



2014

Course Preferences of High School Learners in the Northern Cape: Findings of the Survey



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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM,
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRDSSA	Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa
IPAP	Industrial Policy Action Plan
LED	Local Economic Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NPC	National Planning Commission
NGP	New Growth Path
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SPU	Sol Plaatjie University
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UOM	University of Mpumalanga

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Making the right decision on enrolling for a particular course and subjects in high school and higher education institutions can assist the learners to be better employable after completion of their studies. This is especially relevant in the Northern Cape Province where unemployment rate has been reported at 32.3%, according to the latest Statistics South Africa Labour Force Survey (Quarter 2). One of the reasons cited for high unemployment rate is that majority of youth in the country lack the necessary skills and education to participate actively in the formal economy, secure decent jobs and make sustainable livelihoods. It is therefore of paramount importance that institutions of higher learning produce graduates with the right type of skills and education, which is demanded by private and public organisations, to reduce the scourge of structural unemployment.

Analysis of the economic situation and indicators reflect opportunities for potential growth in the following sectors in the Northern Cape:

- Agriculture and agro-processing,
- Mining and mineral processing,
- Fishing and mariculture,
- Manufacturing,
- Tourism,
- Knowledge economy,
- Energy.

In order to combat the scourge of unemployment in the province, skills and education must be promoted in the above mentioned prioritised sectors that have the opportunity to transform and grow the economy of the province.

The Research and Development sub-programme within the Economic Planning programme of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, saw the establishment of the new Sol Plaatjie University in the province as an opportunity to analyse the course preferences of Grade 11 and 12 learners in Northern Cape and identify any gaps or mismatch between courses offered or planned future courses by the institution and career prospects of Grade 11 and 12 learners.

Another critical issue is the prevalence of brain drain in the Northern Cape, where learners after completing high school migrate to other provinces like Gauteng and Western Cape in order to study further or engage in other economic opportunities. The reality is that once people migrate to other provinces, Northern Cape loses their skills and knowledge, whereas the province itself is still confronted with a shortage of skilled labour to help grow the economy.

If the newly-established university offers the relevant programmes that students want to pursue and links to the current skills required in the province, the institution will play a vital role for training and ensuring that aspirant learners remain in the province and ultimately participate in the formal economy upon completion of their studies.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study objectives, as set out by the Research and Development sub-programme, are as follows:

- Critically take stock of the programmes or courses that will be offered by SPU
- Analyse what type of course and careers learners want to pursue after completing Grade 12
- Identify possible mismatch between courses that will be offered by the new university and possible career prospects of learners
- Identify the institutions of higher learning that Grade 12 learners in Northern Cape prefer
- Seek to address or minimise the issue of brain drain
- Give guidelines to decision makers regarding willingness of Grade 12 learners to enrol at SPU
- Guide decision makers on possible programs to include in university curriculum to support economic and infrastructure plans of province.

1.3 APPROACH

The first phase of the research project was embarked upon earlier in the year. Project team commenced work by reviewing various policies in the educational cluster both at the national and provincial level, and upon completion of which the team conducted a desktop research (secondary data). This was on the programmes offered by the university and the analysis of the education systems in Northern Cape to identify among other things, the number of high schools in the province and the pass rate of Grade 12 learners with university exemption. Secondary sources were

utilised to extract data on different variables deemed important for this project.

After completion of secondary research, the team sourced the list of schools in the province and set up appointments with identified/selected schools for purposes of the survey. It was ensured that the selected learners and schools represented the diversity and demographics of the province.

As per sampling process undertaken, schools were selected based on different criteria including Curriculum, type of school (private or public) and area (urban or rural). A questionnaire was designed for completion by grade 11 and 12 learners, in selected high schools throughout the province. Comments and suggestions from stakeholders were taken into account in order to improve the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The required clearance was then obtained from the Northern Cape Department of Education to conduct the survey in the selected schools.

1.3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive research approach. The target population for the survey comprised of all high school learners in the Northern Cape. Project team embarked upon field trips to the selected schools on the set dates to administer the questionnaire in order to generate primary data.

Defining the sample

The target sample for the survey was learners in grade 11 & 12 across the province from prioritised public and private schools. This was to ensure a sample that is large enough to generate precise estimates but small enough to minimise unnecessary administration burden.

To ensure a sample that's reflective of the dynamics of education in the province, selected schools were chosen based on their curriculums varying between technical, agricultural, commercial and mainstream as well as a combination of rural and urban schools from all 5 districts in the province. Schools were also chosen based on the comparative advantages found within the localities where the schools are situated.

