



RESEARCH DIVISION REPORT

TVET curriculum alignment to Finance and Accounting Services Sector skills needs

Fasset Research Department

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1. Introduction and Background overview

1.1. Introduction

This research report aims to develop an in-depth understanding of alignment of the Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) curriculum to the Finance and Accounting Services (FAS) Sector. A detailed and in-depth review of the TVET Business Studies curriculum has been undertaken and the research report produced. This research is important for two reasons:

- The ultimate purpose of the study was to determine if the TVET college Business Studies curriculum is aligned to the skills needs in the Finance and Accounting Services (FAS) Sector. It is important, therefore, as it will assist the FAS Sector to identify TVET skills that work for the sector.
- Secondly, this research is important as it will outline the weaknesses and strengths of the TVET college in producing skills needed for the FAS Sector.

This research does not aim nor is it mandated to address short term operational issues that the TVET college sector is experiencing. Neither is it interested in only focusing on long-term and theoretical matters of mostly academic interest. This research is very much located at the meso or mid-level and has as its motivation on the systemic improvement and capacity development of Fasset skills development support for the TVET college Business Studies curriculum in particular, and the PSET system more broadly.

1.2. Background of the study

The technical and vocational schools started mainly in Germany and the Netherlands in the early 1900s.¹ In the South African context, vocational education colleges have a long history that also drew from the German system of vocational education and training. The TVET college system in its entirety was created predominantly for mining, craft, and other engineering-related occupations in South Africa. In terms of German TVET dual system, the support for vocational education and training aims to develop practice oriented TVET systems, in line with the needs of the labour market. The German system is based on the principle of close corporation between the state and the private sector, on the job training, societal acceptance of standards, training of vocational teachers and instructors and institutionalised research

¹ Kraak, A., (2016). Three decades of restructuring in Further Education Colleges: divergent outcomes across different global VET systems. In Kraak, A, Peterson, A and Boka K, [eds] (2016). *Change Management in TVET colleges: Lessons learnt from the field of practice*. JET Education Services, Johannesburg

and career guidance. The German TVET system, being a dual system means that they almost concurrently spend time at work and in training. Predominantly the training on itself is largely learning by doing. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in South Africa has been significantly reformed.² According to the Department of Higher Education and Training Statistics Report on the PSET system, in 2018 there were 50 public TVET colleges with 253 registered campuses for delivery of qualifications and part-qualifications and other programmes. Increasing demand for access to higher education has persisted over the years. It became evident during the #Fees Must Fall campaign that the government can no longer ignore this problem. It has been DHET's strategic objective that the public TVET colleges sector is for increasing access to and improve success into higher education by improving access to programmes that lead to intermediate and high-level learning.

Some of the outcomes of the 2009 democratic elections saw the restructuring of the then Department of Education into two distinct Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training. Consequently, the mandate of the new DHET included the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Community Education and Training sectors, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), universities and private higher education institutions offering qualifications from NQF level 5 and above.³ In 2013 the DHET published the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (WP-PSET) system, which captured the expanded sector and the desired integration between sub-sectors. This shift in policy had funding implications for the PSET sector, and at the time of publishing the WP-PSET system, there was no costing done to give effect to the implementation of the policy. Additionally, the per capita funding allocated to universities had been declining in real terms, thereby deepening the funding crisis and leading to an increase in student fees.

It is evident in many liberal economies from which our higher education system (including TVET system) was copied, that, the TVET system occupational destinations are very weak. This is contrary to the idea through which the assumed roles of vocational education were invented which is training people for employment (see more in chapter 2, section 2.3). The perception of TVET colleges is that they are for children who have not performed well in school. And therefore, they are not generally attractive to most students and more importantly parents. By far, general education has a large claim, regardless of the

² Wedekind, V., (2010). Chaos or Coherence? Further Education and Training College Governance in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Research in Comparative and International Education*. Vol.5(3), pp.

³ The Presidency (2016). *Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training*. Pretoria

prevailing evidence that vocational education and training is often the right vehicle for providing skills to those who would otherwise lack qualifications and ensuring their smooth transition into the labour market.

The lack of marketing of trades and artisan roles by the country as viable and opportunities for employment and indeed business ventures add to this negative perception of TVET institutions. The impression of many about TVET colleges is that they are institutions where children with less attractive academic performances from high school are expected to go. This view usually works to the detriment of vocationally oriented training and vocational education, because, in the opinion of many parents and learners, the apartheid legacy has stigmatised these types of education as 'poorer'.

It is also evident that children who attend universities do not stay unemployed as long, compared to TVET students. These and other realities often keep policymakers on their toes grappling with a question of how they can align TVET college curriculum such that it is attractive to employers. This is often associated with the flexibility of students from University, that, they can get employment in other sectors other in the fields of their studies. But the transition from education and training to work is even stronger for University students who studied in more professional focused fields such as Engineering, Accounting, Finance, Law, Actuarial Science to name a few. But for those who studied more generic programmes such as Humanities, transition pathways from education to employment are often weak.

The #Fees Must Fall Campaign brought to the fore many of the issues that were partially systemically ignored. These issues include amongst others, the fact that many children come from different backgrounds. Some children came from the most disadvantaged background. These realities often make it difficult for them to qualify for university education. For poor learners, Universities become a preserver of privilege, where the elites are further elevated to the highest point in society. This study intends to wildly investigate these patterns by focusing on the following objectives and questions:

Main Objectives:

- To investigate TVET curriculum alignment to FAS sector skills needs.
- To investigate perceptions of employers towards TVET college "graduates".

Study Questions:

- Is the TVET college curriculum aligned with FAS sector skills needs?
- What is FAS sector employers' perception of TVET college graduates?

1.3. Key findings of the study

- No specific weaknesses of the TVET college Business Studies curriculum were found, instead, it was the implementation of the curriculum that was indicated to be a problem (issues related to lecturer development and lack of capacity).
- Morale and calibre of the TVET graduates is weak and it often fails them particularly in accessing the labour market (this suggested the need to develop TVET colleges as centres of choice for students rather than a last resort after rejection by the University).
- TVET colleges and employer partnerships are not fully operational in many cases, and as a result, most of these institutions lack understanding and knowledge of what is happening in the world of work.
- There are very few roles that TVET college Business Studies students could be placed in, these includes Bookkeeping, Accounting Technicians and Debt Collectors to note the most critical mentioned during the interviews. It was also mentioned in the Focus Group interviews that there is no progression from these roles to some professional designation in the FAS Sector. This means that what the DHET often referred to as 'articulation' of qualification through work experience and further studies is not taking place for many students who start their careers as Bookkeepers, Accounting Technicians and Debt Collectors. Professional bodies indicated they are interested in playing a part to improve this.

This chapter provided an introduction and the background, it has in addition outlined the objectives and questions the study seeks to investigate. In the following chapter, we explore the literature on the TVET college concerning the South African context of TVET colleges.

2. Literature review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter interrogates literature on the development of TVET colleges worldwide and the South African context. The chapter focuses on developments in TVET college literature in particular. It shows the prevailing understanding of the role of vocational education and the popular perceptions about TVET colleges. The report draws predominantly from South African scholarly literature, the World Bank, renowned international scholars in the area of vocational education and training. The word vocational education and training is used to refer broadly to any forms of education and training institutions other than Universities of Technology and Universities, in particular, it refers to TVET in the context of South Africa. Notwithstanding the fact that there are many non-public vocational education and training institutions in South Africa, in this study, we particularly focused on the public TVET colleges.

2.2. Background into TVET College Business Studies Curriculum

South Africa has 50 colleges and about 250 campuses across the country. The minimum entry requirement for programmes in the TVET college is Matric or Equivalent for both the Business Studies programmes and Engineering N3. This study will focus on Business Studies programme. In order to obtain a Nated National Certificate (Business Management), a student is required to take the following subjects: Introductory Accounting N4, Management Communication N4, Financial Accounting N4 and N5, Sales Management N5 and N6, Computer Practice N4, N5 and N6, Entrepreneurship and Business Management N4, N5 and N6.

In terms of the duration of the Nated National Certificate (Business Management), the programme is a full or part-time six (06) months programme at each of the Nated (N) levels. A student is issued with a certificate on the successful completion of each Nated (N) level of study, that is N4, 5 and 6. At the end of the N6, the student is required to attend in-service training which is 18 months long in order to obtain a National Diploma. A student cannot be a Diploma holder unless s/he has obtained work experience post the completion of N6. In terms of career opportunities students have after completing the Nated National Certificate (Business Management), include accessing careers in any of the sectors listed below: Finance Management, Marketing, Human Resources, Public Relations, Production and Office Administration. At present, there is a significant lack of evidence that suggests that many of the TVET

college students get absorbed in the private sector.⁴ What is even more worrying is the lack of empirical studies, in particular qualitative research that has studied these patterns.

2.3. The political economy of the TVET College system and reform

The technical and vocational schools started mainly in Germany and the Netherlands in the early 1900s.⁵ In the South African context, vocational education colleges have a long history that also drew from the German system of vocational education and training. The TVET college system in its entirety was created predominantly for mining, craft and other engineering-related occupations in South Africa. The increased demand for higher education forced the government to redesign the TVET system to attract other non-engineering programmes for example Commerce, Tourism and Auxiliary studies. Accelerating the closest link between TVET college system and industry has been advocated at both national and institutional levels, and across a wide range of activities from policy development to implementation; and from setting national standards based on occupational profiles to work placements as part of a training programme (Allais, 2013, 2020; Allais & Nathan, 2014; Wedekind, 2014).

The German dual system does have its merits. The German dual system offers youth without a university entrance diploma opportunity to learn a trade and to move quite smoothly into skilled work (Solga et al., 2014). The TVET dual system in German is highly embedded in the labour market structure, that is, occupation-specific skills are rewarded by employers and considered in collective bargaining processes. This means that it is embedded in labour market partnerships model, in which employers, professional organisations and trade unions as well government are fully involved. Despite the weaknesses of the system as alluded in Solga (2014, p. 27), the German dual TVET system is considered to be the best for its clear school to labour market transitions. This is unlike the case of South Africa, where there are no organised institutional structures (meaning: the partnership between employers, trade unions, training providers). As a result, the South African TVET system is considered weak and lacks clear education and training for the labour market transition.

