Tiger Lodge and Spa with four (4) learners and Royal Palm Hotel and Cindy's Travel Agency with three (3) learners each respectively. The remaining 94 employers had one learner placed in the organisation.

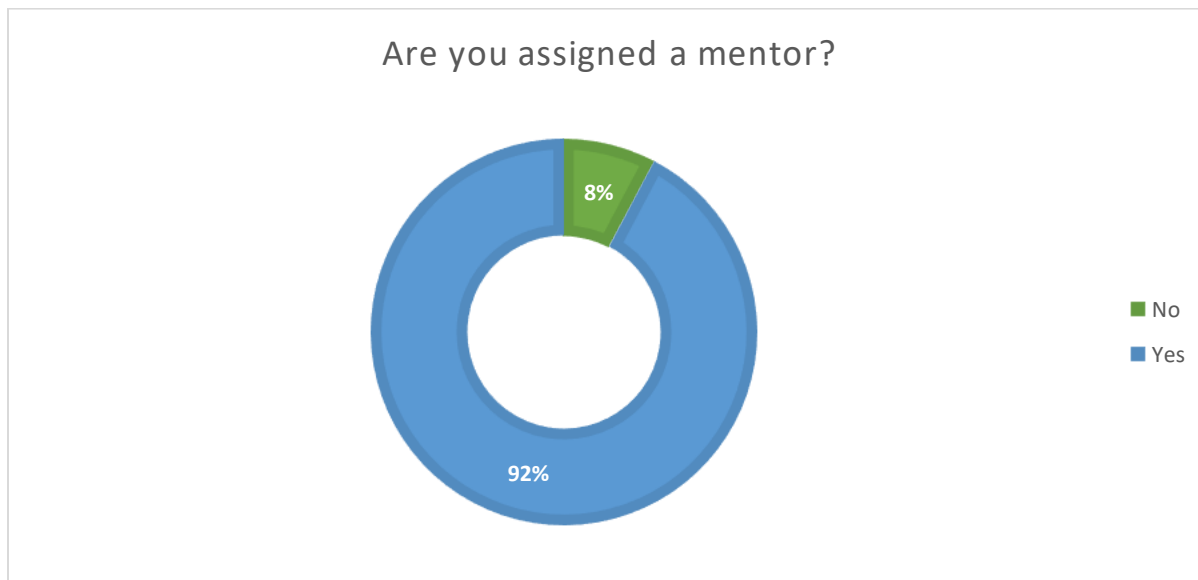


Majority of the respondents 130 (59%) were placed in the hospitality sub-sector followed by the Travel and Tourism sub-sector 38 (17%) and the Conservation sub-sector with 27 (8%) learners. The Gaming and Lotteries and Sport, Recreation and Fitness had the same number of respondents four (4) (2%) respectively.



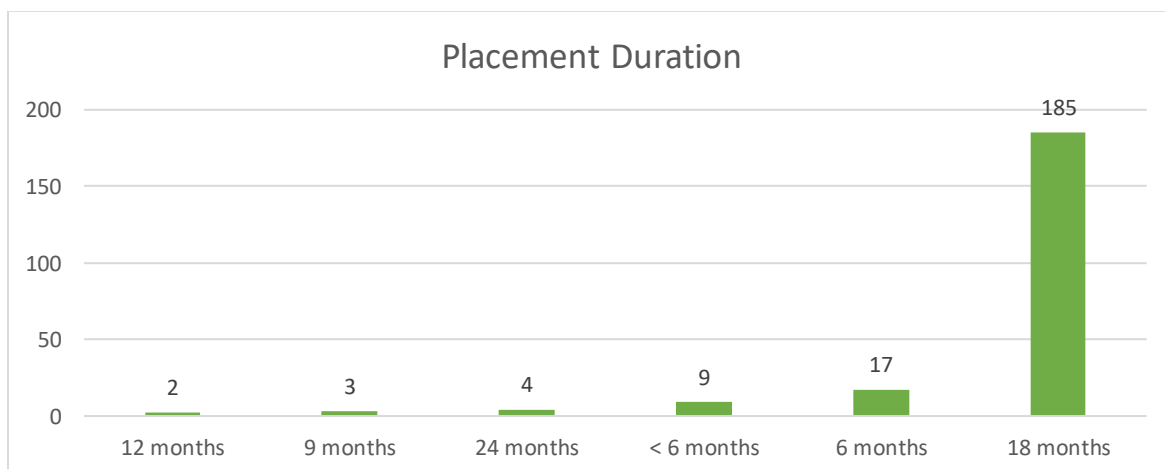
When asked on how the respondents sourced their placement, majority of them 136 (62%) stated that they were assisted by their institution and the remaining 84 (38%) indicated that they self-applied to their respective employers.

Figure 26: Mentor Assignment



Majority of the learners, 203 (92%) indicated that they were assigned a mentor and 17 (8%) indicated that they have not been assigned a mentor.

Figure 27: Placement Duration



Majority 185 (84%) of the respondents indicated that their placement duration is 18 months, followed by learners placed for 6 months 17 (8%).

4.3.1. Host Employer Demographic

Out of the 13 host employers sampled, 12 participated in the TVET WIL study. Below are the demographic details of these companies.

Figure 28: Host Employer Organisation Type

The majority of respondents (67%) represented entities in the public sector, while 33% were from the private sector.

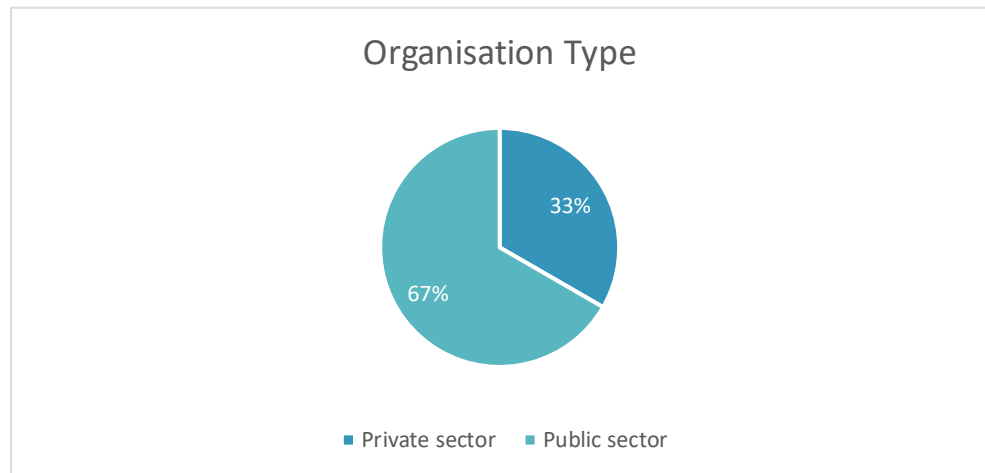
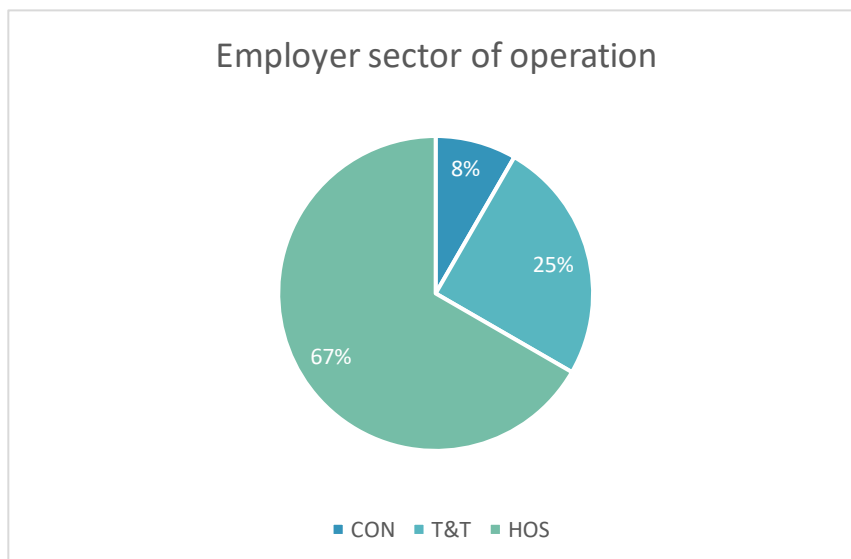
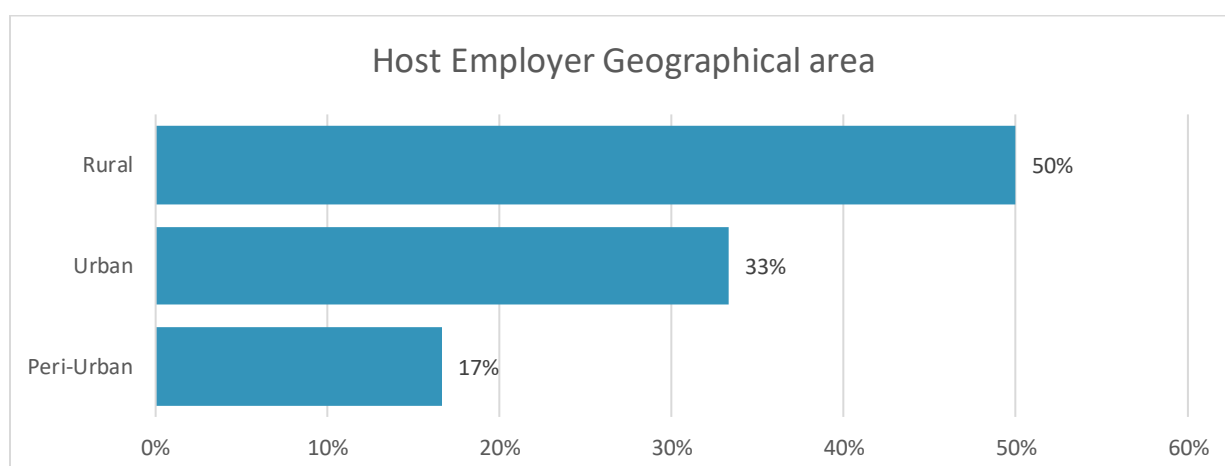


Figure 29: Employer Sector of Operation



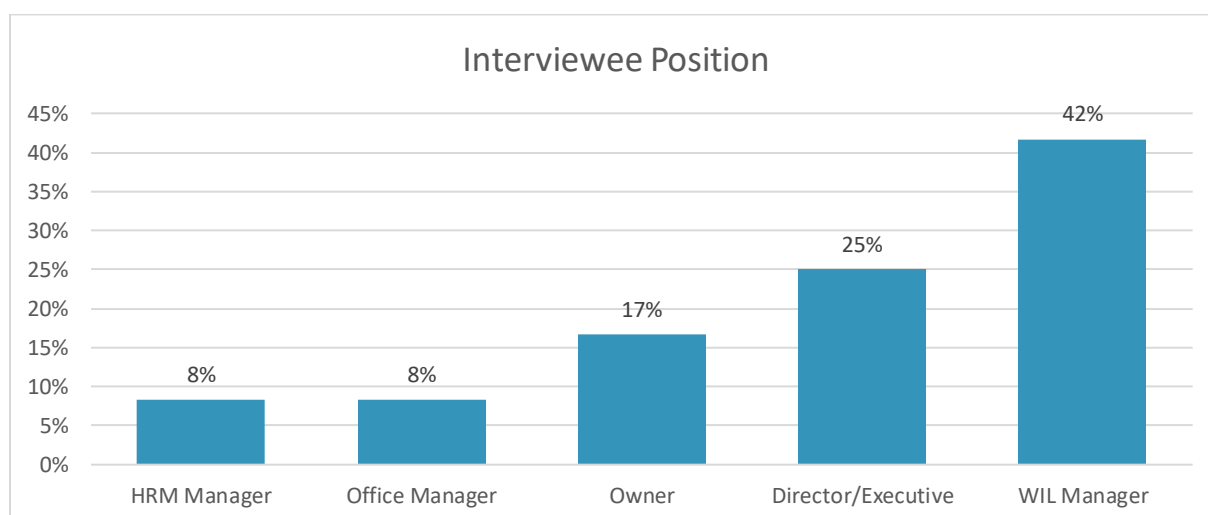
The majority of the employers operated within the Hospitality subsector, (67%), followed by Travel and Tourism (25%).