Estimating the sample size

The survey targeted 3000 learners in the province, with a minimum of 3 high schools per district randomly selected using the simple sampling method. The actual sample (2689) deviated from this targeted sample, due

to issues like absenteeism, deviations from the stated learner enrolment figures amongst others.

Data collection

The research team travelled to each participating school, where a standardized questionnaire was read to participating learners who thereafter completed a self-administered questionnaire during one class period. The questionnaire covered a wide variety of issues including the demographics, career aspirations and migration patterns or intentions of learners. Furthermore, the questionnaire also tried to establish the willingness of the learners to study at the new Sol Plaatjie University (SPU) in Kimberley and what factors possibly influence their decisions. In total, the questionnaire entailed 10 structured and open ended questions and learners needed to tick the appropriate responses and where necessary elaborate on their responses. Learners who were absent on the appointment date with the school unfortunately did not form part of the survey.

Data capturing and analysing

The results were captured on excel for fast and accurate analysis. Data cleaning proved to be the most time consuming process after capturing, at the end of which the data was analysed.

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section is the crux of the report and it captures the primary research findings of the project team when interviewing Grade 11 and 12 learners in the Province. It must be noted that over 2600 learners were interviewed in all five districts of the Province and schools were selected based on the diversity in curriculum, race and location as mentioned in the previous section.

The primary objective of interviewing learners was to find out more about their career choices and types of courses they intend to study after completing Grade 12, to possibly identify mismatch or gaps with the SPU course offerings.

The research findings are divided into three sub-sections namely learner profiles, further education (includes course preferences) and learner migration patterns.

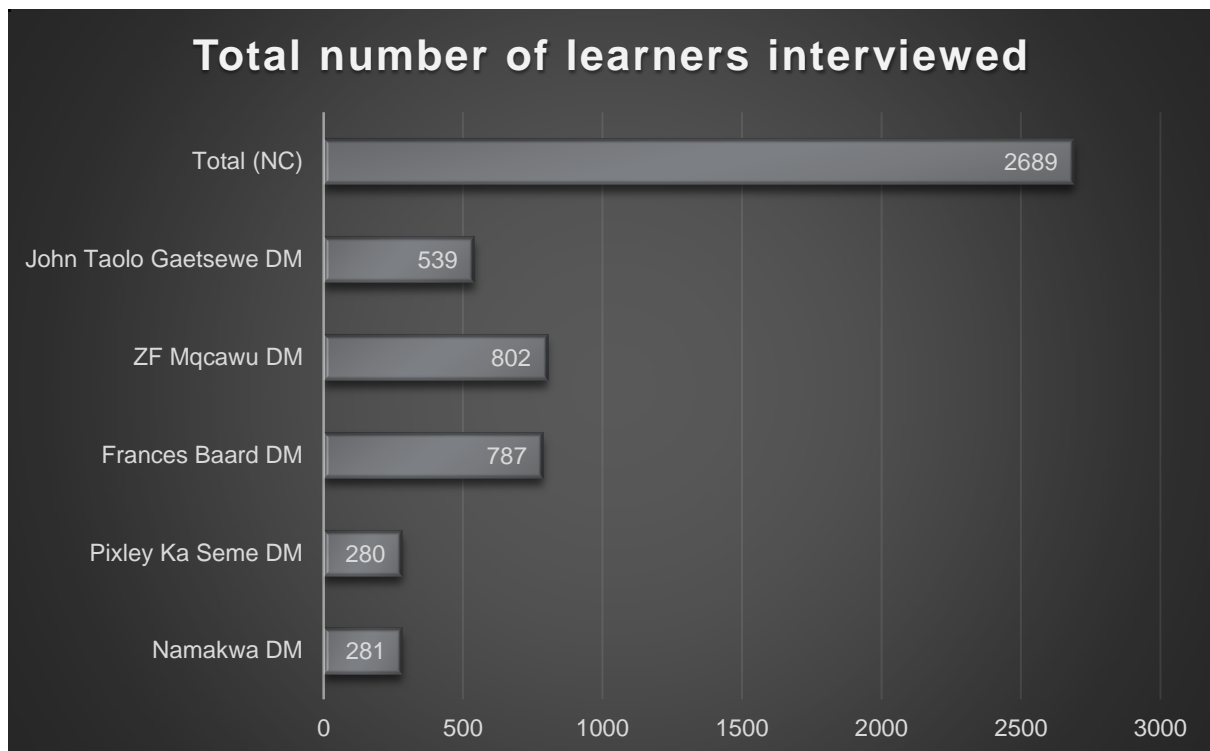
2.1 LEARNER PROFILES

This sub-section briefly discusses the demographics of learners interviewed.