⁴ Papier, J., Powell, L., MacBride, T., & Needham, S., (2017). Survey Analysis of the Pathways of Public TVET College Learners through NATED Programmes. LMPD, Pretoria

⁵ Kraak, A., (2016). Three decades of restructuring in Further Education Colleges: divergent outcomes across different global VET systems. In Kraak, A, Peterson, A and Boka K, [eds] (2016). *Change Management in TVET colleges: Lessons learnt from the field of practice*. JET Education Services, Johannesburg

The dual system is highly dependent on the economic well-being of firms, who must provide sufficient training places. In addition, the German dual TVET system can provide the economy with occupationally skilled labour for the industrial and service occupations. The level of institutional and normative prerequisites in the education system and the labour market is very high and has evolved over a long historical time period.

Another major challenge is posed by the quality of teaching. With lecturer training mainly taking place at universities, only a few lecturers combine pedagogical competencies with technical qualifications and industry experience. Ideally, these lecturers are role players in implementation and strengthening curriculum. How they are trained is assumed to have serious implication for teaching and practice in the TVET colleges. While the lecturers are not unit of analysis in this study but by their role in the implementation of pedagogy in the TVET college they play a significant role in the strengthening or weakening of the curriculum. According to Lolwana, the weak educator fundamental is a consequence of how educators are prepared to be professionals in order for them to build strong institutions (Lolwana & Oketch, 2017). The consequential result of all these problems is that the TVET system is not playing its meaningful role in bridging the transitions between schooling and work in most Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

2.4. Role of the Working Integrated Learning (WIL) program in TVET graduates' employment

In the recent Webinar organised by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), Ms Thulethu Nongauza-Njengele of Ikhala TVET College reiterated that, of most important matter in the development of TVET college “graduates” employment is vibrant Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programme.

Fasset has recently expanded its programmes to include WIL programmes for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) (Fasset, 2020a). The Chief Operating of Officer (COO) of Fasset Ms Elizabeth Thobejane recently mentioned the critical role of WIL to create opportunities for employment of youth., Ms Thobejane affirmed the fact that from Fasset programmes point of view, WIL is one programme that has been neglected over the years. While the committed number of WIL learners to be supported by Fasset remains very small (Fasset, 2020b), the undertaking is envisaged to act as a pilot model that should assist the SETA going forward in ways of improving the programme.

By and large, the Work Integrated Learning programmes form an integral part of the transition between education and training and work. Under very weak education and labour market transition paths (Allais, 2012, 2020; Allais et al., 2009; Allais & Nathan, 2014), WIL is supposed to be playing a strategic role in making transition bearable for learners (see Rambe, 2018).

In this chapter, we explored literature on vocational education and training with a particular focus on the South African Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). We particularly zoomed into the dominant literature in this phenomenon. In the next chapter, we focus on the methodology used in conducting this study. We are describing the manner and process through which this study was carried out.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The initial methodological step was to identify all learners who completed the learnership programme and those who did not complete the learnership programme. The aim is to determine the destination of all learners but with a specific interest in understanding the reasons why some learners drop out of learnership programme without having completed the programme. The assumption is that most learners who drop out of the learnership programme, do so because they have secured good jobs.

The study is a mixed methodology, in which both quantitative and qualitative data collection method was employed. The main data collection tool used was SurveyMonkey. This tool was used given its potential of sorting large data and advanced ways of collecting data in various forms for example chats, tables, diagrams. A survey was sent to companies through a link with which the respondents can click and get to survey questions that they can reply to. In a case where respondents were not managing to answer a survey on their own, the research team administered the survey through the telephone with the respondents. While it was anticipated initially, that, the survey will take up to 15 minutes.

This study is intended to investigate if the curriculum is aligned with sectoral skills needs. In essence, the study explores the suitability of TVET college curriculum to transition students from learning to work in the FAS Sector. The study is envisaged that it will assist Fasset, SETAs within the cluster of Finance, Accounting Banking, Insurance and ITC, Stakeholders and interested parties in the PSET system to grasp the perception of the employers about TVET colleges system alignment to Finance and Accounting Sector skills needs.

In this study, a quantitative self-administered and open-ended survey was used as a data collection tool to gather facts about employers' perceptions on the alignment and relevance of TVET programmes on the skills needs of the FAS sector. Consequently, the study utilised purposive sampling to collect data from selected companies that fall into the scope of Fasset sub-sectors. The open-ended focus group interviews were conducted to collect the data from professional bodies representative.

3.2. Sample selection and sample size

For the first part of datasets, we used random sampling to collect data from companies through an online survey. And for the second part, we used purposive sampling to select only the Professional bodies representatives to conduct Focus Group Interviews with them. For the survey, no specific sample size was pre-planned, the survey was sent to all the companies that we received their contacts through their Professional bodies' representatives. In addition, we took contact of companies in the FASSET database and emailed them to request their participation in the study.

I have called Professional bodies representatives as 'Professional body representative 1' and so forth to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Next to each direct quotation from Professional body representative, I have put labels of the person who contributed as 'Professional body representative 1' and so forth.

3.3. Data Collection

This section describes our data collection process from the initiation of the study and the actual collection of data.

This process included the following:

- 3.3.1. Make use of a quantitative (telephonic interviews and an online survey) research methodology- interviews were projected to last about 15 minutes or less per respondent.
- 3.3.2. The survey was 22 questions long and required responded to tick on the boxes to answer.
- 3.3.3. The Focus Group interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions to allow participants to fully share their knowledge and experiences.

Table 3.3: Summary of the two phases of the data collection for the study

Phase	Timeframe	Activities	Outcomes
1	September to November 2020	Electronic survey (Survey Monkey) was sent to the companies that Fasset has to direct contacts. Approximately +180 companies, from	This first phase helped in generating insight for the second phase questions and to surface the initial understanding of what perceived idea of the TVET college Business Studies curriculum and to FAS Sector skills its alignment to FAS Sector skills needs.

		<p>which only 47 companies replied to the survey.</p> <p>In addition, the invitation to participate in the survey was sent to professional bodies for distribution to their member companies.</p> <p>There were 2 questions for the whole of the survey and their duration to answer was 7-10 minutes.</p>	<p>By the end of the survey, 47 companies responded.</p>
2	November 2020	<p>An in-depth semi-structured focus group interview was conducted with Professional Bodies. This was a big Focus Group session which lasted between 45 to 69 minutes. There were only 4 sets of questions that were asked to the participants.</p>	<p>This was a phase in which the actual data we analysed in writing up this Report was collected. We focused specifically on the alignment of TVET college Business Studies curriculum alignment to FAS Sector skills needs.</p> <p>Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to give transcripts that formed the raw material for the data analysis stage.</p>

3.4. Research Instrument and survey procedure

The main research instrument employed for this study is the survey. For the convenience and keeping up with the emergent of technology, we used survey monkey which is a survey tool that could be self-

administered online. Upon completion of the survey by the participants, a group of other participants was selected to conduct an open-ended telephone interview to get nuanced experiences of learners and the reasons why they drop out of the learnership programme.

3.5. Data Analysis

This section deals with the data analysis process. The section explains the process has been undertaken to analyse data including coding and finding of data themes.

3.5.1. Coding process

This tracer study is twofold in terms of methodology, that, it included both quantitative and qualitative approach to data collection. The process of coding data is separated into, that is, we first converted questions to simplified descriptors for each table of information with exception of those which were already simplified from the onset, for example, the demographic related questions. This procedure was performed for survey data. In terms of interviews, we followed the phenomenography process, which is a qualitative research approach aimed at studying the variation of ways people experience, conceptualize, perceive, and understand phenomena in the world (Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2016). This methodological process has often been employed in studies that seek to study the experiences of students and lecturers' perceptions, experiences and so forth.

In terms of the coding process, the data was audio-recorded, drafted in the excel spreadsheet post the interviews. After drafting and referring to the tapes for verification, data was then assigned categories of description. In addition, themes across the different interviews were postulated, in some instances words or phrases were altered with most suitable phrases or descriptions and thereafter reviewed. The last process was the definition of the themes.

The phrase 'categories of description' is used here and in section 4.3 to represent the different meanings or ways of understanding of the TVET colleges Business Studies curriculum alignment to FAS Sector skills needs as experienced by Professional bodies representatives. The 'categories of description' are not in one-to-one relationships with respondents (see Ojo, 2016). In many instances, a respondent could have expressed more than one of them and the categories are made up of expressions from more than one respondent.

3.6. Data Analysis

The raw quantitative data sets for this study were online through SurveyMonkey as presented earlier in this chapter. And this was supplemented by qualitative Focus Group Interviews with Professional bodies. The process of data analysis from the transcription of the Focus Group Interviews audio was initiated and from it, the categories of description emerged. This process included data sorting phase using content analysis method. All this was conducted in house by Fasset Research team. This transcription of the audio files for both the Professional bodies Focus Group interviews occurred during November 2020. Once the transcription was completed, the key phase of analysis began.

The sorting of the data set was divided into two parts: first for the company survey, and then for the Professional bodies Focus Group interview. Only for one part that we developed codes that Focus Group interview with Professional bodies and we marked-up specific sections of the transcripts related to these codes. At the initial stage, these codes were 'meanings' we made of the selected quotations across the transcripts depicting the Professional bodies representatives understanding of the TVET college Business Studies alignment to FAS Sector skills needs. At this stage, there was an extensive iterative process of comparing each of the codes, subthemes, and the quotations to carefully make sense of each.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

This study involved human participants. Accordingly, general ethical considerations were made. In the SETA landscape, there is no Ethics Committee from which ethical approval for the research can be obtained. As a rule of thumb in research, we have made provision to ensure that this study adheres to acceptable ethical considerations. Part of this process was making the Proposal of the study available to participants and in addition, it was explained to them that their contribution to the study will be completely confidential and representatives from companies and Professional bodies will be treated anonymously. Members of the Professional bodies who participated in the study did so voluntarily without coercion or false intent from the SETA Research team. Voluntary consent from each of the interviewees was sought in a way that each participant understood and agreed to his or her participation without duress. Audio-recordings of the Focus group interviews are kept in a secure drive for safety and ensuring that they cannot be accessed by parties which could use them for wrong reasons.

The next chapter presents findings from both the survey and Focus Group Interviews.

4. Findings

4.1. Introduction

Document analysis finding from DHET PSET statistics report suggests an aggressive increase in TVET college enrolment.⁶ And that, the TVET college have repurposed themselves to meet the educational and economic needs of South Africa. The DHET PSET report however does not give a present position based on clear empirical evidence on employability and sectoral alignment of TVET skills to various sector skills needs.

As it will be shown later in the following sections, it seems however that there is a very clear new TVET reform which has emerged through the introduction of NCV programmes most of which cater for Business Studies (including Finance, Business Studies and Tourism Studies). The report shows that enrolment in TVET colleges reached 657 133 in 2018, which was 4.5% (30 895) lower compared with 2017. This number reflects a count of students enrolled in each enrolment cycle (there are six enrolment cycles at TVET colleges).