Figure 30: Host Employer Geographical Area



The above figure displays the geographical area where the respondents operate. The majority of the respondents operated in rural areas (50%), followed by (33%) in suburban areas and (17%) in peri-urban areas.

Figure 31: Position of Host Employer Interviewee



The survey participants held a variety of leadership positions, with Directors being the most common (25%) followed by Owners (17%), and Human Resources and Officer Managers (each at 8%). Interestingly, the largest group of respondents (42%) identified as WIL Managers.

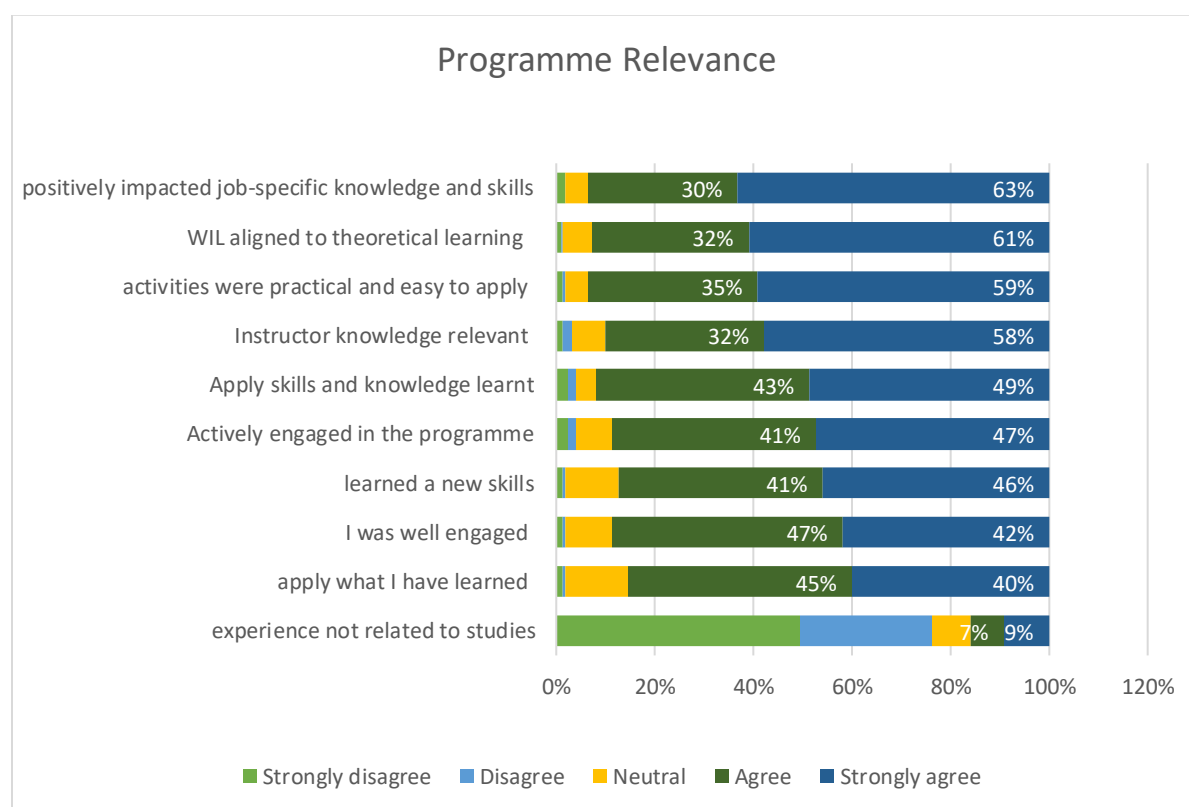
4.4. Outline of the TVET WIL programme relevance

This section looks into the extent in which the TVET WIL programme implementation is aligned to the desired curriculum outcomes drawing from the responses indicated by the learners, host employers, TVET College Directors and Coordinators and CATHSSETA TVET WIL

Implementers. The survey results indicate a high level of agreement among learners regarding the positive impact of the WIL programme on their job-specific knowledge and skills. Specifically, 139 respondents strongly agreed that the programme has positively impacted their job-specific knowledge and skills. Additionally, 134 learners strongly agreed that the WIL programme is aligned with their theoretical knowledge, suggesting a cohesive integration between theoretical learning and practical application. Moreover, a significant majority of learners (130) strongly agreed that the WIL tasks were practical and easy to apply, indicating that the programme effectively facilitates the transfer of theoretical concepts into practical skills in a real-world setting. These findings collectively highlight the effectiveness and relevance of the WIL programme in enhancing learner's competencies and preparing them for their future careers.

4.4.1. Learners perception of the relevance of the TVET WIL programme

Figure 32: Learner's perception of programme relevance



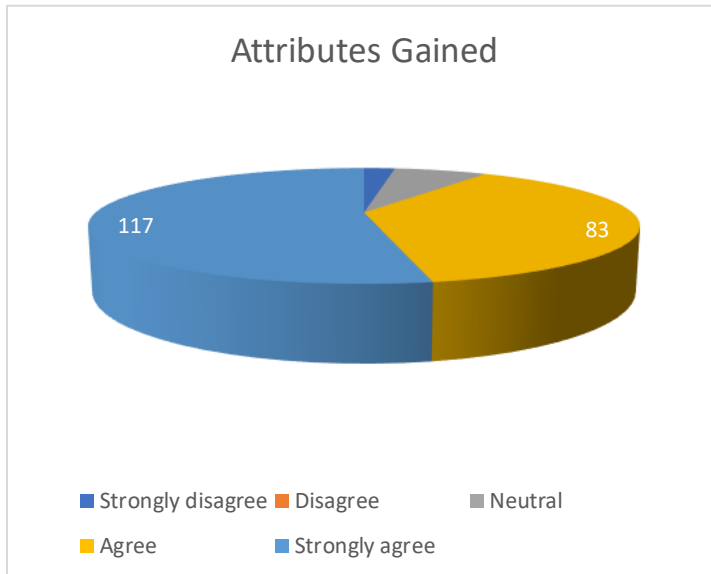


Figure 33: Learners- attributes gained

The survey responses indicate that participating in the TVET WIL programme has had a significant positive impact on learner's cognitive abilities and decision-making skills. Specifically, 117 respondents strongly agreed that the programme has enhanced their ability to think creatively and seek new ways of doing things, demonstrating an increased

capacity for innovative thinking and problem-solving. Furthermore, 119 respondents strongly agreed that the WIL programme has helped them analyse situations, make appropriate decisions, and take action, indicating the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills. These findings underscore the programme's effectiveness in fostering holistic cognitive development and preparing learners for the complexities of the professional world.

The respondents rated the TVET WIL programme in terms of its benefit to their academic learning and the quality of work completed, an overwhelming majority of 131 respondents rated the programme as "excellent" in this regard. Another 62 learners rated it as "very good". Only a very small number, 2 learners, gave a "poor" rating. These ratings indicate learners had an overwhelmingly positive view of how beneficial the WIL programme was in supporting their academic learning and enabling them to produce high-quality work. Overall, the data suggests the vast majority of learners believe the WIL programme greatly enhances their academic development and ability to complete quality work, with only a negligible few holding a negative perception.

Figure 34: Learners programme perception



60%

28%

10%

1%

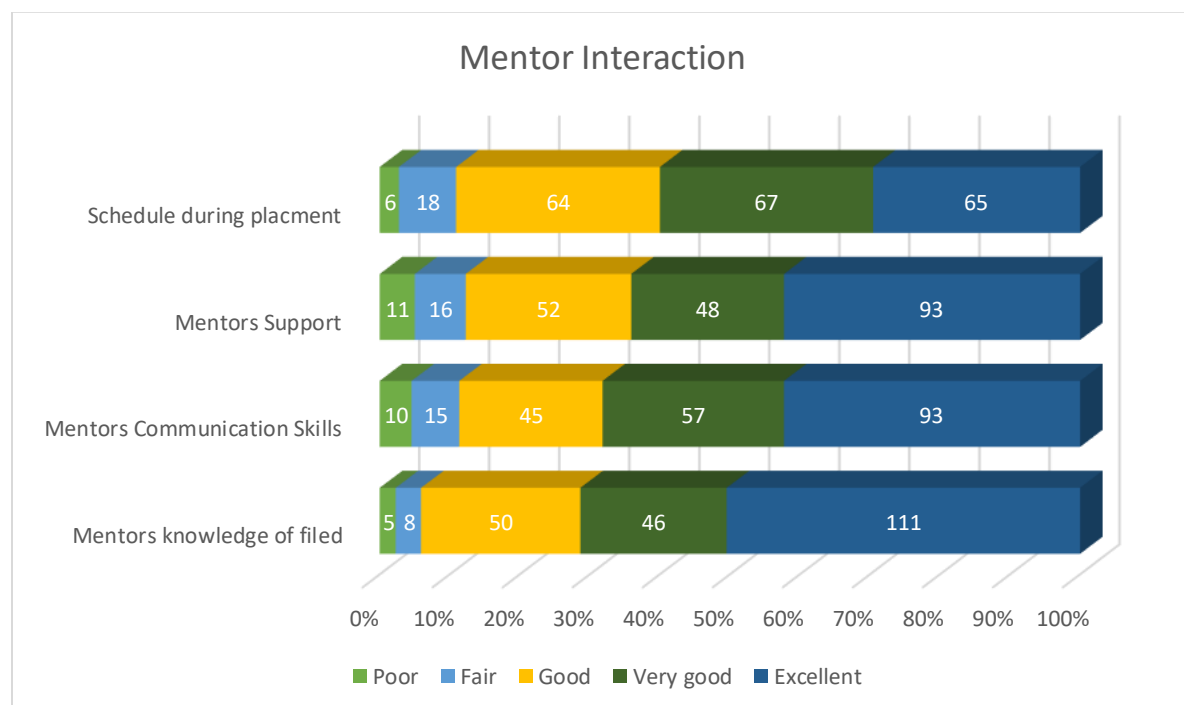
1%

4.5. Outline of the TVET WIL programme effectiveness

This section looks into the extent in which the TVET- WIL programme has been able to meet its set goals and objectives over the five-year period drawing from the responses indicated by the learners, host employers, TVET College Directors and Coordinators and CATHSSETA TVET WIL Implementers.