2.1.1 Number of learners interviewed

The project team travelled province-wide to interact with learners at various schools. The team interviewed 2689 learners (Grade 11 and 12). Figure 2.1 depicts the number of learners who completed the questionnaire in all five districts.

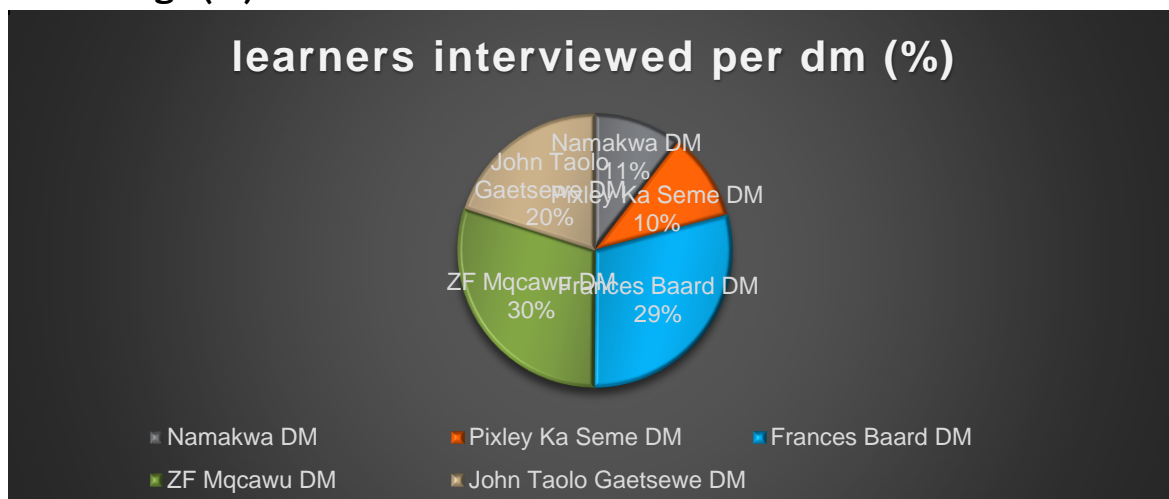
Figure 2.1.1 Total number of learners interviewed



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.1 above, ZF Mqacawu and Frances Baard DM have the highest number of learners interviewed, this also mirrors the population trends in the province where the two districts have the highest population rates than other districts. As illustrated in Figure 2.1.2 below, the two districts (Frances Baard and ZF Mqacawu) account for approximately 59% of learners interviewed, Pixley Ka-Seme and Namakwa Districts have the lowest number of learner participants.

Figure 2.1.2: Distribution of learners interviewed per districts Percentage (%)



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

Table 2.1.3 below, lists the name of schools and number of schools interviewed per districts. The schools with the highest number of respondents are Vuyolwethu High School (Frances Baard DM), Duineveld High School (ZF Mgcawu DM), Galaletsang Science High (John Taolo Gaetsewe DM) and Emmang Mmogo Comprehensive high school (Frances Baard).

The learner enrolment rates in Pixley Ka-Seme and Namakwa DM are low when comparing with other districts. Overall, Aggeneys High had the lowest number of learners who were interviewed by the project team.

Table 2.1.3: Schools visited by the project team

District	School	Number of learners
Namakwa DM		
	Boesmanland High	115
	S.A Van Wyk High	127
	Aggeneys High	39
	Total	281
Pixley Ka Seme DM		
	De Aar High School	132
	Weslaan DM	148
	Total	280
Frances Baard DM		
	Emmang Mmogo Comprehensive School	243
	Hoerskool Landbou Noordkap	60
	Kimberley Girls High	120
	Vuyolwethu	319
	Warrenton	45
	Total	787
John Taolo Gaetsewe DM		
	Galaletsang Science High	275
	Kathu High	110
	KP Toto	154
	Total	539