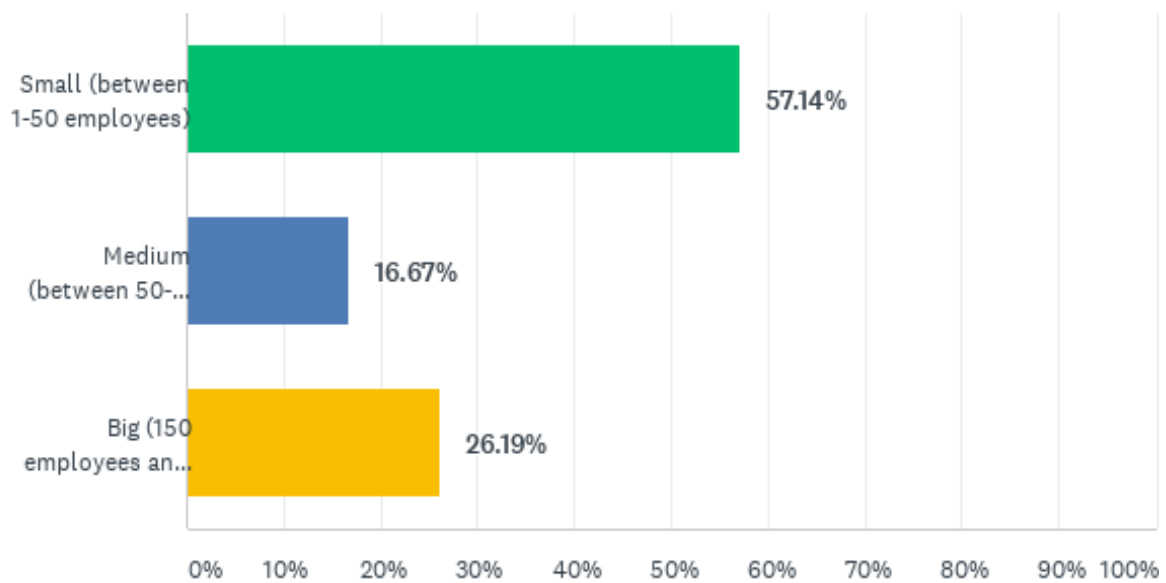
The NDP indicates that the headcount enrolment in TVET colleges should reach 2.5 million by 2030. The DHET PSET report further indicates that a total of 120 007 students completed N3, N6 and NC(V) Level 4 in TVET colleges in 2018, which are key exit levels in the sector. This translated to the following completion rates: 83.2% for N3, 87.1% for N6 and 53.9% for NC(V) Level 4.

4.2. Findings from the survey

In terms of the size of companies who participated in the study, as shown in figure 5.2A below of the 47 participating companies, 57% were small, 26% were large and 17% were medium sized.

⁶ DHET (2018). *Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa: 2018*. Department of Higher Education and Training, Pretoria

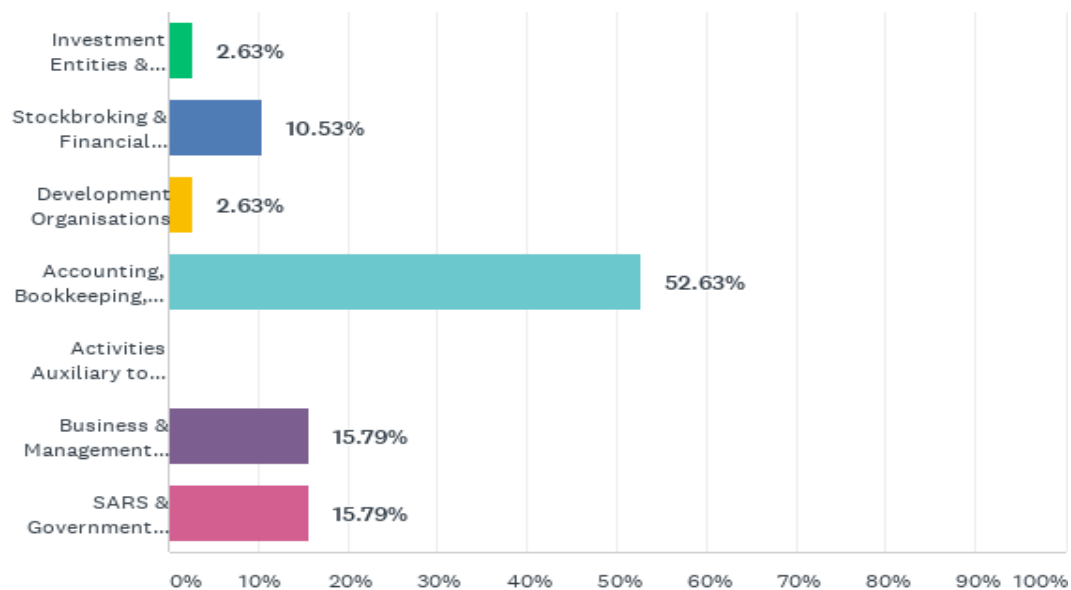
Figure 4.2A: Company size



It was found that participation by sub-sector was more concentrated in those companies that fall under Accounting, Bookkeeping, Auditing and Tax Services sub-sector. This may be due to the fact this sub-sector is the biggest in the whole of the FAS sector. Of the 47 companies participated in the study, only 38 completed this question. Shown in figure 5.2B, participation by sub-sectors was as follows:

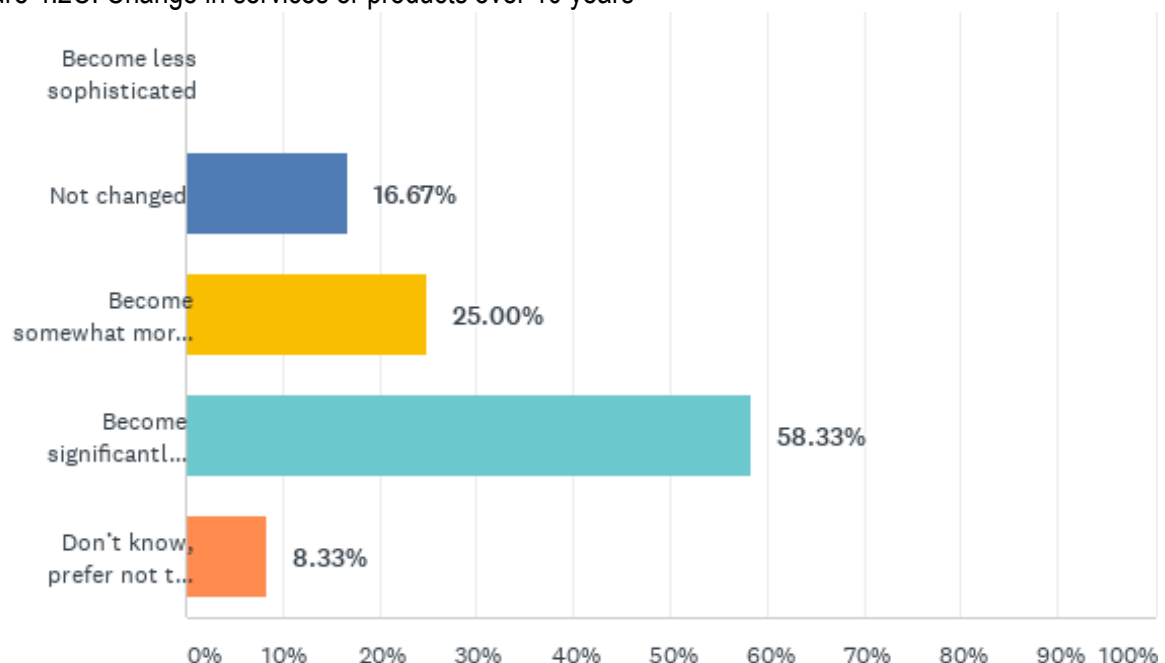
- Investment Entities and Trusts and Companies Secretary Services 2%
- Stockbroking and Financial Markets 11%
- Development Organisations 2%
- Accounting, Bookkeeping, Auditing and Tax Services 53%
- Activities Auxiliary to Financial Intermediation 0%
- Business and Management Consulting Services 16%
- SARS and Government Departments 16%

Figure 4.2B: Participation of companies by sub-sector



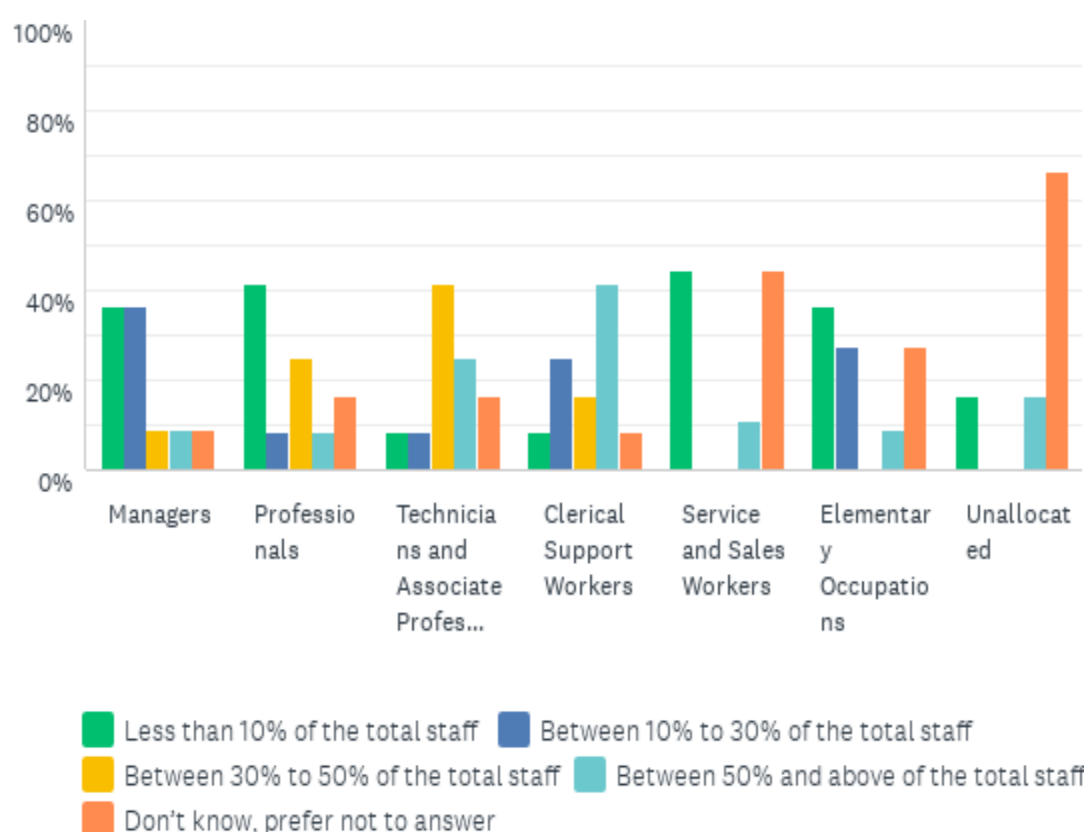
It is often assumed change in the composition of work is the main reason companies would change their skills sets composition. The study finds no significant change in terms of companies' service and products provision over the past ten years. Regarding the change in company services or products over the past ten years, it was found that for a significant majority of companies' services and products have become complex. For example, of 12 companies who replied to this question, 53% said services or products have become complex. The other 25% of companies said that.