The survey results indicate overall satisfaction among learners participating in the TVET WIL programme, as evidenced by their ratings across various statements. Firstly, 67 learners rated their placement schedule as very good, suggesting effective organisation and management of their time during the placement. Additionally, 93 learners reported feeling adequately supported by their mentors, indicating the presence of a supportive environment conducive to learning and growth. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of 93 learners rated their mentors' communication skills as excellent, highlighting effective communication channels between mentors and learners. Lastly, 111 learners rated their mentors' knowledge of their respective industry as excellent, indicating that mentors possess the expertise necessary to guide learners effectively in their chosen field. These positive ratings collectively indicate a successful and fulfilling WIL experience for the majority of learners surveyed.

Figure 35: Learners view of the mentor interaction



According to the figure below, when asked about the workload assigned to them during their work placement, the responses from learners were as follows, the majority, 109 learners (49%), found the workload to be moderate. A significant number, 105 learners, reported that their workload was either very heavy or heavy. This suggests that while nearly half of the learners felt the workload was manageable at a moderate level, a comparable proportion found the workload quite demanding, describing it as very heavy or heavy. The figure highlights that learner experiences varied when it came to the intensity of the workload during their placements, with a fairly even split between those who found it moderate and those who considered it to be on the heavier side.

Figure 36: Learners view of the workload during the WIL placement

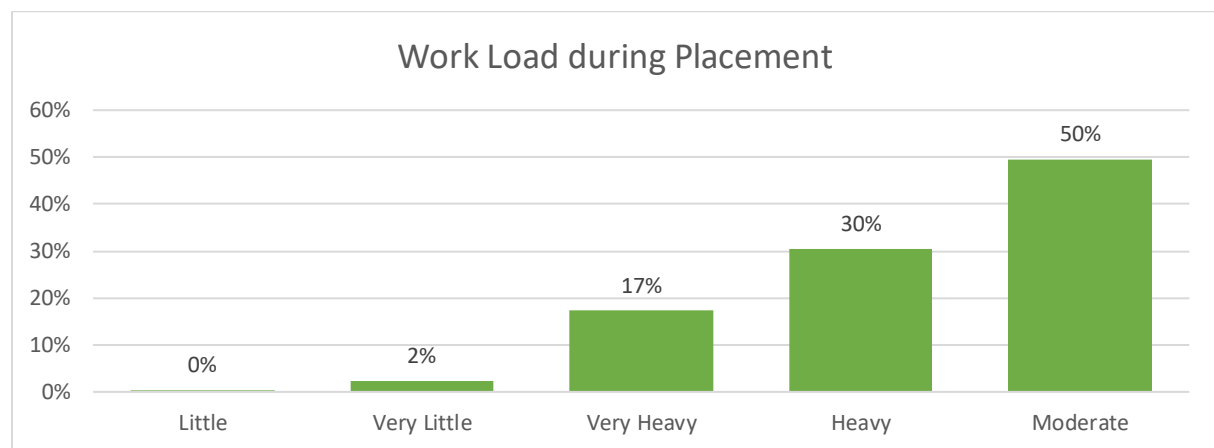
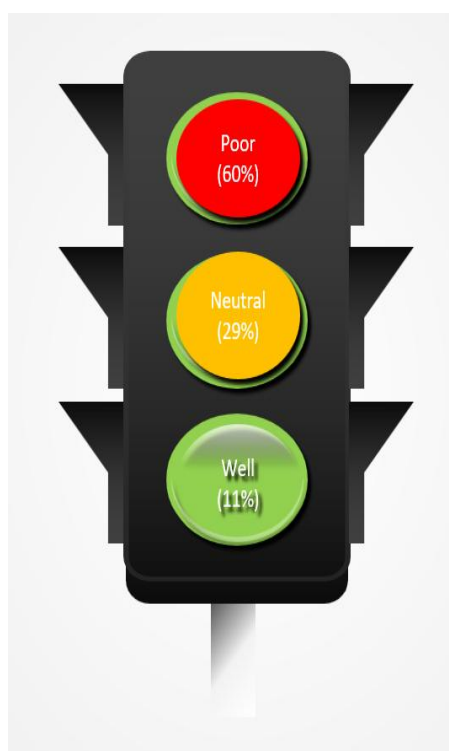
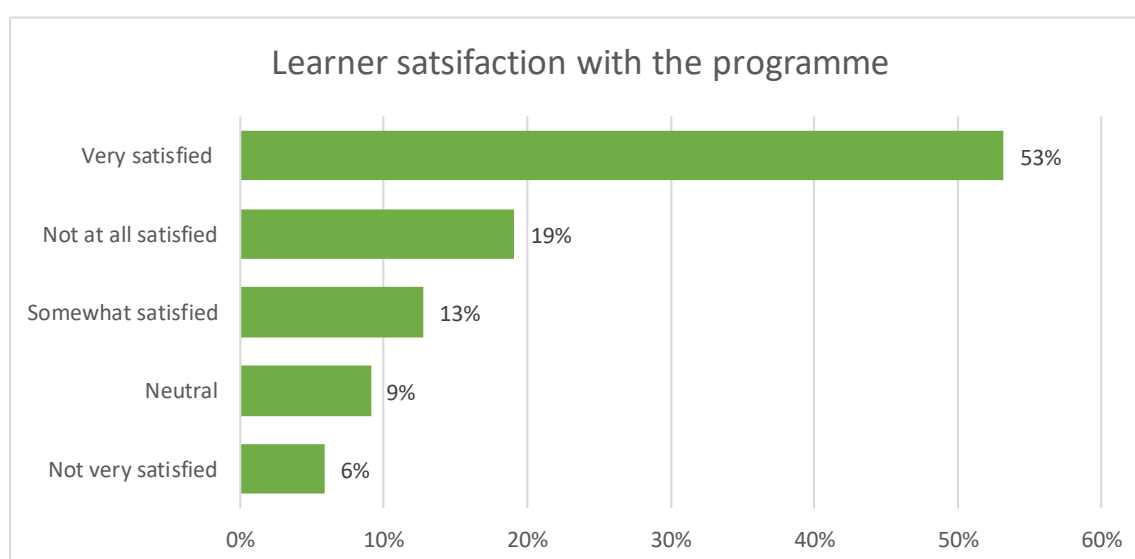


Figure 37: Learner's perception of the coordination of the programme



A significant majority of 132 respondents (60%) stated that the programme is either poorly or very poorly organised. 64 (29%) learners had a neutral stance, neither positive nor negative, regarding the organisation of the programme. Only 24 learners felt the programme was well or very well organised. The data indicates a concerning trend, with three (3) out of every five (5) learners expressing dissatisfaction with how the TVET WIL programme is structured and coordinated. This disparity in perceptions suggests significant room for improvement in the structure and management of the TVET WIL programme to better to meet the needs and expectations of participating learners.

The survey results reveal varying levels of satisfaction among learners with the TVET WIL programme. A significant majority of 117 respondents rated themselves as very satisfied with the programme, indicating a high level of overall contentment. However, 42 respondents expressed dissatisfaction by rating themselves as not at all satisfied, suggesting areas of improvement within the programme that require attention. Additionally, 13 respondents reported being not very satisfied with the programme, indicating a moderate level of discontent. These findings highlight the importance of addressing concerns and implementing changes to enhance the overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the TVET WIL programme for all participants.

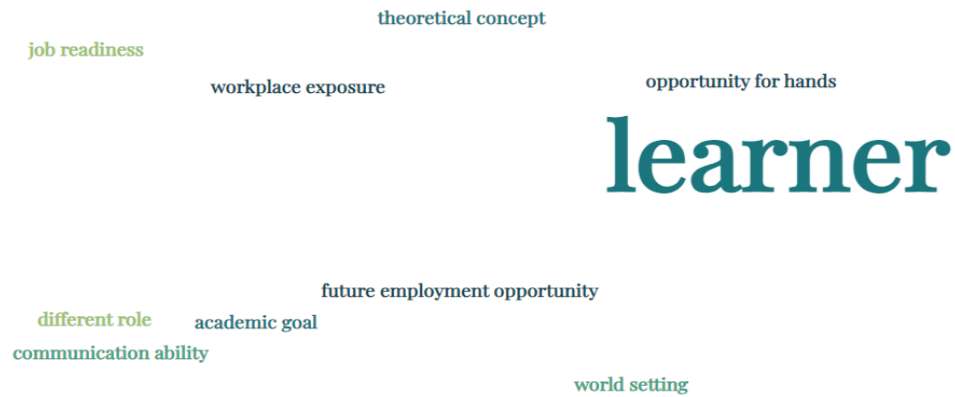


Learners were asked to comment on what they consider the most significant contribution of the programme to their development as a learner. The word cube below displays that learners found the programme significantly contributed to developing their skills, gaining practical experience, and acquiring new knowledge related to their fields of study. Other frequently mentioned positive contributions include:

- Providing opportunities for hands-on training and workplace exposure;
- Helping learners become more independent and self-reliant;
- Enabling learners to apply theoretical concepts in real-world settings;
- Supporting learners financially through stipends, which aided with transportation and other needs;
- Boosting learners' confidence, communication abilities, and problem-solving skills;
- Allowing learners to explore different roles and departments within their industries;
- Improving job readiness and preparing learners for future employment opportunities; and
- Assisting learners in achieving their academic goals and obtaining qualifications/diplomas.

Overall, the word cube highlights that skills development, practical experience, knowledge acquisition, financial assistance, and improved employability were among the most significant contributions of the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme, as perceived by the learners.