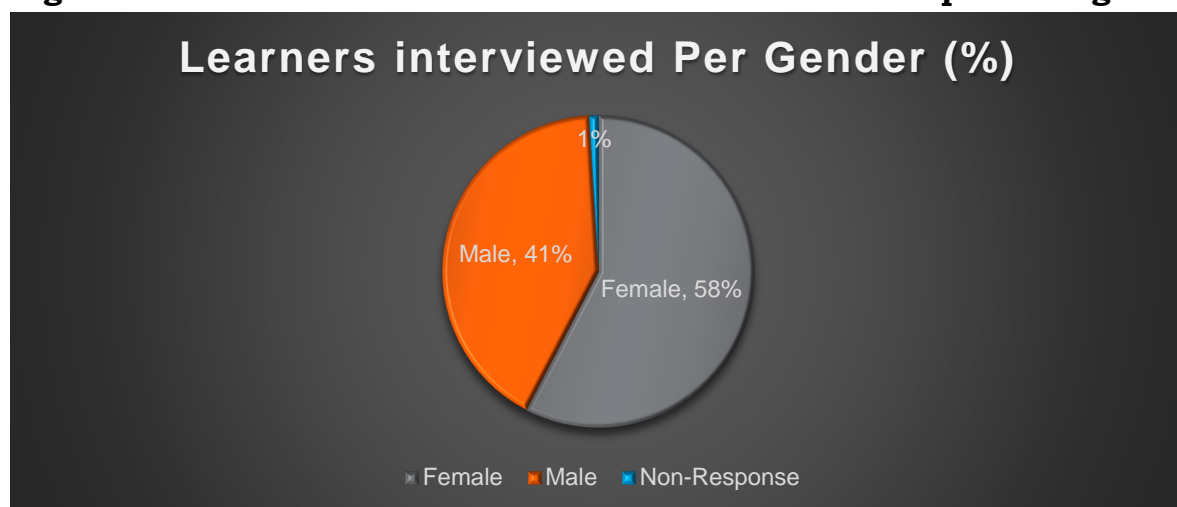
ZF Mgcawu		
	Duineveld High	309
	High School Postmasburg	110
	Pabalello High School	168
	Ratanang Thuto	221
	Total	808

Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

2.2. Gender of learners interviewed

Figure 2.2.1 shows the percentage distribution of learners interviewed per gender for all the districts. The majority of respondents were females, accounting for more than 58% of the sample and only small percentage (1%) of learners interviewed did not indicate their gender, whilst males accounted for 41%