Figure 4.2C: Change in services or products over 10 years



Participating companies were asked about the number of employees in broad for categories of employees (Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, Clerical Support Workers, Service and Sales Workers and Elementary Occupation). Of the 34 companies that answered this question indicated that less than 10% of staff are managers, professionals are between 30% -50%, technicians and associate professionals make more than 50% of the company staff,

Figure 4.2D: Employees categories



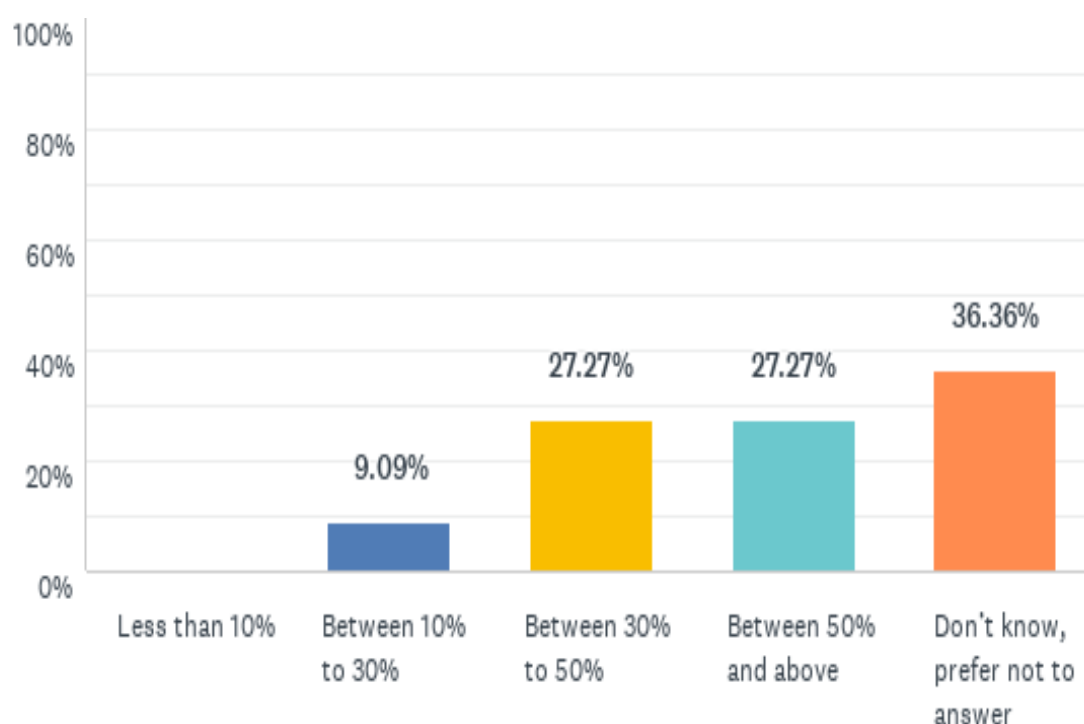
In terms of the share of the more sophisticated and complex services, it was found that (as shown in figure 5.2E) 9% of companies have between 10%-30% share, and 27% of companies have a share of between 30%-50% of sophisticated and complex services and 36% preferred not to answer this question.

The share of complex services or products is not significant, the greater need for more Higher Education candidates as oppose to TVET college graduates. It is often assumed the higher the share of complex services and products in the company would force companies to hire more highly educated candidates, in particular those at the category of University Degree as they often possess very complex knowledge and theoretical foundations (Howell & Wolff, 1992). But in the case of companies participated in this study, no reason was found that supports the concentration of these companies to higher education

(Degree level) candidates. The assumption made was that the nature of FAS Sector could be the main reason why the employers in this sector often have so little consideration of TVET college graduates for jobs. The FAS Sector is a highly professionalised sector and often regulated by global level standards and practices. For this reason, candidates in some instances are required to have higher Degrees as a minimum entry requirement to the profession.

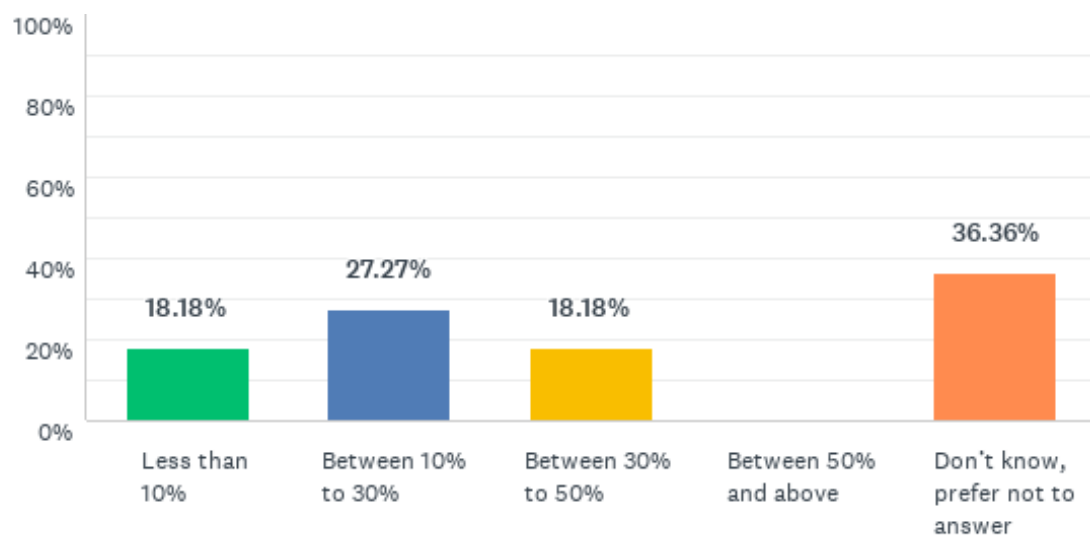
The service provider is assumed to have a close relationship with demand for certain categories of skills. But the study finds no significant change in complexity and sophistication of the FAS Sector and this factor could not hold water to suggest the reason why the intake of the TVET college graduates is very low in this sector.

Figure 4.2E: Share of complex services provision in total revenue



As shown in figure 5.2F, about 18.18% of companies indicated that the share of less complicated services was less than 10%, 27.7% companies indicated that the share of less sophisticated services was between 10% to 30%, 18.18% indicates that the share of less sophisticated services was between 30%-50% and 36.36% of companies did not know or preferred not to answer.

Figure 4.2F: Share of less sophisticated services



It was found that the introduction of more sophisticated and complex service provision has a serious implication for skills required in the sector (see below figure 5.2G). The findings demonstrated that the introduction of more sophisticated and complex services provision required significantly advanced workers' skills. About 55.45% companies indicated that introduction of more sophisticated and complex services provision required more advanced skilled workers, 36.36% indicated that this would require somewhat more advanced skilled workers, 9.09% indicated that this would not make any change, rather same workers' skills as before would be required and 18.18% said they did not sure and preferred not to answer.

Figure 4.2G: Introduction more sophisticated and complex service provision in the companies and requirement of certain skills

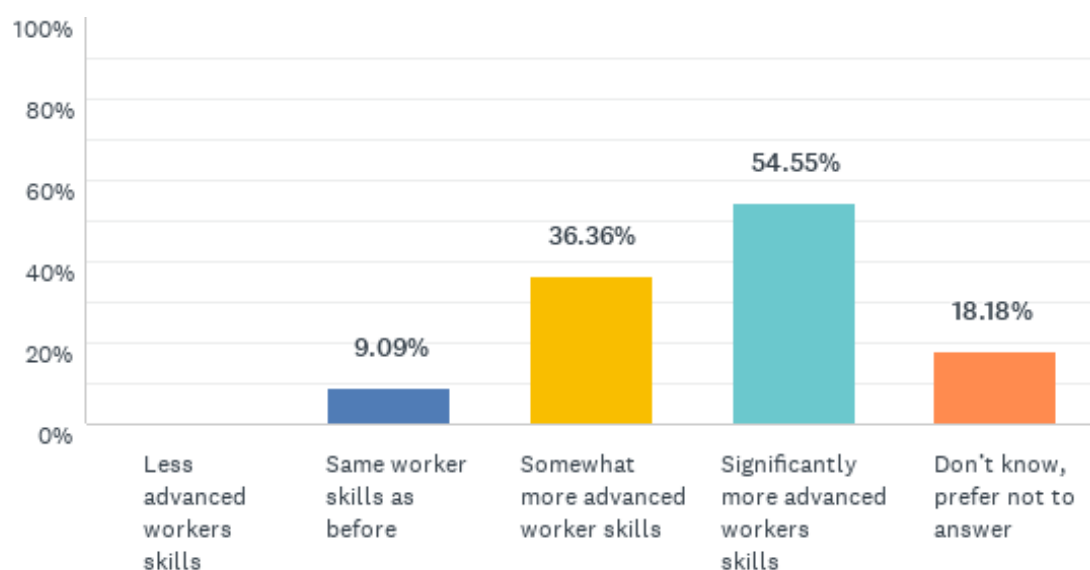
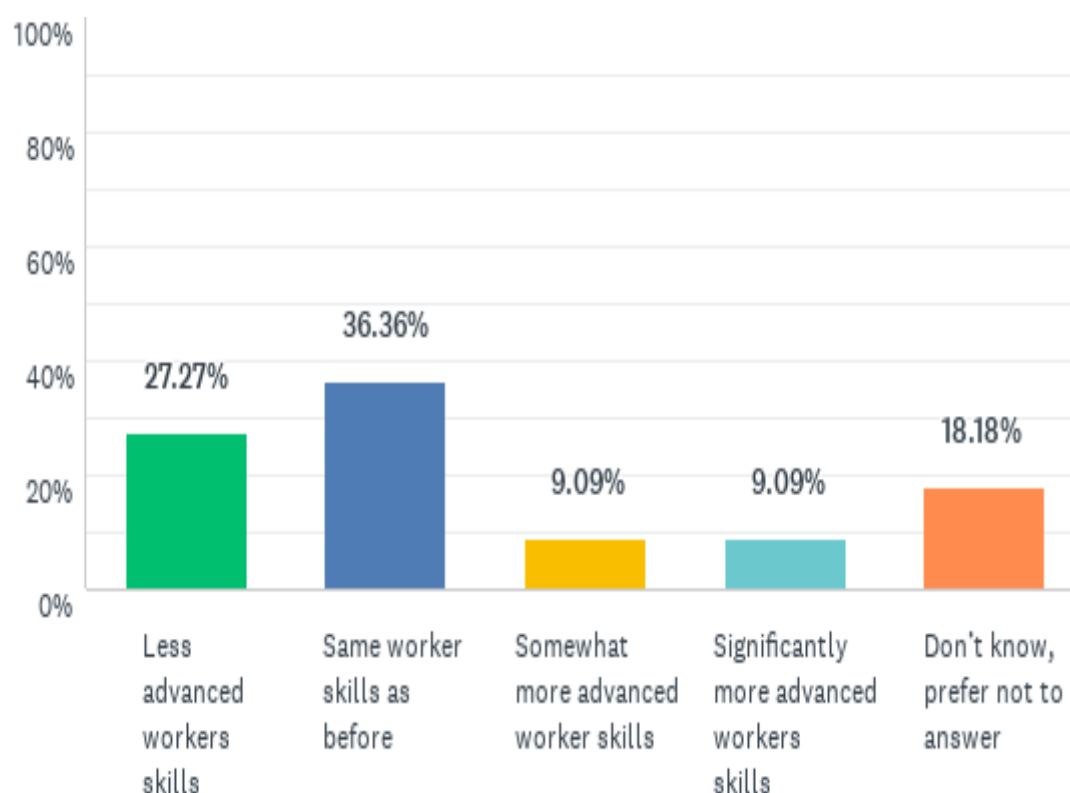