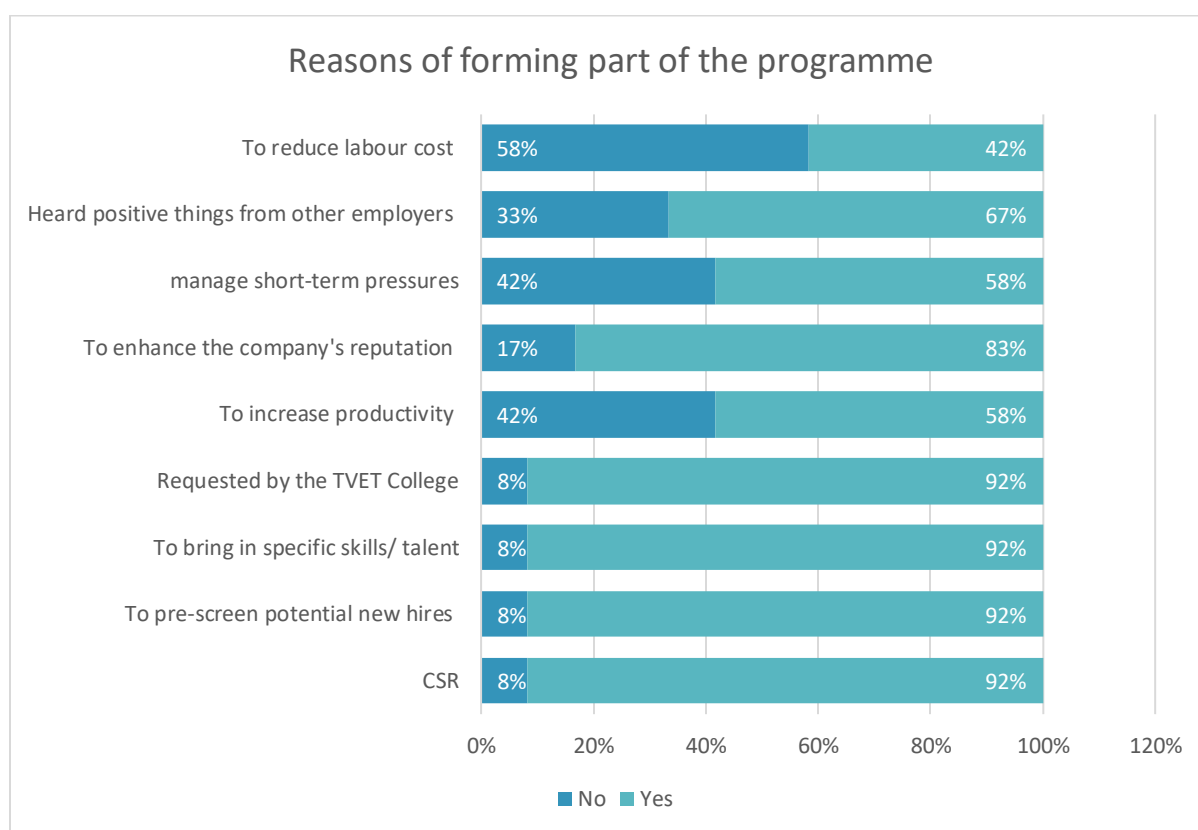
Learners were further requested to provide specific examples of how the programme has helped them to develop their skills and knowledge. The word cube below details that the learners reported to be significantly assisted to gain essential vocational skills, knowledge of hospitality/tourism operations, and confidence in applying their learning in real workplace settings.



4.5.1. Host Employer perception towards the programme

The study indicated that employers are willing to host learners as part of the WIL programme and some of the reasons that they outlined were as follows. An overwhelming majority of (92%) indicated that they engage in the programme for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) purposes. This suggests a strong commitment to giving back to the community and supporting education. Interestingly, the same employers (92%) also see the programme as a valuable tool for pre-screening potential new hires. This allows them to identify talented individuals with skills requested by the TVET College, potentially aligning well with their specific needs. Finally, reducing labour costs appears to be a less significant motivator, with only 42% of employers citing it as a reason to participate in the programme.

Figure 38: Host employers reasons for participating in the programme



4.6. TVET WIL programme successes and challenges thus far

4.6.1. Learner challenges and success of the WIL programme

The findings indicated that most significant successes of the CATHSSETA TVET WIL programme among others were:

- Gaining practical work experience and exposure to the workplace environment;
- Providing financial support and stipends to students;
- Helping students acquire new skills and knowledge;
- Assisting with job placements and training opportunities;
- Supporting and enabling students to complete their studies/N-diplomas;
- Offering opportunities for personal and professional growth;
- Punctual payment of stipends and good communication from CATHSSETA; and
- Creating pathways to employment in their respective industries.

Figure 39: Observed successes of the TVET WIL programme



Overall, the word cube and responses highlight that the TVET WIL learners greatly value the programme for the work experience, funding support, skills development, and employment prospects it provides. The practical exposure and financial assistance seem to be among the most significant successes enabling students to further their education and careers.

Figure 40: Word Cube learner challenges



The word cube above depicts some of the major challenges or obstacles reported by the learners including:

- Late or delayed payment of stipends, sometimes for several months;
- Heavy workload and long working hours, leading to work pressure;
- Difficulties in dealing with rude or difficult customers/guests;
- Communication gaps or lack of communication from employers and mentors;
- Transportation issues, especially when stipends were delayed;

- Interpersonal conflicts and dealing with different personalities at the workplace;
- Language barriers while interacting with customers or colleagues;
- Mistreatment or unfair treatment by employers and their staff members;
- Shortage of resources or equipment required for training;
- Balancing work responsibilities with completing college assignments/logbooks;

Other challenges mentioned were handling customer complaints, overtime work without compensation, confidentiality concerns, lack of proper placements, adapting to new departments, and personal/family emergencies affecting their participation. The word cube highlights that payment delays, work pressure, interpersonal issues, communication gaps, and transportation problems were among the most faced obstacles during the programme. Addressing these challenges could potentially improve the overall experience for future participants.

The word cube below lists some of the approaches used to address the learners' issues when they were asked how the challenges were resolved.

Figure 41: Word Cube Learner TVET WIL programme challenges



- Communication: many learners mentioned addressing challenges through communication, either with supervisors, mentors, or management;

- Management: Learners reported that challenges were often addressed by management, supervisors, or mentors through meetings, disciplinary actions, or resolutions;
- Patient: Learners expressed the need for patience in dealing with challenges, understanding that some issues may take time to resolve;
- Adaptation: Several learners mentioned adapting to different situations, personalities, or workloads as a way of addressing challenges;
- Report to Superior: Reporting challenges to supervisors, mentors, or managers was a common approach for seeking resolution;
- Resolutions: Learners described various resolutions implemented to address challenges, such as scheduling adjustments, relocation, or financial assistance;
- Understanding: Developing an understanding of different personalities, work styles, or client expectations was seen as crucial in addressing challenges; and
- Learning: Many learners viewed challenges as learning opportunities, allowing them to acquire new skills, knowledge, or perspectives.

It is important to note that some learners also mentioned that their challenges were not addressed or remained unresolved, highlighting areas for potential improvement in the programme.

4.6.2. Employer Challenges and successes of the programme

The table below outlines challenges reported by employers in the context of the WIL programme and the corresponding mitigation measures they propose to alleviate these challenges.

Table 6: Challenges and mitigation measures as identified by host employers

Challenges	Solutions explored to address the challenges
Identifying projects that align with WIL requirements	Attend induction sessions to gain more knowledge of the industry's requirements.
Locating suitable students to be provided with WIL	Build strong linkages and collaborations with stakeholders (e.g., TVET colleges, other employers) for locating suitable students.
Lack of finances to provide students with stipends	CATHSSETA to create availability of funds or financial assistance for providing student stipends.
Quality of student performance	CATHSSETA to fund work readiness workshops with learners to improve their soft skills and overall performance.

Previous negative experiences	CATHSSETA to increase funding to ensure learner insurance coverage to mitigate risks associated with previous negative experiences.
Engaging management to support WIL programmes	Ensure all stakeholders (e.g., SETA management, TVET colleges, employers) are present during induction sessions and advocate for management support.
Lack of learner tools of trade during WIL	Explore the possibility of deducting a portion of student stipends (with SETA and learner approval) to address the need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
Previous negative experiences	Implement mediation strategies to address and resolve previous negative experiences
Engaging staff to be part of WIL coordination	CATHSSETA to conduct campaigns to raise awareness about the WIL programme and its benefits to engage staff in WIL coordination
Assigning learners with suitable mentors	Attend induction sessions to gain a better understanding of industry needs and requirements.

4.7. Sustainability of the TVET WIL programme

4.7.1. Learners Perception of programme sustainability

This section looks into the sustainability of the TVET WIL programme and the level of commitment by all stakeholders. When TVET Colleges were asked whether they have existing partnerships with Host Employers. The respondents confirmed having a proactive approach in securing placement for learners. All 11 TVET College Directors confirmed that they have formulated partnerships with Host employers to ensure that a pool of employers is readily available to place learners. The TVET College indicated these partnerships have been formalised through signed MOUs.



TVET Colleges were then asked how they ensure that there are sufficient host employers the respondents reported the below:

Active recruitment of employers: The colleges actively reach out to potential employers and engage in recruitment efforts to secure their participation as host organisations for WIL placements.

Hosting and attending job fairs: Colleges organise and participate in job fairs, which serve as platforms to connect with employers, showcase their programmes, and network to establish partnerships for WIL placements.

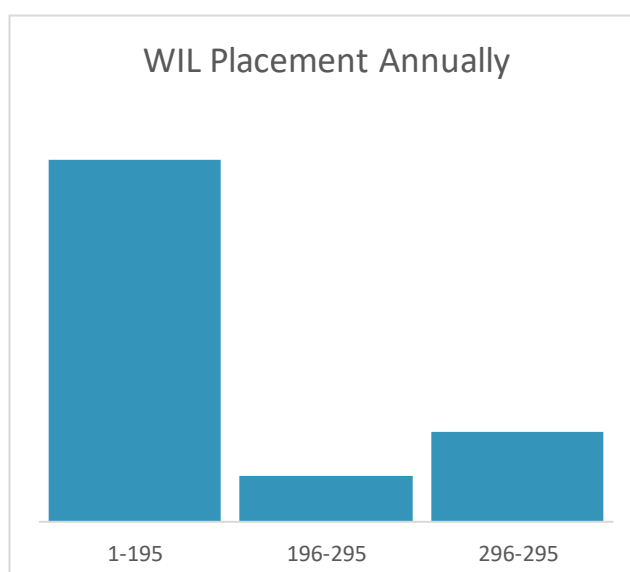
Stakeholder business breakfasts: Colleges host stakeholder business breakfast events, which provide opportunities to engage with employers, present the WIL programme, and foster collaborative relationships.

Referrals from existing employer partners: Colleges rely on referrals and recommendations from their current network of employer partners, who may suggest or connect them with additional organisations interested in hosting WIL learners.

The host employer demonstrated eagerness to continue placing learners and possibly absorbing some of the learners upon completion of the programme. The majority of employers (58%) confirmed that they have absorbed or hired learners within their companies after the successful completion of the WIL programme. However, a notable portion, of employers (41%), indicated that they have not hired or absorbed learners into their organisations following the completion of the WIL programme.

This data reveals that while over half of the employers have capitalised on the opportunity to retain skilled TVET WIL learners by offering them employment, a sizeable minority have not pursued this avenue. Nonetheless, the positive response from the majority of employers in absorbing TVET WIL learners signifies the potential for these programmes to serve as a talent pipeline, enabling employers to identify and recruit work-ready candidates who have already gained practical experience.

Among the seven (7) employers who confirmed absorbing TVET WIL learners into their organisations upon programme completion, the absorption rates varied significantly. Four (4) employers reported absorbing relatively low numbers of learners, hiring 4, 10, 15, and 25 learners respectively. However, two (2) employers stood out with substantially higher absorption rates. One employer reported hiring 30 TVET WIL learners, while another employer absorbed an impressive 294 learners into their organisation. The



highest absorption rate reported was 300 learners hired by a single employer after the completion of the TVET WIL programme. Figure 42: WIL Placement

This data highlights the diverse absorption capacities and approaches of different employers. While some selectively hired a smaller number of TVET WIL learners, likely based on specific workforce needs, others embraced the opportunity to significantly bolster their workforce by absorbing a considerable number of skilled graduates from the programme.