Figure 2.2.1: Learners interviewed per gender



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

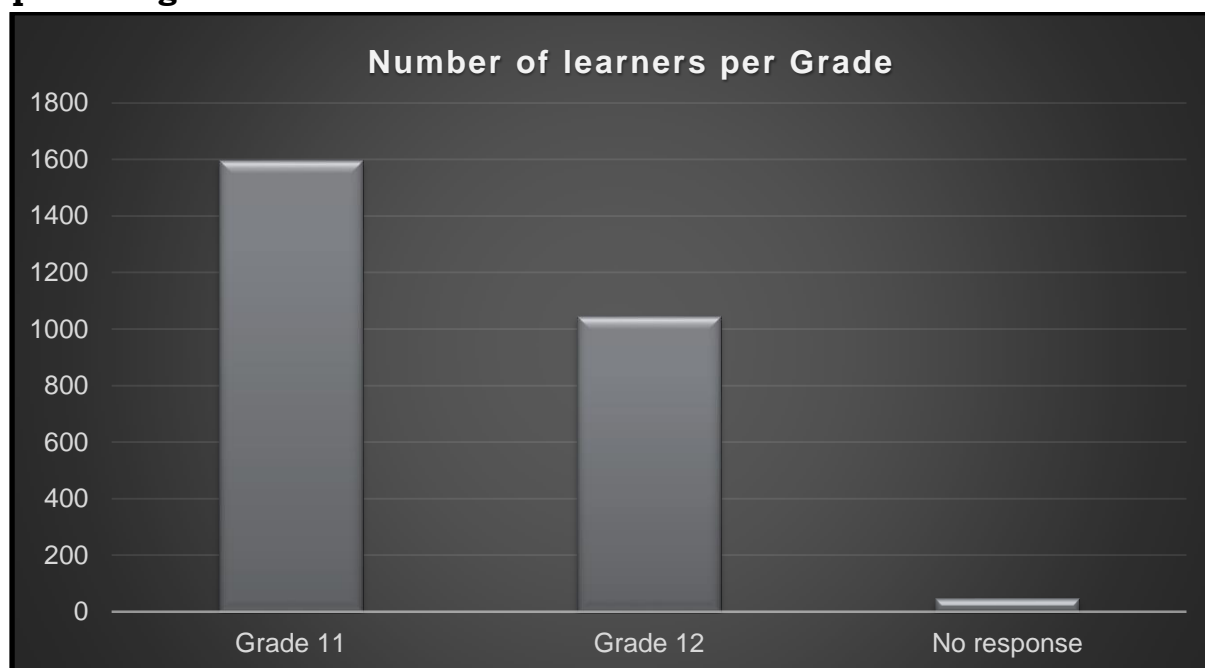
2.3 Learners per Grades

As mentioned above, learners in Grade 11 and 12 were selected as target respondents for the study. The assumption made was that learners in those grades are making plans to attend tertiary institutions and have already made possible career choices. Hence their responses were deemed essential in giving the project team a good indication of where they would prefer to study and what courses they would want to study after matric.

Figure 2.3.1 depicts the distribution of learners that were interviewed per grade. Approximately 1600 learners interviewed are in Grade 11,

representing the majority of the sample (59.4%) and alternatively the number of learners in Grade 12 was just over 1 000 (accounting for 38.9% of respondents). A fairly small number of learners did not indicate on the questionnaire which grade they are currently enrolled in.

Figure 2.3.1: number of learners per grade - total numbers and percentage



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

2.4 Subjects chosen by learners

This sub-section aims to show what type of subjects the learners have chosen as part of their curriculum and this is important because it must be aligned with their future career aspirations. For example a learner who wants to study medicine after matric, must have pure Mathematics as one of their subjects in high school.

Table 2.4.1 list the subjects that learners indicated that they are currently doing at their respective schools. The subjects are ranked in order of popularity among the participants, meaning the first one will be the one chosen by the majority of learners interviewed. It is important to note that some of the learners did not respond to the question at hand.

Table 2.4.1: Subjects selected by learners

Subjects	Number of learner enrolments	Percentages
1. English	2640	98.2%
2. Life Sciences	1930	71.8%
3. Maths Literacy	1580	58.8%
4. Afrikaans	1417	52.7%
5. Geography	1165	43.3%
6. Setswana	1103	41.0%
7. Mathematics	1093	40.6%
8. Physics	1003	37.3%
9. Business Economics/ Studies	890	33.1%
10. Life Orientation	844	31.4%
11. History	683	25.4%
12. Accounting	555	20.6%
13. Computer Studies	457	17.0%
14. Economics	430	16.0%
15. Tourism/ Hospitality (combined)	371	13.8%
16. Xhosa	194	7.2%
17. Engineering Graphics and Design	181	6.7%
18. Consumer Studies	117	4.4%
19. Agricultural studies/ technology/science (combined)	111	4.1%
20. Electrical technology/ engineering	64	2.4%
21. Mechanical Technology/ engineering	61	2.3%
22. Civil Technology/ engineering	56	2.1%
23. Technical Drawings	14	0.5%

Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

As based on Table 2.4.1 the majority of learners are currently enrolled for English (98.2%), Life Sciences (71.8%), Maths Literacy (58.8%) and Afrikaans (52.7%). It is rather concerning to note that there are more learners enrolled for Maths literacy (58.8%) than for pure Mathematics; which had only 40.6% learner enrolments. This is because Maths Literacy will in the future be a hindrance for learners in pursuit of studies in fields

that require Maths. Other popular subjects include Geography, Setswana, Physics, Business studies and Life Orientation.

In addition, over 371 learners indicated that they are currently enrolled for Tourism as a subject; this is a positive development as Tourism is one of the important industries in the Northern Cape and the Provincial government has initiatives in place to promote this developing industry. Moreover, Agriculture is another sector that contributes significantly to the economy of the province but it is disappointing to note that only 111 learners out of 2689 learners are currently registered for agricultural studies.