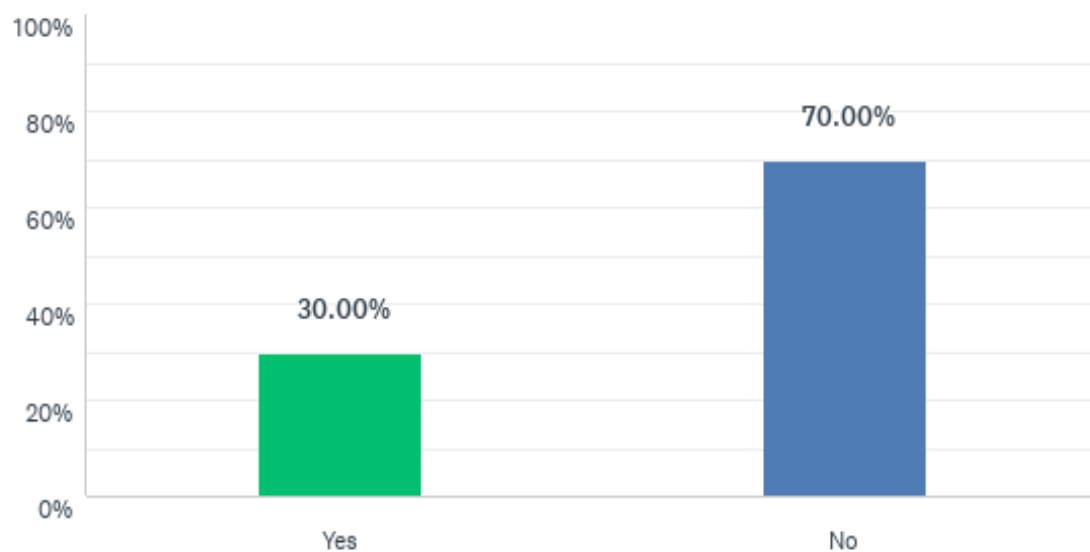
Figure 4.2H below shows that introduction of less complex services and products has a very limited impact on change in the composition of skills requirement. 27% of the participated companies said that introduction of less complex services or products would need less advanced workers, 36% said that they would require the same level of skills, 9% said that they would somewhat require more advanced skilled workers, other 9% said that they would require significant more advanced worker skills. and 18% either did not know or preferred not to answer.

Figure 4.2H: Introduction of less complex services and products



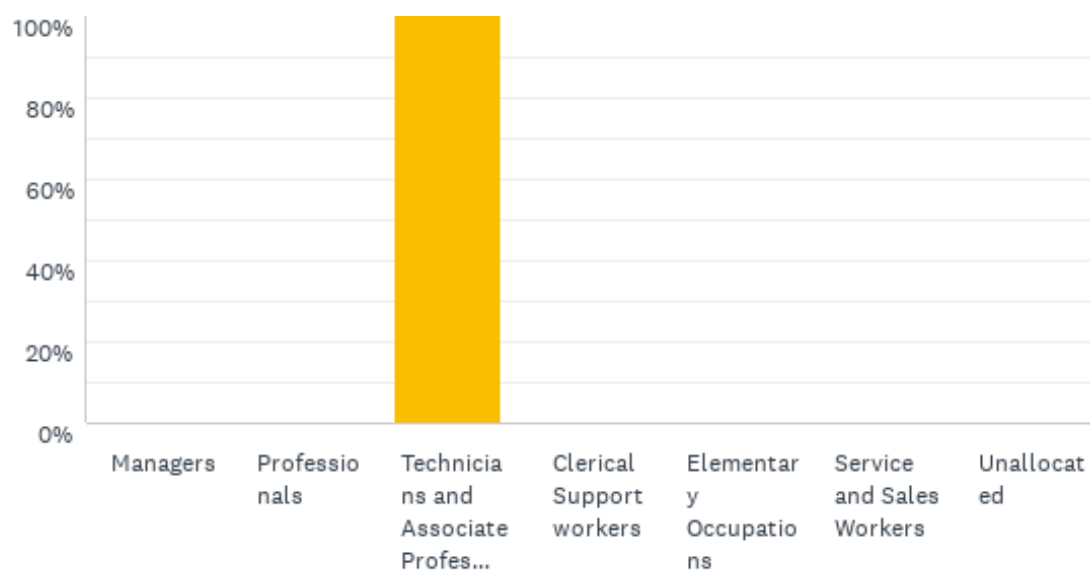
The majority (70%) of employers as shown in figure 4.2I indicated that TVET college qualifications were not meeting their companies' skills needs or requirement. Only 30% of companies indicated that TVET college qualifications were meeting their skills needs.

Figure 4.2I: Number of employees with TVET college qualification meeting company skills requirements



It was found that companies experienced difficulties in getting TVET college graduates for the position of Technicians and Associate Professionals (see figure 4.2J). Technicians and Associate Professionals in terms of the FAS Sector are linked to occupations such as Accounting Technicians, Debtor Collectors and others which are NQF level 5. It is an alarming finding that companies are finding it difficult to find employees at a level of Technicians and Associate Professionals with the TVET college qualification.

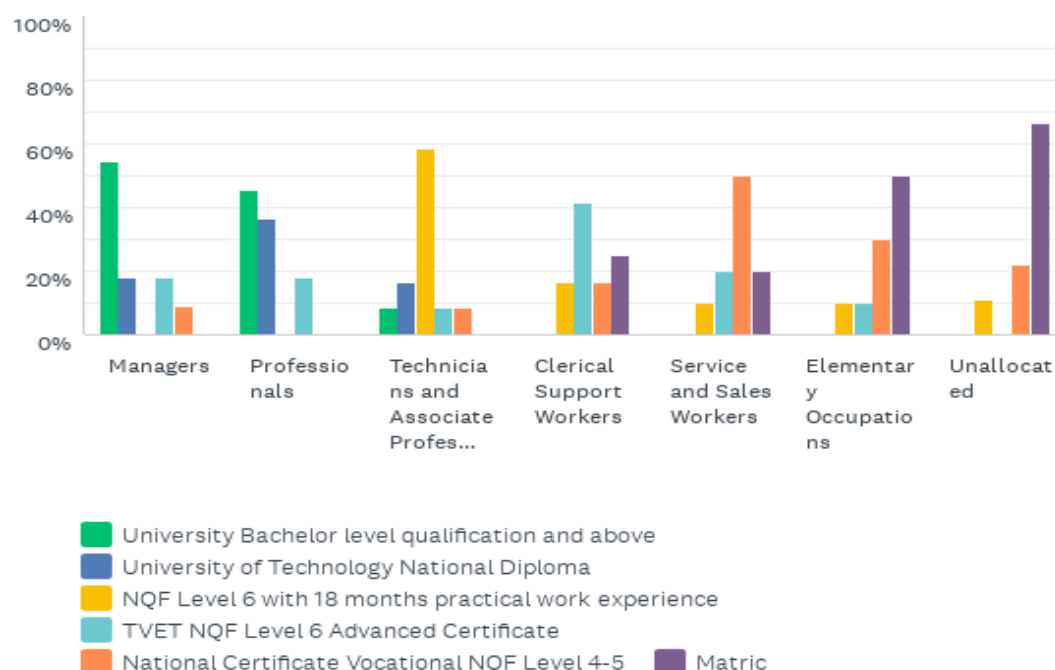
Figure 4.2J: Categories of employees that employers find it difficult to find TVET candidates



The data in figure 4.2K indicated the fact that at Managerial level, companies are more inclined to prefer University Degree as oppose to education levels below that. In terms of education levels required for six major categories of employees (Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, Clerical Support Workers, Service and Sales Workers and Elementary Occupations) shown in figure 4.2K below, it was found most organisations (about 58%) at managers level require a candidate to have a University bachelor's degree.

All other companies that required a manager to have a level of education below University Degree (i.e., University of Technology National Diploma, TVET college NQF level 6, NQF level 6 Advanced Certificate, National Certificate Vocational NQF level 4-5) they appeared to be far fewer compared to companies requiring University Degree for managers. We found that 18%, 18% and 6% of companies they respectively indicated that they require managers to have University of Technology National Diploma, TVET College NQF level 6 with 18 months practical experience and National Certificate Vocational NQF level 4-5.