Of the five (5) employers (41%) who stated that they have not hired or absorbed learners into their organisations following the TVET WIL programme, shared insights into the reasons were provided by two (2) of them. One (1) employer cited a lack of available job openings or vacancies within their organisation as the primary reason for not absorbing the TVET WIL learners upon programme completion. Another employer indicated that the salary expectations of the learners were too high, making it challenging for the employer to accommodate the desired compensation levels.

While the remaining three (3) employers did not specify their reasons, the responses from these two employers shed light on potential factors that can hinder the absorption of TVET WIL learners. Limited job availability and misaligned salary expectations between learners and employers can act as barriers, preventing employers from offering full-time employment opportunities to programme graduates.

An overwhelming majority, (92%) of respondents, indicated that they would recommend the programme to others. Only a small minority (5%) outright said they would not recommend the programme, while (3%) were unsure or on the fence about recommending the programme to others. These results suggest that despite any challenges faced, the overall experience and value gained from the WIL were seen as highly beneficial by most learners.

The (92%) recommendation rate from the learners speaks volumes regarding the programme's effectiveness in providing a valuable real-world learning experience that participants overwhelmingly endorse for others to pursue as well. This learner feedback bodes very well for the continued success of the TVET WIL initiative.

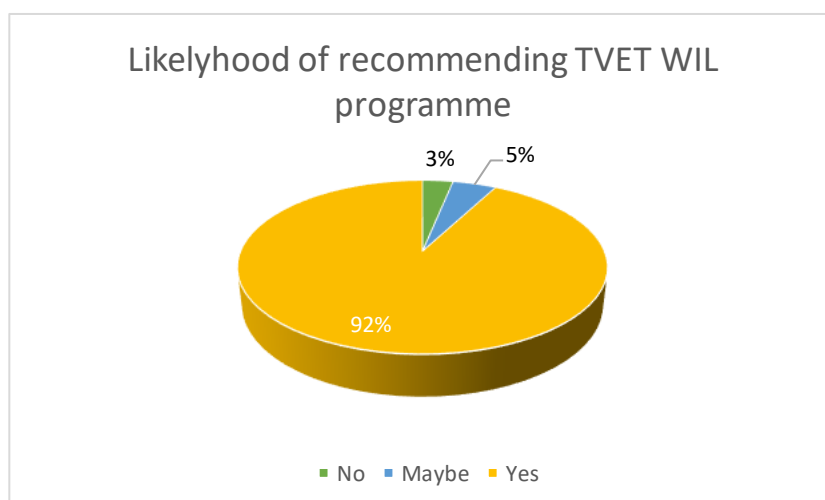


Figure 43: Likelihood of recommending programme

4.8. TVET WIL benchmarking with the other SETAs.

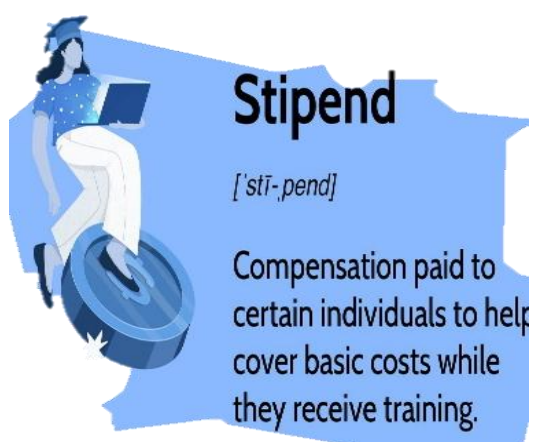
Table 7: SETA Benchmarking Exercise

SETA Name	NATED Stipend	NCV Stipend	Funding of Administrative Cost	Administrative Cost Fee	Rural Allowance
Food & Bev SETA	R5250	Does not fund NCV	No	N/A	No rural allowance provided
TETA	R4500	Does not fund NCV	Yes	R450 (Coaching and Mentoring Fee)	No rural allowance provided
AgriSETA	R4200	Does not fund NCV	Yes	16% for per learner deducted from R60000	No rural allowance provided
LGSETA	R4000	R4000	Yes	7.5% for each learner deducted as follows R77400 for NATED R51600 for NCV	Provide a once-off rural allowance of R4000 in the 2nd month of the project. An additional R4000 is paid to learners living with disabilities
CATHSSETA	R3500	R3500	Yes	R11 500 per learner	No rural allowance provided
HWSETA	R3500	R3500	Yes	R3375 per learner	No rural allowance provided

As part of triangulating data for the study, 5 SETAs were asked to provide details on their implementation processes for the TVET WIL programme. The SETAs were posed the following 5 specific questions:

1. What is the stipend amount paid to learners enrolled in the NATED (National Accredited Technical Education Diploma) programme's?
2. What is the stipend amount paid to learners enrolled in the NCV (National Certificate Vocational) programme's?
3. Do you provide payment for administrative costs to employers or TVET colleges hosting the WIL learners? (SETAs to respond with 'Yes' or 'No')
4. If payment for administrative costs is provided, please specify the amount allocated per learner.
5. Do you allocate or pay a different stipend amount to learners placed in rural areas compared to those in urban areas? In other words, do rural and urban learners receive the same stipend amount?

Below is a discussion on the findings



When asked about the stipend amount paid to learners enrolled in the NATED programmes, the responses from the SETAs varied. The lowest amount reported was R3,500, which is the same as what CATHSSETA pays for the NATED programme. Other amounts provided were R4000, R4200, R4500. The highest stipend amount for NATED learners reported by a SETA was R5250. While CATHSSETA's R3500 was the lowest, most of the other SETAs paid higher stipends

ranging from R4000 up to a maximum of R5250 per NATED programme learner. This highlights the lack of a standardised stipend amount across SETAs for learners in the same NATED programmes.

Three (3) out of the five (5) SETAs stated that they do not fund or implement the NCV programme at all. The remaining 2 SETAs reported that the stipend amount they provide for the NCV programme is the same as what they pay for their NATED programme stipends. They fund the NCV programme for the same 12-month duration as CATHSSETA does.

The vast majority, 4 out of the 5 SETAs, pay some amount to cover administrative costs incurred by organisations hosting the WIL learners during the programme. Only 1 SETA indicated they do not make such administrative cost payments.

There is quite a variation in how the four SETAs determine and pay the administrative costs from percentage deductions of allocated amounts, to fixed fees per learner that differ across SETAs.

- One SETA deducts 7.5% from the allocated amount of R77,400 per NATED learner and R51,600 per NCV learner to cover administrative costs.
- Another SETA deducts 16% from R60,000 allocated per NATED learner for administrative costs.
- A different SETA pays a fixed "Coaching and Mentoring Fee" of R400 per learner to employers for administrative costs.
- The remaining SETA provides a flat R3,375 payment per learner, regardless of whether NATED or NCV, for administrative costs.

On the question of whether they allocate different stipend amounts to learners placed in rural areas compared to urban areas, four (4) out of the five (5) SETAs stated that they pay the same stipend amount to learners regardless of whether they are in rural or urban areas.

One (1) SETA reported having differentiated stipends, where rural-based learners receive a one-time R4,000 rural allowance in addition to their regular stipend. This same SETA also provides an additional one-time allowance of R4,000 to learners living with disabilities.



4.9. Outline of the theory of change

The Theory of Change for the TVET WIL programme is demonstrated as follows;

Figure 44: Theory of Change

In addition to the theory of change which will guide future evaluations the following assumptions, risks and mitigation factors were noted.

Figure 45:TVET WIL Programme Assumption, Risks and Mitigations

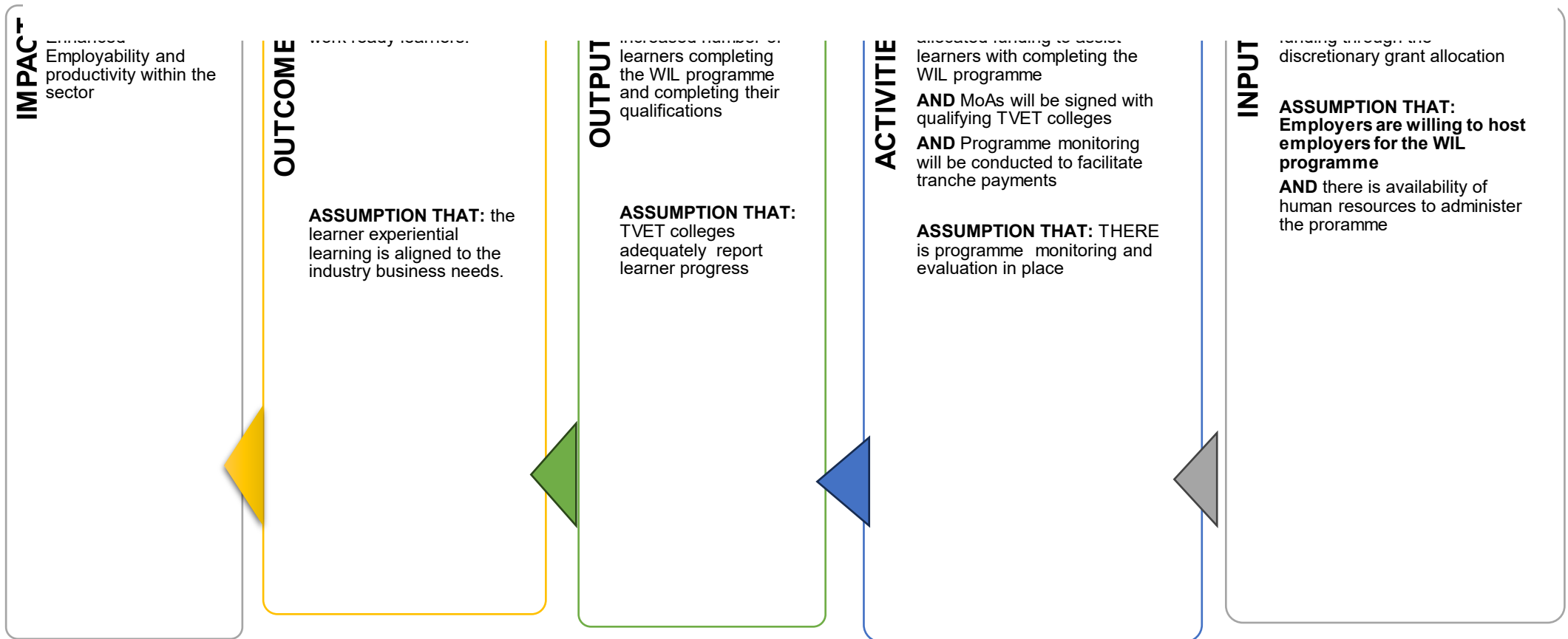


Table 8: Assumptions and Risk Mitigation measures for the TVET WIL programme

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigations
Availability of host employers	Host employers unwilling to place learners Local host employers only taking few learners Placement of learners far from the college or residential area	Encourage participation from host employers Stipends to be paid timeously for learners placed away from their residential areas Rural subsidy to be introduced
Relevant training provided	Training not aligned to the WIL requirement and therefore learners unable to acquire the experience outlined in the logbook Learners not receiving training exposure and mentorship required	Monitoring of logbooks
Timeous payment of stipend	Learners dropping out due to late stipend payments. Learners protesting at the college affecting the brand of the institution Learner morale affected Inability to attend and complete the work programme	To ensure stipends are paid on time CATHSSETA to conduct site visits on time and schedule them ahead of time TVET colleges to submit timesheets and reports on time
Learners complete the theoretical component and ready to embark on the TVET WIL programme	Lack of funding	Source out alternative funding opportunities CATHSSETA to consider funding more learners
Learner commitment to the programme	Lack of commitment leading to discouraged employers and learner dropouts	Create student support and frequent communication with employers and learners
Tools of trade	Lack of suitable resources	Provision of PPEs;

		Site visits of the premises, assisting employers with resource's to adequately train leaners
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4.10. Outline of the logic matrix and monitoring plan;

The table below describes the logic matrix, monitoring and evaluation activities.