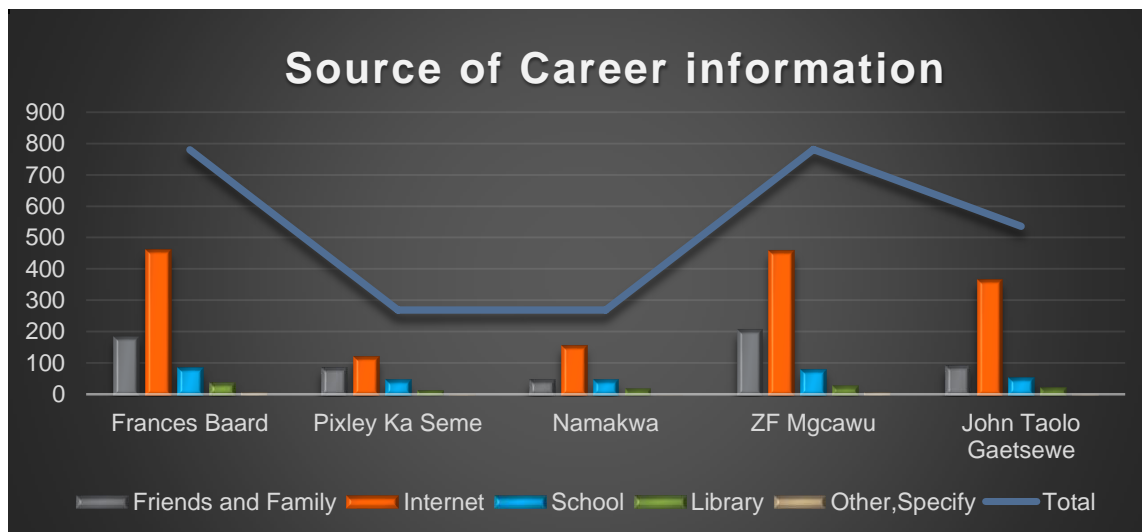
Overall, it is rather concerning that the subjects that ensure acceptance into the careers most required by industry and commerce have such low enrolment rates. These subjects, in order of importance are: Mathematics; Physics, Accounting; Computer Studies and/or Economics. It must be noted though that various factors could be at play in the aversion of students to these subject areas including the quality of teaching, proper career guidance, lack of aptitude, lack of information, and other factors.

3. FURTHER EDUCATION

Many Development practitioners are of the opinion that further education and training of society is the backdrop of any developing economy, and would lead to sustained economic development. However for the general populace to identify potential career paths cognisance of the source of information should be given.

3.1 Sources for career information

Fig. 3.1 Career information Sources



Source: NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014

Access to information is an important tool to improve circumstances of communities, in terms of services, health, safety etc. In this instance access to information is a possible contributor to learners making a potentially wise career decision or a woeful career choice. Thus it is critical that sources of information for learners who are preparing for their future, be noted as it can be life changing. Learners in grade 11 and 12 respectively, were asked to indicate the sources they accessed to gather information on various careers they might be interested in.

The majority of learners utilized the internet to source information on careers, followed by family and friends, school and the library. Overall very few learners were using their libraries to source information on careers. Other sources specified were; newspapers, magazines, government officials, university career days and career counsellors.

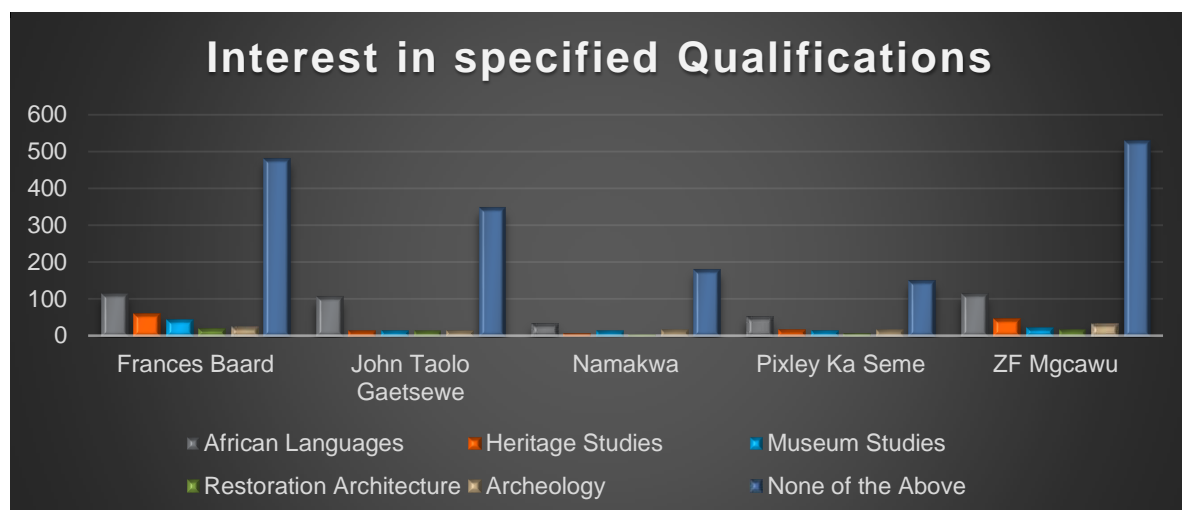
3.2 Interest in proposed courses for Sol Plaatjie

Sol Plaatjie University is currently offering three programs in the 2014 academic year. These include a Diploma in Information Technology and Applications; Diploma in Retail Management and a Bachelor of Education Degree focusing on building capacity on future teachers of mathematics, natural science and technology. At the time the survey was initiated, some of the future qualifications envisaged were African Languages Heritage Studies, Museum Studies, Restoration Architecture and Archaeology. Discussions on future programmes are still on-going and latest

developments include qualifications in Renewable Energy, Mining, Arid-terrain Agriculture and Commerce¹.