Figure 4.2K: The 3 most frequent formal pre-employment education and training programmes required for the 6 major categories of employees



In figure 4.2L below companies were asked if the TVET college education and training catering for six major categories of employees have contributed to fulfilling their skills needs.

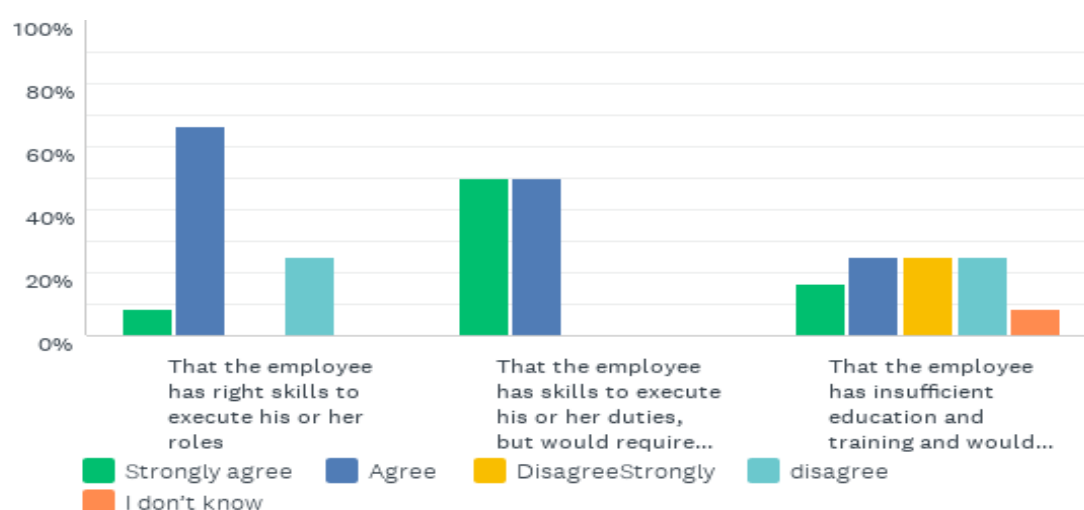
Employers' perception of the TVET college graduates is often an interesting indicator, but the evidence that gives nuanced reasons about the negative perception of employers towards these graduates is not yet clear from the literature. In this study, it was found (in figure 4.2M below) that:

Table B: Perception of employers towards TVET college graduates

Descriptions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Do not know
That the employee has the skills to execute his or her duties but would require further onsite training.	8%	67%	0%	25%	0%
That the employee has right skills to execute his or her roles	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
That the employee has insufficient education and training and would require reskilling in theory and practice	17%	25%	25%	25%	8%

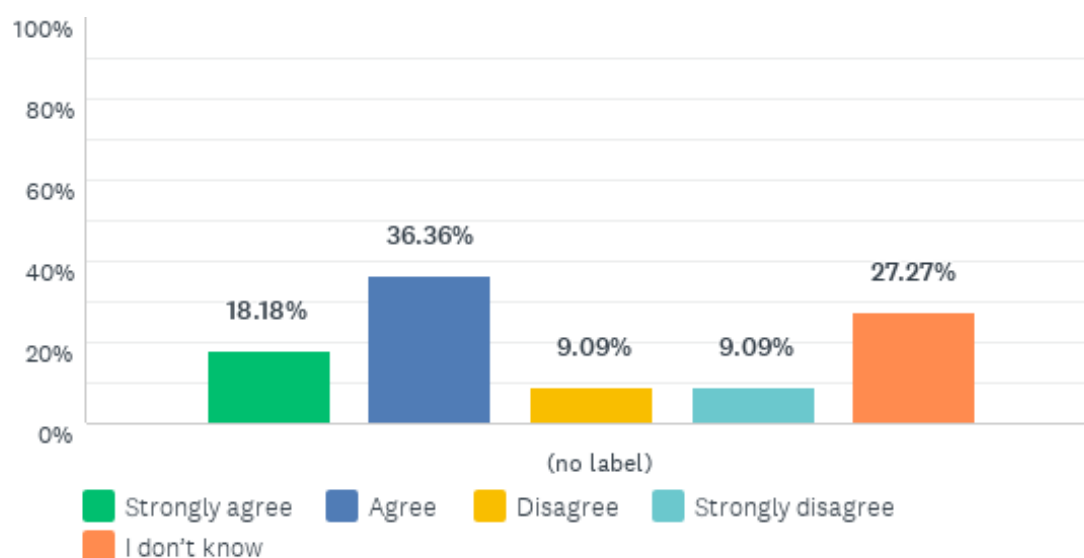
The above results suggest that the perception of the participated employers is that TVET college graduates have the right skills to execute their duties but could require further on the job training.

Figure 4.2L: What does a TVET college qualification tell you about a prospective employee's suitability?



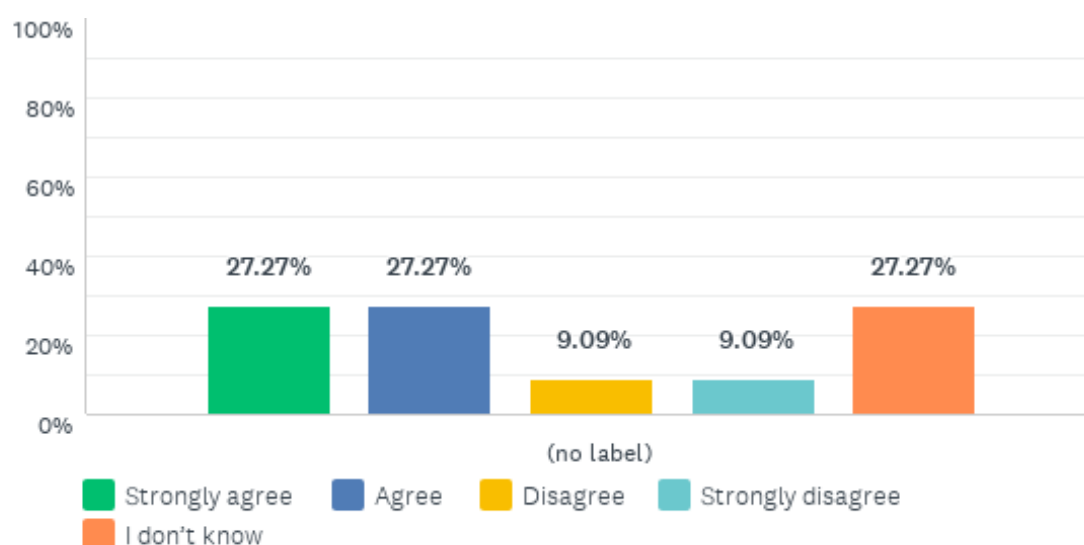
Further 4.2M intended to assess whether employees with TVET qualification can perform more diverse and complex tasks. About 18.18% of companies strongly agreed that employees with TVET qualification can perform diverse and complex tasks, 36.36% agreed, 9.09% disagree, 9.09% strongly disagree and 27.27% did not know.

Figure 4.2N: Are employees with TVET qualifications able to perform more diverse and complex tasks?



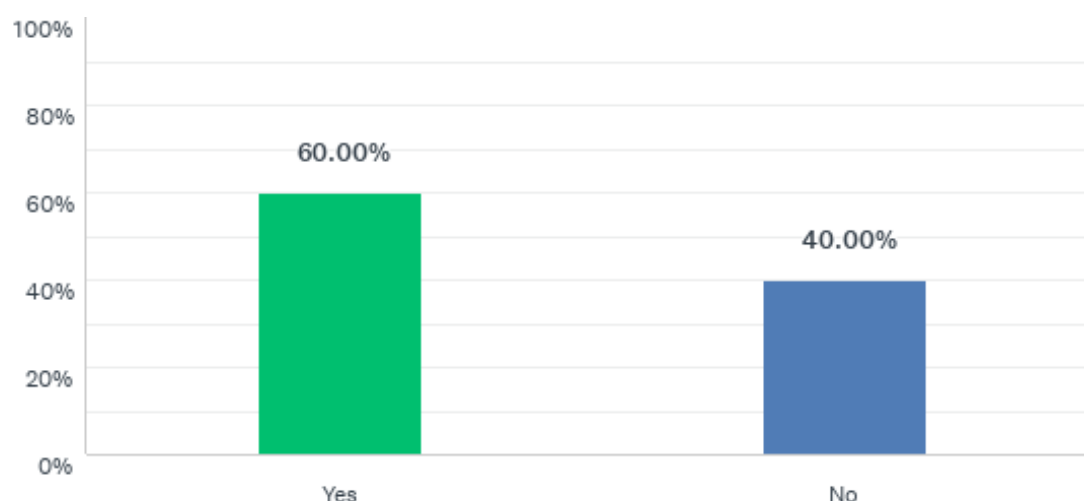
Further 4.2O below intended to assess whether having employees with TVET qualification has become any important. About 27.27% of companies strongly agreed that employees with TVET qualification can perform diverse and complex tasks, 27.27% agreed, 9.09% disagree, 9.09% strongly disagree and 27.27% did not know.

Figure 4.2O: Does having employees with TVET qualifications become more important now?



Only 10 of the 47 companies that replied to this question. Of these 10 companies, 60% of them indicated that 'yes' skills of employees with TVET qualification are playing a very special role in their operations and 40% said 'no'.

Figure 4.2P: Skills of employees with TVET qualification



4.3. Findings from Focus Group Interviews

Three research questions were asked in chapter one of this study. This section seeks to answer the research questions in qualitative form drawing from data collected through Focus Group Interviews with FAS Sector Professional bodies. This section intends to explore the qualitative different understandings of the TVET college curriculum and perceptions of the TVET college sector in the FAS Sector employers.

This section presents the categories of description of the ways of understanding of alignment of TVET college Business Studies alignment to FAS Sector skills needs and further explore the perceptions about the TVET sector. The categories of description emerged in the analysis of interviews from the Focus Group Interviews with professional bodies.