Table 9: TVET WIL Logic Matrix

LOGIC MATRIX						
	Narrative Summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of Verification	Assumption & Risks	Monitoring activities	Evaluation activities
Impact	A transformed and growing sector, with the requisite skills that respond to the needs of the South African economy.					Impact evaluation
Outcomes	The effectiveness of the public college system.	Enhanced number of work ready learners	See outputs		(See under Outputs)	Annual track and tracer outcomes evaluation
Outputs	Skills development programmes implemented within the CET AND TVET colleges.	# of TVET College learners completing WIL programmes	MOU; Learner Agreements; Learner certificate	Assumptions: Employers are willing to host, mentor and supervise learners upon at their workplaces RISK:	Quarterly Performance Information Reporting (QMR) and the quarterly organization Performance information Report (OPIR) and Annual Report (AR)	Quarterly Performance Information Reporting (QMR) and the quarterly organisational Performance information Report (OPIR)

				Lack of sufficient funding and learner dropouts		
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Table 10: TVET College and CATHSSETA programme implementers estimated targets

	PROGRAMME DURATION	MINIMUM TARGETS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION OF SUCCESS
Impact	5-year SP period	-	Impact evaluation
Outcome (Long-term result of outputs)	Within six months after completing the programme	10%	Outcomes Evaluation through the annual track and tracer
Output (Immediate result of activities)	12 months for NCV and 18 Months for NATED upon completion of the TVET WIL programme	100% of the annual funded target	Closeout reports, Timesheets; Completion forms; Logbooks; Report from employers; Learner Agreements
Input (Resources)	NCV- 12 Months and NATED – 18 Months	100% number of learners on the TVET college list based on the annual targets and funding availability	MOA, Learner agreements, Tranche payments, List of host employer working with TVET college

4.11. Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder	Potential role in the programme	Position	Interest in the programme (High, Medium or Low)	Influence/ Power (High, Medium or Low)	Impact of the success of the programme on stakeholder (High, Medium or Low)	How they are engaged? (EOI, Proposal. etc)
CATHSSETA	Programme Funder; Provision of oversight	Top= 8; Middle= 1; Bottom=1	High= 9; Middle= 0; Bottom=1	High=7; Middle=2; Bottom= 1	High=9; Medium= 0; Bottom=1	Easily Engaged through Email and telephone with regional managers; and Coordinators
TVET College	Programme Implementation and coordination	Top= 7; Middle= 2; Bottom=1	High= 10; Middle= 0; Bottom=0	High=9; Middle=0; Bottom= 1	High=10; Medium= 0; Bottom=0	Easily Engaged via Email, phone with Management of the programme
Host Employer	Host Employers	Top= 7; Middle= 3; Bottom=0	High=10; Medium=0; Low= 0	High= 10; Medium= 0; Low= 0	High= 10; Medium= 0; Low= 0	Easily engaged through Social media; M&E reports; Forums; Physical visits; Stakeholder engagements; Telephonically

4.12. TVET College Response

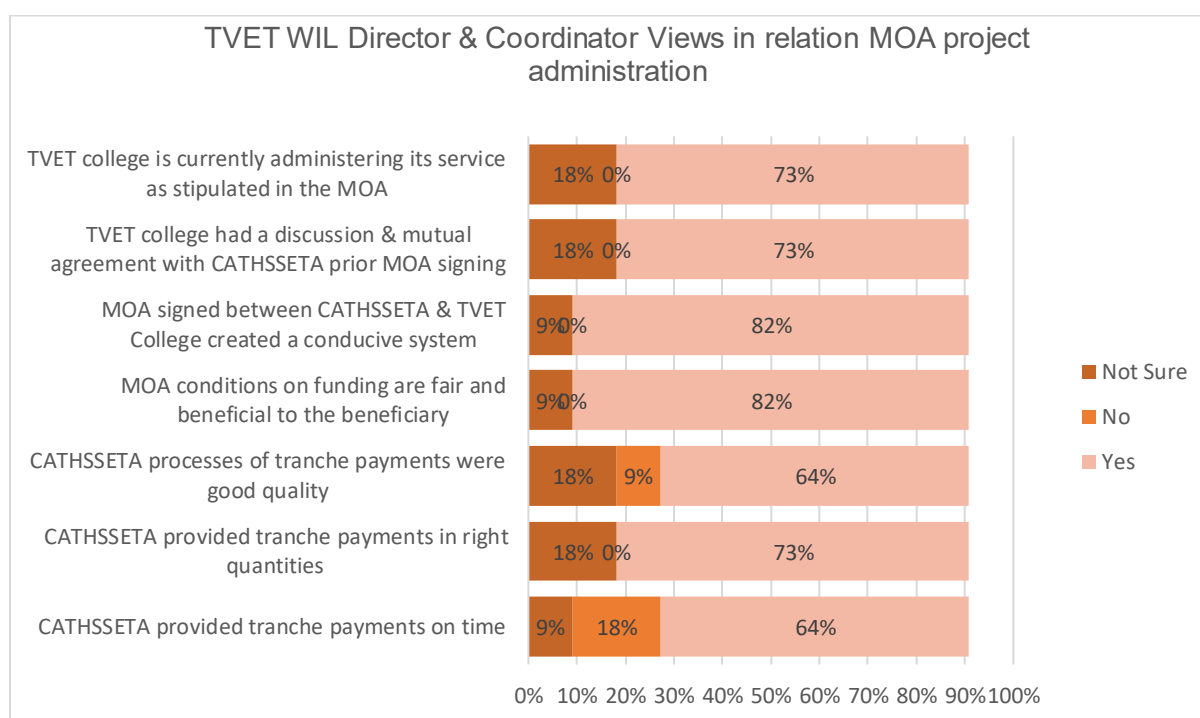
When respondents were asked how they found out about CATHSSETA's funding opportunities, the responses indicated that TVET Colleges rely heavily on digital channels, such as CATHSSETA's website, email communications, and social media platforms to stay informed about available funding opportunities. Additionally, traditional channels like newspaper advertisements and SETA forums also play a role.

Some colleges also mentioned receiving direct communication from CATHSSETA when funding becomes available or being notified through third-party organisations or informal networks.

Below is a list of channels colleges use to source CATHSSETA funding opportunities:

- WhatsApp notifications;
- CATHSSETA website notifications;
- Email communications from CATHSSETA;
- Advertisements in national newspapers;
- Social media announcements from CATHSSETA;
- SETA forums and events;
- Expressions of Interest (EOI) or Adverts from CATHSSETA;
- Automatic reminders or alerts from CATHSSETA (ideally);
- Awareness campaigns or direct communication from CATHSSETA;
- Through third-party organizations like African Global;
- Word of mouth or informal channels; and
- Registering on CATHSSETA's mailing lists or information sheets.

Figure 46: MOA and project administration



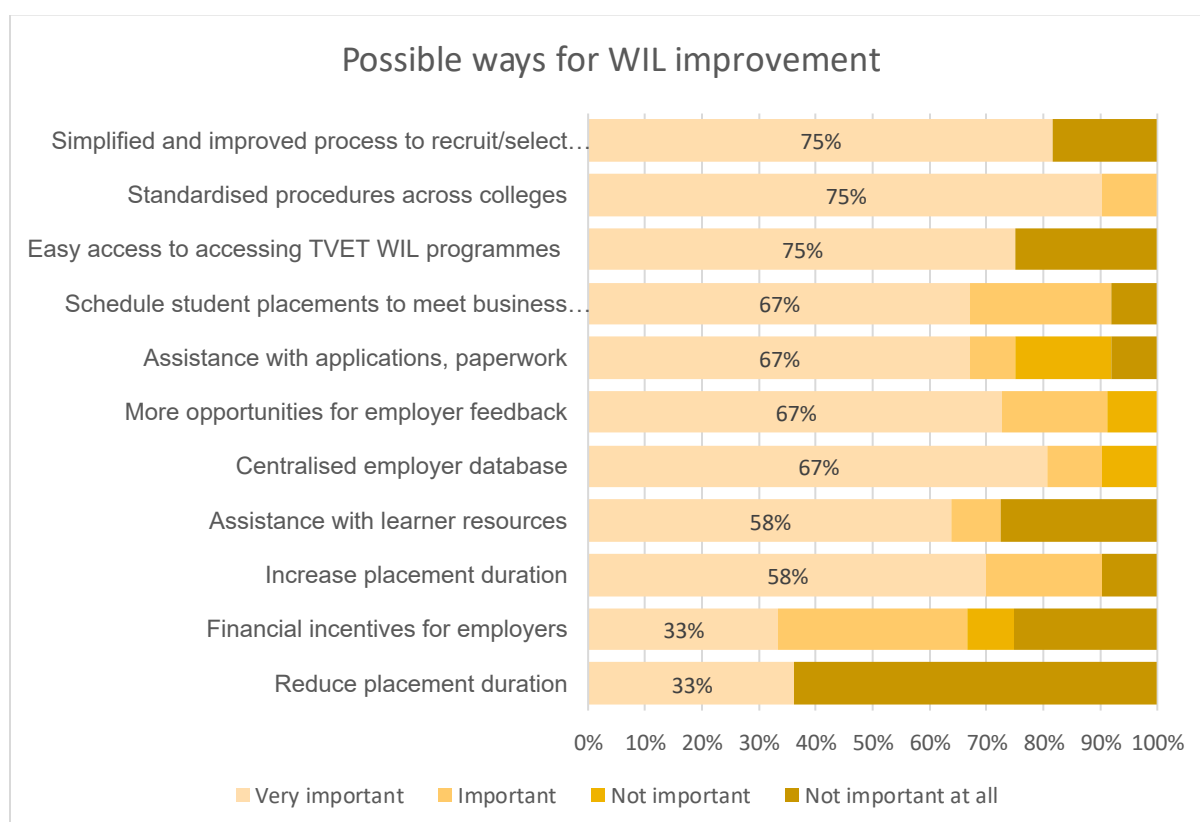
The TVET Colleges provided insightful ratings on various aspects of their engagements with CATHSSETA. An overwhelming majority of 82% affirmed that the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) entered into with CATHSSETA are fair and beneficial to the intended beneficiaries. Similarly, 82% of the colleges acknowledged that the MOUs signed between CATHSSETA and the TVET colleges created a conducive system, clearly delineating roles and responsibilities for different stakeholders. Regarding financial arrangements, 73% of the colleges reported that CATHSSETA's Tranche payments were released on time, while 64% considered the quantity of these payments to be appropriate. These positive ratings from the TVET Colleges underscore their overall satisfaction with the agreements and payment processes established with CATHSSETA. However, the slightly lower percentages for timely and appropriate payment quantities suggest potential areas for improvement. Nonetheless, the responses collectively indicate that CATHSSETA's processes are generally well-received by the TVET Colleges, fostering a collaborative and transparent environment for the effective implementation of their initiatives.