Grade 11 and 12 learners were asked if they would be interested in the five initially envisaged qualifications (i.e. African Languages, Heritage studies, Museum studies, Restoration Architecture and Archaeology). Noting that 95% of the learners responded to this question, majority (66%) indicated a lack of interest in all the programmes. Whilst indications for interest in these programmes was recorded at 17% for African Languages, 6% for Heritage Studies, 4% for Museum, 2% for Restoration Architecture and 4% for Archaeology. This is illustrated in Figure 3.2.1 below.

Fig 3.2.1. Interest in specified Qualifications



Source: NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014

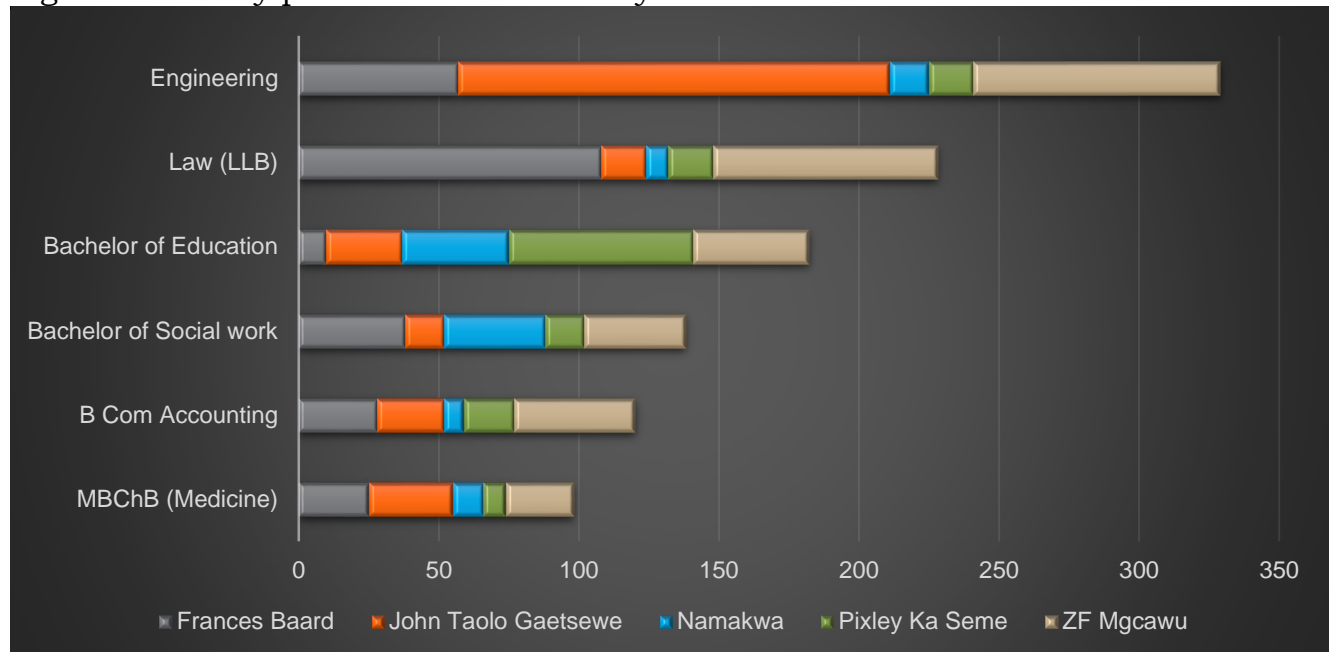
3.3 Courses preferred by learners

Learners were also asked to indicate which courses they would prefer as their first choice if they had the opportunity to further pursue their studies. There were in total 53 fields of study² in which grade 11 and 12 learners would opt for in pursuit of their higher education. In order of preference (from most to least), this section of the report captures the first choice of study fields as indicated by the learners. This is based on 78 per cent response rate as 2105 of the total 2689 learners interviewed responded to the question.