The phrase 'categories of description' is used here and in the next chapter to represent the different meanings or ways of understanding TVET college Business Studies curriculum alignment to FAS Sector skills needs. The 'categories of description' are not in one-to-one relationships with respondents. A respondent could have expressed more than one of them and the categories are made up of expressions from more than one respondent. From the phenomenographic analysis carried out, five qualitatively different 'categories of description' (ways in which Professional bodies in the FAS Sector companies

understand and experience the alignment of TVET college Business Studies curriculum to the skills of the sector) emerged. These are:

- Companies employ TVET college graduates only for certain roles
- TVET College graduates' ability to get employment in the FAS Sector
- Challenges TVET college graduates facing when searching for employment opportunities and labour market perceptions about TVET college graduates
- The actual teaching experience in the TVET college and developing of students acquire knowledge that is relevant to sector-specific skills needs
- Relation of the TVET college sector with the FAS Sector and the broader labour market

Category 1:

Companies employ TVET college graduates only for certain roles

The major work roles in the FAS Sector include but not limited to: Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, Clerical Support workers, Elementary Occupations and Service and Sales Workers. According to a couple of professional bodies' representatives. The Finance and Accounting Service Sector is assumed by its very nature that it predominantly accommodates high-level skills across the board, with little consideration of Post Matric qualification below Diploma or Degree. According to one of the Professional bodies' representatives:

Graduates can be placed in an administrative role in our sector as mentioned, but still very poor skills set. [Professional Body representative 2]

As professional bodies, we are trying to make opportunities for 000s and 000s of TVET graduates for Bookkeeping. We understand that it is envisaged that in the future the role of Bookkeepers will further diminish due to the more use of technology. But we still believe that we can produce Senior Bookkeepers equipped with the latest technology. [Professional Body representative 1]

Category 2:

TVET College graduates' ability to get employment in the FAS Sector.

At the centre of successful placing TVET college to work opportunities and actual understanding whether what they have learnt in the college is aligned to FAS Sector skills needs is the ability of learners to attract employers.

What we did more recently, we took 50 TVET graduates in Financial Management Diploma, we placed them in employment. We started putting them in Bootcamp of some sort to try to get them ready to take the Accounting Technicians entrance exam. We did a trial run of an entrance exam, and of 48 candidates, we had no successful passes. What we started doing is to analyse that group a little bit more, and we invested in them and did more work. Our findings there are that only about 50% are likely to pass. If an employer would love to take one of these TVET graduates for employment, the fact that they cannot pass entrance exams shows that the problem is not the curriculum only, but it is also a calibre of those students. [Professional Body representative 3]

The other Professional Body representative added:

We find that a lot of TVET college students often lack basic Mathematics and Accounting skills which university students are often well equipped with. Even in instances where they have been taught Mathematics, the quality is often very poor. This issue is the reason why most of the TVET students fail proficiency test. [Professional Body representative 2]

TVET candidates coming from poor backgrounds often lack some basic business acumen and skills. [Professional Body representative 7]

The other Professional Body representative added:

Strengthen basic knowledge and skills. Some trainees arrive not knowing/understanding basic elements such as a debit or credit. Focus on software skills - any current accounting software, as it is not so difficult to move between programmes once they mastered one. Make sure that lecturers show up for classes - something mentioned by every group starting at the firm is that they experienced breaks in their training. [Professional Body representative 8]

In this category, Professional bodies representatives' experience of TVET graduates' ability to find work in the FAS Sector focuses on the quality of the students rather than the curriculum. They suggest that the quality of students from TVET colleges is very poor from the theoretical and practical knowledge of the field of Finance and Accounting and they often lack basic mathematical abilities. Thus, at the heart of this category of description is the actual quality and calibre of the students who come out of the TVET

colleges. But the problem may not be necessarily lying with students, as it will be explained in category 4 below, that, the teaching practice in the TVET colleges is often poor and in instances, lecturers lack industry knowledge.

Category 3:

Challenges TVET college graduates facing when searching for employment opportunities and labour market perceptions about TVET college graduates

There is often the negative perception about the TVET college graduates as indicated by Allais; Allais and Nathan; Cloete (2020; 2014; 2016). It is believed that TVET college graduates often facing serious labour market discrimination. One Professional body representative has this to say:

I believe that students can be taken by employers in the sector, of course, the rest of the success depends on the employers' willingness to go an extra mile. Retention of TVET students is a problem because for me it often seems like employers take TVET graduates for 18 months WIL programme to get incentives or perhaps just to give students experience but they do not do much work to ensure career progression of those students beyond the WIL. [Professional Body representative 3]

The labour market in South Africa and elsewhere are often dominated by perceptions of those who control the labour market which is employers. These perceptions have serious implications for choices made by students about what to study and the expected labour market outcomes. In some instances, neither the curriculum of the TVET college is a problem, nor the learners are a problem in their unemployment post the completion of their qualifications but it could be the complexity of the labour market (see Allais & Nathan, 2014). It could be said that in some cases the negative perception of students towards TVET college is driven by the sentiment of employers about these institutions. Regarding the issue of curriculum alignment to FAS Sector skills needs the other Professional body representative commented:

What we found is that the curriculum is great, how that curriculum is implemented has a lot of developmental gaps and that results in a very poor quality of graduates and we have been tracking this over the years. [Professional Body representative 2]

I have visited many TVET colleges, it seems that many of the learners often enrol in TVET as last resort not that it was their primary choice. There are also cases where students would only be attending lectures a few times before and after collection of their stipends. This suggests that they not really dedicated and interested in studying or perhaps they not are motivated based on the fact that TVET college was not their first choice of a tertiary education institution. [Professional Body representative 4]

Category 4:

The actual teaching experience in the TVET college and developing of students acquire knowledge that is relevant to sector-specific skills needs.

The other consistent concern about the TVET colleges is an often-expressed issue about lecturing and teaching practices. Some commentators argue that curriculum on its own is not a problem, the problem could be lying on the capacity of lecturers to teach the course. One of the Professional bodies' representative commented about this as presented in the quote below:

In addition to this, I found that most TVET lecturers would be in a similar ranking with the students because it was students who studied in the same TVET and maybe have had an internship there and after became lecturers. So, the lack of industry experience from the side of the lecturers is the biggest problem for the TVET system. [Professional Body representative 4]

In addition, the issue of lecturers in the TVET colleges was clearly stated by the other Professional body representative that no evidence suggests problems about the curriculum, but the actual implementation of the curriculum is where the problem is. The quote below illustrates this:

Thank you...we have done very much work in the TVET colleges over the past 6 or 7 years for capacity building. What we found is that the curriculum is great, how that curriculum is implemented has a lot of developmental gaps and that results in is a very poor quality of graduates and we have been tracking this over the years. [Professional Body representative 2]

We might be going on about the issue of TVET lecturers, I think we should be thinking about re-skilling TVET college lecturers. More investment should be made into TVET college lecturers'

development. It would be good if Fasset can commit some funding for the TVET college lecturers' development, perhaps this can be aligned to the development of those who are teaching accounting and finance. This is very critical as we have noted in various forums and through our own experience that the TVET college lecturers require a lot of re-skilling and professional development. [Professional Body representative 5]

Category 5:

Relationship of the TVET college sector with FAS Sector and the broader labour market

The quotes below indicate the very important gap which is often referred to as the distance of the TVET college with the labour market.

Constant interaction with the businesses in the sector. Colleges need to visit the sector and see what is needed and happening on the ground. [Professional Body representative 9]

The next quote again asserts that the WIL programmes have such an important role in transiting students from the TVET colleges to the labour market.

The 18 months training is better because it assists students to get an opportunity to know what they have learnt from school and that opens more doors for them. Practical work should be strengthened with the TVET colleges like other SETAs so that students can understand what is going in the firms. [Professional Body representative 3]

The introduction of shadow working and more students to the accounting companies of the fields while still studying to better understand the in-depth of the curriculum would be much better. This would make them understand and relate from the course and actual work, system, application of principles and laws. [Professional Body representative 10]

5. Discussion of key issues arising from the findings and implications for the FAS Sector

From the preliminary findings in the analysis of the documents, it is evident statistically, that many TVET college students do not attract private sector employment (DHET, 2015; Erasmus & Breier, 2009). There is no evidence yet about the reasons why this is the case. But some patterns in the literature suggest a clear incline of employers towards University graduates at the expense of TVET college graduates.

5.1. Employers perception of TVET college graduate versus the actual skilling of TVET college graduates

While there is a perceived notion that employers in the FAS Sector are generally not inclined to employ TVET college graduates, it is, however, evidence that the actual training and skilling of the students in the TVET colleges is very poor. Interview findings suggested that many TVET college graduates are poorly trained. This problem was raised in an interview with a Professional Body representative who we quoted below:

...we took 50 TVET graduates in Financial Management Diploma, we placed them in employment. We started putting them in Bootcamp of some sort to try to get them ready to take the Accounting Technicians entrance exam. We did a trial run of an entrance exam, and of 48 candidates, we had no successful passes. What we started doing is to analyse that group a little bit more, and we invested in them and did more work. Our findings there are that only about 50% are likely to pass. If an employer would love to take one of these TVET graduates for employment, the fact that they cannot pass entrance exams shows that the problem is not the only issue of the curriculum, but it is also the calibre of those students.

Some scholars argue that, notwithstanding substantial differences between TVET colleges and Universities, it remains a concerning issue that in most TVET colleges basic Mathematics is lacking. In many cases, this problem kicks TVET student out of the mainstream labour market. As the quote above suggests, students from TVET colleges are often unable to pass entry-level competence tests and for that, they get excluded even in low-level entry jobs.

5.2. The ability of TVET College to produce competitive graduates

While the TVET college sector has been growing in terms of enrolment and the funding allocation by the government, the abilities of these institutions to produce quality graduates is still questionable (Cloete,

2016; Papier et al., 2017). This is caused by the fact that TVET colleges have not established themselves to institutions of post-school education that could guarantee returns or graduates (Cloete, 2016). It is estimated that unemployment amongst TVET college graduates is well over 45% while it remains under 15% for graduates.

5.3. Automation of Finance and Accounting Services Sector

Findings did not show any huge increase in the share of sophisticated and complex services in the sector to justify the need for higher degrees instead of TVET college. This finding could be suggesting that the sector has become very much automated and making the role of Accounting Technicians to be absolute. The finding of this study is that, despite the lack of clarity about the FAS Sector becoming complex and sophisticated in its service provision, but the industry makes very little use of TVET college graduates across the board. Many commentators during the focus group interviews indicated that the actual curriculum was not a problem, but the teaching of the curriculum could be the actual problem. For example, one other professional board representative said:

I found that most TVET lecturers would be in a similar ranking with the students because it was students who studied in the same TVET and maybe had an internship there and after became lecturers. So, the lack of industry experience from the side of the lecturers is the biggest problem for the TVET system.

This assertion suggests that the problem goes beyond the issue of the curriculum, but the actual teaching could be problematic as some lecturers often lack industry experience and are often not experienced.