5. CHAPTER 5: LESSONS LEARNT, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Lessons Learnt

When asked to rate various factors that could improve the TVET WIL programme, the employer's responses revealed clear priorities. A resounding 75% deemed a simplified and improved process for recruiting and selecting students as "very important," underscoring the need for a streamlined and efficient process in securing suitable candidates. Similarly, 75% rated standardised procedures across colleges as "very important," highlighting the desire for consistent practices and uniformity in the programme's implementation. Ease of access to TVET WIL programmes was also considered "very important" by 75% of employers, reflecting the importance of removing barriers and facilitating seamless participation. However, when it came to reducing the placement period of the programme, one-third (33%) of employers viewed this as "not important at all," indicating a preference for maintaining the current duration of the workplace-based learning experience. Overall, the employers emphasized the significance of optimising administrative processes, establishing standardisation, and ensuring accessibility, while expressing mixed views on altering the programme's length.

Figure 47: Possible ways for WIL improvement



TVET College Directors were asked how they select employers to host learners. Below are the responses:

- **Alignment with qualification requirements:** The employers are selected based on their alignment with the specific requirements of the qualification being pursued by the learners. For instance, for hospitality-related qualifications, employers with active hospitality operations would be sourced to ensure a relevant learning environment.
- **Geographic proximity:** The employers' locations are taken into consideration, with a preference for those situated in the vicinity of the learners. This is to minimize travel burdens and logistical challenges for the learners during their WIL placements.
- **Credibility:** The credibility and reputation of the potential host employers are evaluated to ensure a conducive and appropriate learning environment for the learners.
- **Availability of mentors:** The presence of experienced mentors within the employer's organisation is considered a crucial factor, as mentors play a vital role in guiding and supporting learners throughout their WIL experience.
- **Workplace approval:** Employers who have obtained the necessary approvals or certifications to host learners in their workplaces are given preference, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and industry standards.

The responses from the TVET College Directors highlight a holistic approach to selecting employers, considering factors such as industry relevance, logistical convenience, credibility, mentorship capabilities, and regulatory compliance. By considering these factors, the colleges aim to provide learners with optimal WIL placements that align with their qualifications, offer access to experienced mentors, and provide a credible and approved learning environment, while minimising logistical burdens.

Based on the feedback provided by the TVET colleges, it is evident that there are significant challenges related to the timing of CATHSSETA's funding allocation and the requirements for programme implementation. The following key issues were highlighted:

- **Inconvenient timing of funding allocation:** One TVET college reported declining CATHSSETA funding because the SETA required them to implement the programme during December, which coincided with the college's closure period when learners had already ceased campus activities.
- **Clash with industry peak seasons:** According to the college's experience, employers are often reluctant to host WIL learners during peak seasons or high business periods, citing concerns about the learner's inability to grasp operations in a fast-paced environment and the potential for mistakes.

- Inadequate time for programme implementation: The colleges expressed concerns that CATHSSETA does not allocate sufficient time for proper implementation of the WIL programme. They feel pressured to disregard their established processes, such as recruiting learners, sourcing relevant employers, signing Service Level Agreements (SLAs), and obtaining learner agreement signatures.
- Challenges with small businesses (SMMEs): When it comes to hosting learners, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) often refuse to leave their businesses to sign learner agreements within the short timeframes provided by CATHSSETA.
- These issues highlight the need for better coordination and alignment between CATHSSETA's funding allocation timelines and the operational realities faced by TVET colleges and industry partners. Colleges require adequate lead time to follow their established processes, accommodate industry peak seasons, and ensure a smooth implementation of the WIL programme without compromising the learning experience or overburdening employers, especially SMMEs.
- CATHSSETA should consider revising its funding allocation schedules and programme implementation requirements to align with the academic calendars of TVET colleges and the operational cycles of industry partners. By addressing these timing and logistical challenges, CATHSSETA can facilitate a more seamless and effective delivery of the WIL programme, benefiting both learners and participating employers.

5.2. Recommendations by population group

5.2.1. Recommendations by employers

Overall, the employer's suggestions highlighted the need for open communication channels, collaborative platforms, continuous monitoring and evaluation, and a shared understanding of goals and expectations to strengthen the relationship between TVET colleges and employers in the context of the WIL programme.

Table 11: Host Employer Recommendation

Recommendation	Recommendation discussion
Inclusive programme design	Employers suggested involving all stakeholders (colleges, employers, learners and SETAs) from the beginning of the programme to provide feedback and ensure alignment of expectations.
Logistical improvements	Recommendations included extending timeframes, providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to learners, and increasing learner stipends to improve their financial support.
Stakeholder collaboration	Establishing forums and platforms for stakeholder engagement, idea-sharing among employers, continuous review of programme outcomes, and increased funding from CATHSSETA were proposed.
Active involvement	Employers emphasised the need for their active involvement in the programme, as well as quarterly monitoring of learners to track progress effectively.
Placement facilitation	Suggestions included having dedicated personnel responsible for learner placement, upskilling mentors and educators, providing access to learner databases, and facilitating opportunities for learners to gain workplace experience.
Programme enhancement	Recommendations were made for lecturer development, exploring international exchange opportunities for the programme, increasing overall funding, and strengthening the alignment of the WIL programme across SETAs.

Communication and coordination	Employers highlighted the importance of improved communication channels, workshops for stakeholders, and SETA-coordinated forum meetings with host employers and TVET colleges to discuss progress and address challenges.
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The employers provided several recommendations to foster a stronger and more collaborative relationship with TVET colleges. Consistent monitoring of learners and their progress was highlighted as a key area for improvement. Establishing forums or platforms for employers to meet, exchange ideas, and potentially rotate learners was proposed as a means to facilitate knowledge-sharing and networking.

Table 12: Employer Recommendations Cont

Theme	Description of Theme
Stakeholder engagement	Continuous engagement and active communication between colleges and employers emerged as a recurring theme, with the need to understand industry needs and align expectations. Suggestions included assistance with learner placement, systems to track learner progress, and regular meetings (quarterly) to address issues and ensure active participation from all stakeholders.
	Attending events hosted by TVET colleges was also recommended to strengthen relationships and foster collaboration. Employers emphasised the importance of identifying problems, implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and maintaining constant follow-up to address any challenges.
Learner behaviour	Additionally, employers stressed the need for colleges to provide well-behaved and disciplined learners, and to establish a common understanding of the "why" behind the WIL programme. Conducting more workshops on

completing logbooks was also proposed to enhance the learners' preparedness and ensure alignment with industry practices.

Overall, the programmes recommendations focused on fostering inclusive programme design, enhancing logistical support, promoting stakeholder collaboration, facilitating active involvement, streamlining placement processes, exploring programme enhancements, and strengthening communication and coordination among all stakeholders involved in the TVET WIL programme.

5.2.2. Recommendations by TVET College Directors

TVET College Directors have recommended streamlining finance processes within CATHSSETA, particularly regarding stipend provision, to alleviate delays. Additionally, they suggest incentivising employers to participate in the programme to enhance engagement and training opportunities for TVET learners. These recommendations aim to improve operational efficiency and increase participation, ultimately benefiting students and the broader industry.

Table 13: TVET College Director Recommendations

Challenge Encountered	Description of the Challenge	Mitigation Measure
Learner Drop-out rate	Due to learners falling pregnant during the programme	CATHSSETA to develop a policy on pregnancy to direct employers and TVET Colleges on how to handle this issue considering the programme requirements
	Delayed stipend payout by SETA	Create a centralised data system to streamline reporting and programme management perhaps through CIMS
	Shortage of funding allocation	CATHSSETA to align their stipend allocation to that of other SETA
	Variance in stipend allocation across the SETA's. Learners opt for higher stipend amounts	
Employer Engagement	Host employers are not aware of the programme or lack the resources to properly support WIL learners.	Incentivise employers to encourage them to partake in the programme. Create an awareness campaign of the programme to increase interest around the programme

Student Suitability	Some students lack industry knowledge, and passion, or are enrolled in the programme for the wrong reasons (double-dipping).	No recommendation here? A system to avoid double dipping? An APP of some sort??-
Financial Strain	Low stipend allocation does not cover the learner's travel costs.	CATHSSETA should consider increasing the stipend amount in line with industry best practice
	TVET College has to carry the financial burden of the programme due to delayed payment of invoices	Reducing the frequency of submitting invoices suggests 2 submissions for the NCV programme and 4 submissions for the NATED programme.
Programme Issues	The reporting system is inconvenient (mentioned as requiring reports every 3 months).	
	The attendance register template confuses the learners (too many months on the template and not enough space for them to complete the register	Revise the attendance register template
	The SETA fails to provide sufficient notice to employers regarding Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) visits. Host employers are reluctant to halt operations for SETA site visits.	Provide reasonable notice when conducting site visits. To ensure that the logistics of gathering learners and host employers is catered for. Alternatively work on a schedule for site visits at the beginning of the WIL programme.
	CATHSSETA allocates funding in December which is a peak season for the Hospitality and Travel and Tourism sub-sector. Employers are not willing to partake in the programme during this time. Learners are also not available during this time, as they would have travelled back to their homestead.	Revise funding allocation period. Suggest that TVET WIL is allocated during the first and second quarter of the financial year (i.e) April to August. In addition, the SETA to send automated DG adverts for TVET Colleges not to miss open windows.

	Inconsistency in how the programme is implemented by CATHSSETA, i.e allocating the admin cost and at times not allocating the fund	Standardise the programme and workshop the requirements amongst all stakeholders. Suggest that CATHSSETA benchmarks its programme against other SETA to help in standardising its processes. i.e CATHSSETA's Learner Agreement is longer than most SETA's while other SETA's have a three-pager agreement and yet the same contract is submitted to the same entity (DHET).
Skills Mismatches	A mismatch exists between the skills supplied by TVET Colleges and the skills demands required by employers	CATHSSETA to develop relevant qualifications in line with QCTO requirements and collaboration with industry experts.
Learner exploitation	Exploitation of learners in the workplace (contributes to drop-outs). Employers use learners as labourers and do not rotate them	Ensure clear communication between all stakeholders (employers, colleges, learners) about programme expectations and responsibilities

The TVET College Directors highlighted the below strengths as part of the programme.

Table 14: TVET College description of strengths

Strength	Description of the strength
Implementation as Planned	The programme has been implemented according to the outlined objectives.

Expanded Partnerships	In the 2016/17 fiscal year, the programme expanded partnerships within the hospitality sub-sector e.g China WIL programme
Sense of Employability	The programme has created a sense of employability among participants. Learners are absorbed into the workforce permanently after completing the programme
Good Relations with CATHSSETA	There are well-established and positive relations with CATHSSETA, supported majorly by the regional offices
Increased Throughput and Enrolment	There has been an observed increase in throughput and enrolment rates yearly
Family Benefits	Families of learners also benefit from the programme

5.3. Summary of Discussion of findings

This section of the report focuses on evaluating whether the study has effectively addressed the research questions posed at the beginning and achieved its intended objectives. It revisits each research objective and associated research question individually to assess their fulfilment based on the study's findings. Additionally, the section includes discussions based on the recommendations derived from the study's findings. Finally, the research report concludes with a summary of the key findings and conclusions drawn from the study.

Research objective one (1) sought to determine the programme relevance, the extent to which the programme is aligned with curriculum outcomes. The study found strong evidence that the TVET WIL programme is achieving its desired outcomes. Learners reported that they are gaining valuable job-related skills and employers see graduates with the necessary competencies for their workplaces. This suggests a strong alignment between the programme and the curriculum goals.



Research Objective two (2) aimed to assess the effectiveness of the TVET WIL programme, and the study's findings paint a picture of overall satisfaction among participants. According to survey results, learners expressed high levels of contentment across various aspects of the programme. A majority of the learners felt adequately supported by their mentors, fostering a conducive learning environment and satisfied with the programme overall. Furthermore, employer's feedback indicated a positive impact on employment outcomes, with a majority confirming the hiring of TVET WIL students following programme completion. These findings underscore the effectiveness of the WIL programme in meeting the needs of both learners and employers, highlighting its role in facilitating successful transitions into the workforce.



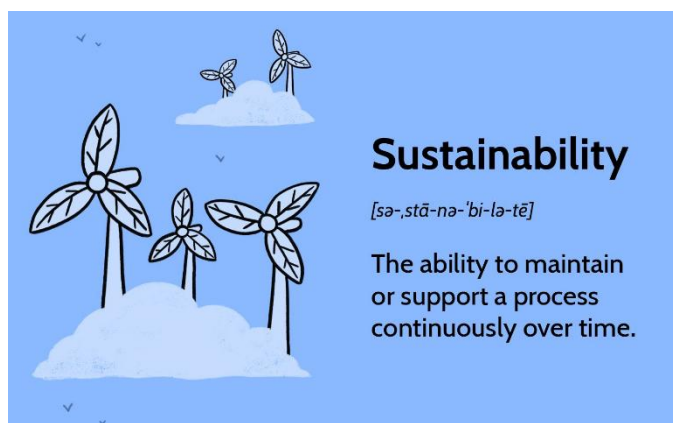
Research Objective three (3) aimed to identify the programme successes encountered within the TVET WIL programme. Learners participating in the programme highly appreciate its offerings, which include invaluable work experience, financial support, skill enhancement, and improved employment prospects. Practical exposure and financial assistance emerged as significant successes, enabling students to advance their education and careers effectively.

Furthermore, TVET Colleges provided insightful feedback on their collaborations with CATHSSETA. An overwhelming majority of colleges expressed satisfaction with the fairness and advantages of the MOUs established with CATHSSETA. With regards to finance, the colleges reported that CATHSSETA's Tranche payments were somewhat paid on time. However, a major challenge highlighted by the TVET Colleges was that of the funding allocation time, which affects or at times prevents the TVET College from implementing the TVET WIL programme.



Research Objective four (4) focused on assessing the sustainability of the programme. An overwhelming majority of learners expressed their willingness to recommend the programme to others, indicating a positive perception of its value and effectiveness.

Moreover, when queried about existing partnerships with Host Employers, all 11 TVET College directors affirmed their proactive approach to securing placements for learners. They confirmed the establishment of partnerships with Host Employers to ensure a readily available pool for learner placements. Additionally, all host employers expressed their willingness to continue hosting TVET learners in the future, indicating ongoing support and commitment to the sustainability of the programme.



5.4. Recommendations

Based on the recommendations provided by the various stakeholders (learners, host employers, and TVET colleges) in the CATHSSETA TVET WIL study, here are some key recommendations that can be included in the report:

1. The study identified that the primary programmes implemented by TVET Colleges predominantly revolve around Hospitality and Travel and Tourism sectors. However, respondents have cautioned that this concentration may lead to market saturation. Therefore, there is a need for the SETA to advocate for diversification, encouraging both employers and TVET Colleges to explore opportunities in other sub-sectors. This approach aims to ensure a more balanced and sustainable distribution of resources and opportunities within the TVET sector;
2. Respondents highlighted a significant challenge faced by TVET Colleges regarding learners falling pregnant during the programme. To address this issue, they emphasized the necessity for the SETA to develop a pregnancy policy. This policy would provide guidance for implementing the programme, particularly concerning the prescribed time allocations for the NATED programme. Additionally, respondents noted concerns about the employer's ability to accommodate a learner who becomes pregnant after other learners have completed the programme. Moreover, the policy would need to consider the legal constraints against discrimination. Therefore, the development of a pregnancy policy by the SETA is seen as crucial to effectively manage this challenge while ensuring fairness and compliance with legislation;
3. The respondents strongly advocated for the creation of a CATHSSETA TVET College Forum. Some TVET colleges, particularly those situated in rural areas, voiced concerns about occasionally missing out on vital information released by the SETA, such as notifications about open Discretionary Grant windows. Consequently, they urged the SETA to establish a dedicated forum for TVET colleges. This platform would serve as a space for colleges to engage in discussions on best practices and ensure real-time dissemination of information released by the SETA. The aim is to ensure that all TVET colleges are kept informed and updated with the latest information from the SETA, fostering collaboration and alignment with SETA initiatives and opportunities;

4. The respondents voiced concerns about the provision of opportunities for learners from rural areas. They highlighted the disadvantage faced by rural-based learners who often have to travel outside their localities to access host employers, unlike their urban counterparts. This discrepancy exacerbates the financial burden on rural learners, particularly considering that the allocated R3500 is insufficient to cover their expenses. Consequently, the respondents strongly urged for the implementation of a rural allowance to address these disparities and provide financial support to rural learners;
5. The respondents indicated a significant challenge in the programme related to the requirement for signing learner agreements by learners, host employers, and TVET colleges. They explained that host employers and learners are often scattered across the province, making it difficult to convene them in the same location to sign the agreements. This logistical issue becomes especially problematic for learners, as the agreements are typically signed at the start of the programme when they lack the funds to travel. Additionally, many host employers which are SMMEs are reluctant to leave their businesses to travel long distances to the TVET college for agreement signings. Respondents requested that CATHSSETA make a provision that allows learner agreements to be signed online to mitigate this challenge;
6. The respondents emphasised the need for incentivizing employers to encourage their participation in the programme. They suggested that providing incentives would motivate host employers to open up their workplaces and share industry knowledge with learners.
7. The respondents advocated for an increase in the duration of the NCV programme to 18 months. They argued that since minimum employment requirements often demand 12 months or more of experience, extending the programme duration would provide learners with a competitive edge in securing employment after completion. Consequently, stakeholders have urged CATHSSETA to consider extending the NCV programme beyond the standard 12-month duration to better align with industry demands and enhance learners' employment prospects.
8. In relation to monitoring site visits, respondents emphasized the need for stakeholders to receive a month's notice prior to these visits. They underscored similar concerns raised regarding the signing of learner agreements. Consequently, they urged the SETA to provide sufficient time for preparation, emphasizing that site visits should not

aim to catch stakeholders unaware but rather be perceived as an opportunity to improve the programme for the benefit of the learners.

9. The TVET Colleges are urging the SETA to reconsider the implementation timeline to better align with business operations. Specifically, they recommend revising the timeframe for implementing TVET Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes to run from April to August. During this period, host employers are typically less busy and more willing to dedicate time to providing experiential learning opportunities to TVET learners. However, the current practice of CATHSSETA tends to allocate large numbers in the third quarter of the financial year, which coincides with December, a peak season in CATHSSETA sub-sectors. Additionally, respondents noted that CATHSSETA does not allocate sufficient time to implementing agents for proper programme implementation. This leads to demands from CATHSSETA for TVET Colleges to place learners within a short timeframe, causing the colleges to infringe on their processes to meet CATHSSETA's demands.
10. Furthermore, the SETA benchmarking exercise conducted in this study revealed that CATHSSETA, among other SETAs, still pays a stipend of R3500 to learners enrolled in the programme. Additionally, Labour Minister T.W. Nxesi announced a new National Minimum Wage determination, increasing it from R25.42 to R27.58 per hour worked, effective from 01 March 2024. When this new minimum wage is calculated based on five working days, an eight-hour shift, and four working weeks, the total amounts to R4412.80. Consequently, the stipend allocated by CATHSSETA, which remains at R3500, falls below the newly established minimum wage. The SETA therefore needs to consider increasing the stipend allocation in the programme.
11. The respondents also advocated for the implementation of a nationwide tracking system to prevent learners from double dipping. Employers highlighted this as a significant challenge, as it prevents other learners from benefiting from the programme. Many learners tend to move between different programmes and across various SETAs, creating inefficiencies and hindering the fair distribution of opportunities.
12. Finally, the survey findings revealed that most learners are unaware that CATHSSETA is the funder of the programme in which they are enrolled. Host employers and TVET Colleges echoed this sentiment, indicating that CATHSSETA is not actively involved in the monitoring of the programme. They expressed a desire to see the SETA's presence

on the ground, allowing partners to interact with the funders and gain knowledge about the opportunities provided by the SETA. This visibility would validate the programme and enhance awareness among other employers regarding the opportunities facilitated by CATHSSETA.

5.5. Conclusion:

In conclusion, CATHSSETA plays a critical role in aligning its interventions with the goals outlined in the NSDP 2030. The NSDP 2030 places significant emphasis on TVET colleges as pivotal institutions for addressing critical skills shortages and achieving sustainable economic growth. Through various outcomes outlined in the NSDP, such as identifying high-demand occupations, linking education with the workplace, increasing access to occupationally directed programmes, and supporting the growth of public colleges, CATHSSETA aims to enhance the TVET sector's responsiveness and effectiveness.

Throughout the study, several research objectives and questions were addressed to evaluate the TVET WIL programme's effectiveness and sustainability. Firstly, the study examined the programme's relevance by assessing its alignment with desired curriculum outcomes. Secondly, it evaluated the programme's effectiveness in meeting its set goals and objectives over a five-year period. Furthermore, the study identified both the successes and challenges encountered in the implementation of the programme, shedding light on factors contributing to its effectiveness and areas requiring improvement. Lastly, the study aimed to determine the programme's sustainability by assessing the level of commitment from all stakeholders involved.

Overall, the findings from this study underscore the importance of continuously evaluating and improving the TVET WIL programme to ensure its alignment with national skills development goals and its ability to address the evolving needs of learners and industry sectors. Moving forward, it is imperative for CATHSSETA and other stakeholders to remain dedicated to enhancing the programme's effectiveness and sustainability to contribute effectively towards South Africa's economic growth, employment creation, and social development goals outlined in the NSDP 2030.

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