5.4. Reasons for concentration to higher degrees instead of TVET college graduates

The Finance and Accounting and Services Sector is traditionally a sector that is predominantly pro higher education, and it is non-vocational except for a few instances (Fasset, 2019). For example, FASSET proportion of funding for various programmes, more of it goes to the funding towards Degrees and Post-Graduates Degrees (Fasset, 2019, p. 21). It is a serious issue that companies are experiencing difficulties to get TVET college graduates at a level Technicians and Associate Professionals (see figure 4.2J).

6. Recommendations and conclusion

6.1. Develop TVET college Centres of Excellence in Mathematics and Science.

Notwithstanding the strong regulatory framework and practices in the Finance and Accounting Services Sector, the sector has grown to become more sophisticated with the emerging of the 4IR. These developments have necessitated the need for advanced practices in the sector including the use of the latest technology to record financial entries. This is what the Chairperson of the Board of Fasset, Ms Lynnet Ntuli related to the need for reskilling. Talking in the Fasset Annual General Meeting of 2020, the Board Chairperson said that “automation does not make jobs and professions redundant. It does make skills redundant”. Taking from the recent developments due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, it can be argued that if there was ever a time to grow Finance and Accounting Sector Services technological capabilities it is now. We have witnessed as things have been unfolding under the pandemic, that, more companies have improved on this call for automation of the sector. This does not mean throwing away the basis, but it is a way to improve efficiency and better was of accountability and monitoring of our programmes.

6.2. Develop Professional bodies in TVET college Business Studies curriculum teaching practices as advising body.

The nature of the Finance and Accounting Services Sector, which is dominated by standards practices, make it a requirement that institutions of higher education and training involved in the teaching or offering of Finance and Accounting courses should be considered from the development of curriculum and the dissemination of that curriculum to students. South African TVET colleges remain distant from employers, there are very limited platforms of corporation between industries and TVET colleges. To ensure a better TVET college system in the future, employers and TVET colleges should consider partnerships like those of the German dual TVET system.

6.3. Improve lecturer development.

One of the professional bodies which have had a very long relationship with the TVET colleges in partnership to develop Bookkeepers and Accounting Technicians said that they found that some of the lecturers at the TVET college were not equipped with industry experience and their theoretical

foundations were not strong. This calls for continuous engagement of the TVET colleges with industry experts who could if possible, form an advisory team to the TVET colleges.

6.4. Introducing Accounting Software at TVET college level

Technology across all sectors of the economy has increased since the 3rd Industrial Revolution. We have recently (at least over the past 7 years) learnt about the emergent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (Schwab, 2016). This included the increased use of modern technology of robotics, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and others. In the previous sections, we reflected on the fact that TVET colleges have been the biggest producers of Accounting Technicians, Debt Collectors, and a few others.

It was argued by professional bodies representative during the focus group interviews, that, the graduates from TVET colleges often lack strong Mathematics and for these reasons they find it difficult to adapt and add to this the sector is increasingly becoming more inclined to the using of technology to perform some of the duties which would often be performed by Accounting Technicians. This is happening as results of automation. Due to this, the suggestion is that TVET college graduates learn accounting software while still studying, this could assist to give them a competitive edge.

6.5. Strengthen the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes for TVET college students

The key focus in this recommendation is that students at TVET college need to be introduced to WIL programmes early in their studies so that when they start 18 months of practical training post the three trimesters, they will be already knowledgeable about work. The students are likely to stand high chances of getting employment if they have on the job training during their studies and early after completion of the 18 months of in-class learning. Fasset's strategic overview affirms the idea of strengthening the capacity of the TVET college to ensure absorption of the TVET learners into the labour market. This is noted in the four most important skills issues that Fasset needs to be content with. Fasset APP notes that:

“Strengthening the capacity of the TVET Colleges and improving the absorption of the TVET learners in the labour market.”⁷

⁷ Fasset (2020). *Annual Performance Plan (APP)*. Fasset, Randburg


A call for TVET support is linked to the Fasset strategy as noted in the APP 2019/2020. The view is that actions are important to ensure that the sector realises the dream of an all-encompassing FAS sector that gives learning and employment opportunities for a diverse range of people.

In conclusion, the survey gathered data that drew (at least at the surface) one's attention to some issues that could be necessitating relook to the TVET college sector for the benefit of the FAS Sector. The data indicated no flows in terms of the curriculum itself but suggested that there are other underlying reasons why TVET sector Business Studies graduates are not taken into serious consideration by FAS sector employers. The solution to the issues raised lie within partnership models that could be developed between the DHET, Fasset, Professional Bodies and TVET colleges themselves.

There is a strong consensus in the findings that, FAS sector remains concentrated in the University graduates despite the strong call for support of the TVET system.

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix 8.1. Company survey

**FASSET**
Make the future count

The TVET College Curriculum Study

General information

Company information

1. Name of your company

2. In what year did your company begin operation?

3. Company size

☐ Small (between 1-50 employees)

☐ Medium (between 50- 150 employees)

☐ Big (150 employees and more)

4. Sub-sectors

Development of the company

These questions are intended to ask about operational development of the company

5. During the last 10 years, the services of this company have

- ☐ Become less sophisticated
- ☐ Not changed
- ☐ Become somewhat more sophisticated and complex
- ☐ Become significantly more sophisticated and complex
- ☐ Don't know, prefer not to answer

6. Please indicate how many employees fall into the listed categories of employees in your company

	Less than 10% of the total staff	Between 10% to 30% of the total staff	Between 30% to 50% of the total staff	Between 50% and above of the total staff	Don't know, prefer not to answer
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technicians and Associate Professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clerical Support Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service and Sales Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elementary Occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unallocated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please indicate the share of the more sophisticated and complex services in total revenue

- ☐ Less than 10%
- ☐ Between 10% to 30%
- ☐ Between 30% to 50%
- ☐ Between 50% and above
- ☐ Don't know, prefer not to answer

8. Please indicate the share of the less sophisticated and complex services in total revenue

- ☐ Less than 10%
- ☐ Between 10% to 30%
- ☐ Between 30% to 50%
- ☐ Between 50% and above
- ☐ Don't know, prefer not to answer

9. The introduction of more complex and sophisticated services and/or service provision processes required...

- ☐ Less advanced workers skills
- ☐ Same worker skills as before
- ☐ Somewhat more advanced worker skills
- ☐ Significantly more advanced workers skills
- ☐ Don't know, prefer not to answer

10. The introduction of less complex and sophisticated services and/or service provision processes required...

- ☐ Less advanced workers skills
- ☐ Same worker skills as before
- ☐ Somewhat more advanced worker skills
- ☐ Significantly more advanced workers skills
- ☐ Don't know, prefer not to answer

11. How many of your employees in the following categories have the TVET qualification?

	Less than 10%	Between 10% to 30%	Between 30% to 50%	Between 50% and above	Don't know, prefer not to answer
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technicians and Associate Professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clerical Support Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service and Sales Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elementary Occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unallocated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. During the last 10 years, did you find it difficult to find employees with the TVET college qualification meeting your skills requirements?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If your answer to the above is 'yes', please indicate for which categories of employees did you find it difficult to find TVET candidates

- ☐ Managers
- ☐ Professionals
- ☐ Technicians and Associate Professionals
- ☐ Clerical Support workers
- ☐ Elementary Occupations
- ☐ Service and Sales Workers
- ☐ Unallocated

Formal pre-employment: education and training programmes of your company

These questions are intended to ask about education and training required before employment.

14. Please indicate the 3 most frequent, formal pre-employment education and training programmes required for the following categories of employees

	University Bachelor level qualification and above	University of Technology National Diploma	NQF Level 6 with 18 months practical work experience	TVET NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificate	National Certificate Vocational NQF Level 4-5	Matric
Managers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technicians and Associate Professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clerical Support Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service and Sales Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elementary Occupations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unallocated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Please indicate if the TVET college education and training programmes catering for the following categories of employees have contributed to fulfilling your skills needs

	Not at all	Somewhat	Significantly	Very significantly	Don't know, prefer not to answer	Not applicable
Managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technicians and Associate Professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clerical Support Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service and Sales Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary Occupations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unallocated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. What does a TVET college qualification tell you about a prospective employee's suitability?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree Strongly	disagree	I don't know
That the employee has right skills to execute his or her roles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
That the employee has skills to execute his or her duties, but would require further onsite training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
That the employee has insufficient education and training and would require reskilling in theory and practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Please rate the importance of having TVET college employee in your company

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
It is more important that a prospective employee at the mid-level has a TVET qualification rather than only a school education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is more important that a prospective employee at the higher level has a TVET qualification rather than only a school education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we hire for the mid-level, we test the skills of prospective employees even if they have undergone TVET.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we hire for the higher level, we test the skills of prospective employees even if they have undergone TVET.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we hire for the mid-level, it is more important that the prospective employee has work experience than a TVET qualification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we hire for the higher level, it is more important that the prospective employee has work experience than a TVET qualification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Are employees with TVET qualifications able to perform more diverse or complex tasks?

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Has having employees with TVET qualifications become more important now?

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please elaborate on your response

20. Do skills of employees with TVET qualifications play a special role in your operations?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please elaborate on your response

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21. What can be done to strengthen TVET colleges curriculum to meet skills needs of the Finance and Accounting Services Sector?

22. What are important features (if any) of the TVET Business Studies programmes that you find valuable for your sector?

7.2. Appendix 8.2: Interview Schedule for Focus Group

Proposed Questions to Guide Interviews: TVET College Curriculum

The nature of TVET means that employers must be involved in significant ways to facilitate the transition from education and training to work. Professor Pheliwe Lolwana and Moses Oketch note that TVET reforms across the SADC region are driven by a strong concern to ensure training is responsive to and relevant for the labour market and industry needs. However, the responsiveness itself is weak under conditions where employers play a very minimal role in meeting TVET college students halfway through practical training. This study intends to investigate the alignment of the TVET college Business Studies curriculum to FAS Sector skills needs.

The Focus Group session will focus on discussing the perspective of the Professional Bodies on the current employment trends of the TVET college “graduates” and to understand if companies can find candidates with the required TVET College qualifications for various roles in their organisations.

If companies employ TVET college “graduates” only for certain roles, in which roles (amongst the listed below) are TVET College “graduates” predominantly getting placement?

- Managers
- Professionals
- Technicians and Associate Professionals
- Clerical Support workers
- Elementary Occupations
- Service and Sales Workers

Are TVET College “graduates” able to get employment in the FAS Sector?

What kind of challenges are TVET College “graduates” facing when searching for employment opportunities, if any?

How are the Professional Bodies involved in ensuring that TVET College “graduates” get absorbed in the FAS Sector?

Any suggestions on what else could be done to help improve skills alignment of the TVET College “graduates” to FAS Sector?

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