¹ www.spu.ac.za/

² In some cases students indicated actual degree or diploma courses, while others were more general, indicating careers or subject interests such as Psychology for example.

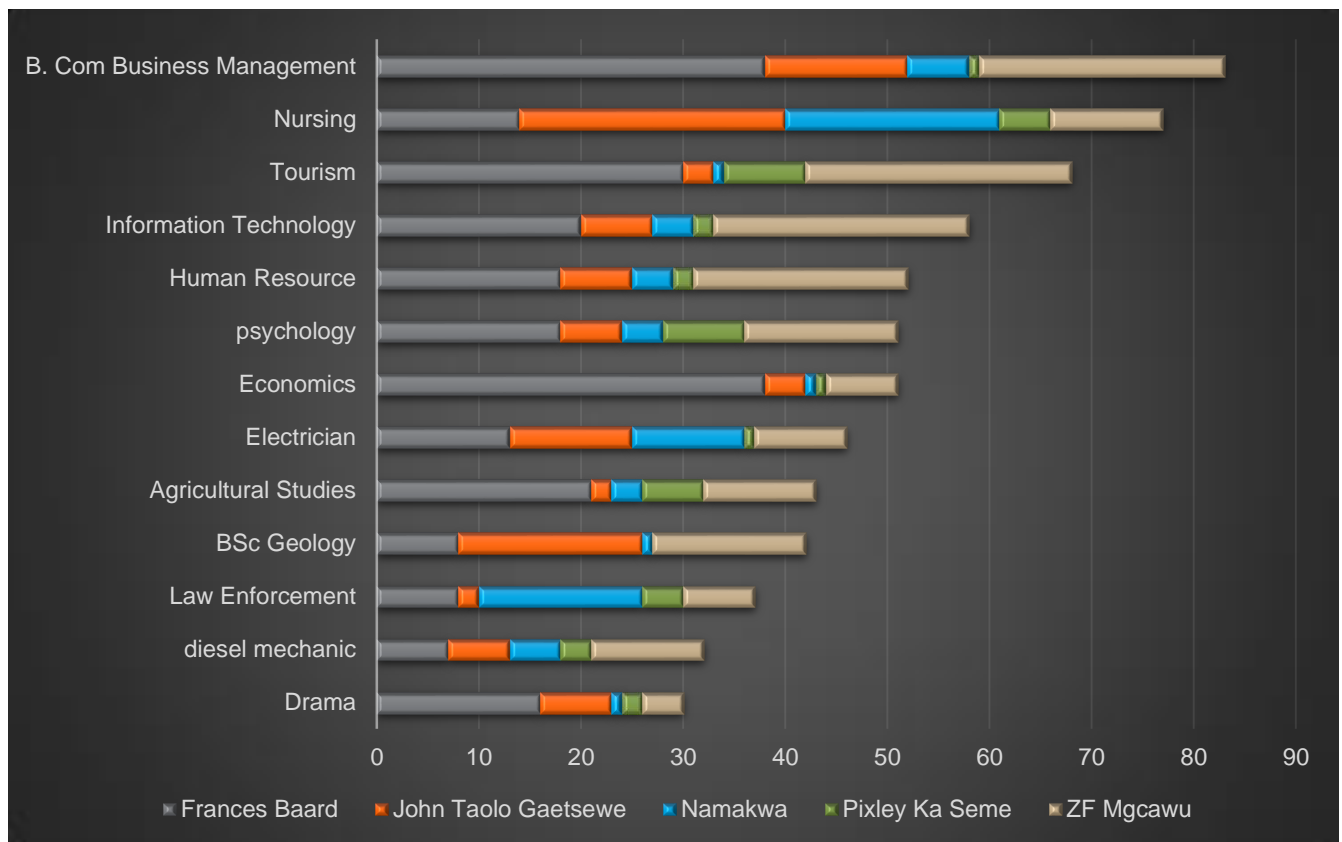
Fig. 3.3.1 Mostly preferred fields of study



Source: NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014

As seen in Figure 3.3.1 above, the mostly preferred fields of study are in Engineering, Law, Education, Social Work, Accounting and Medicine. Together, these fields of study represent 52 per cent (1095) of the learner preferences. It is worth noting that amongst the most preferred fields of study only Education is currently offered at SPU. Furthermore, none of the other four mostly preferred fields of study are in the 5 other programmes considered to be offered in the future (Refer to Section 3.2 above).

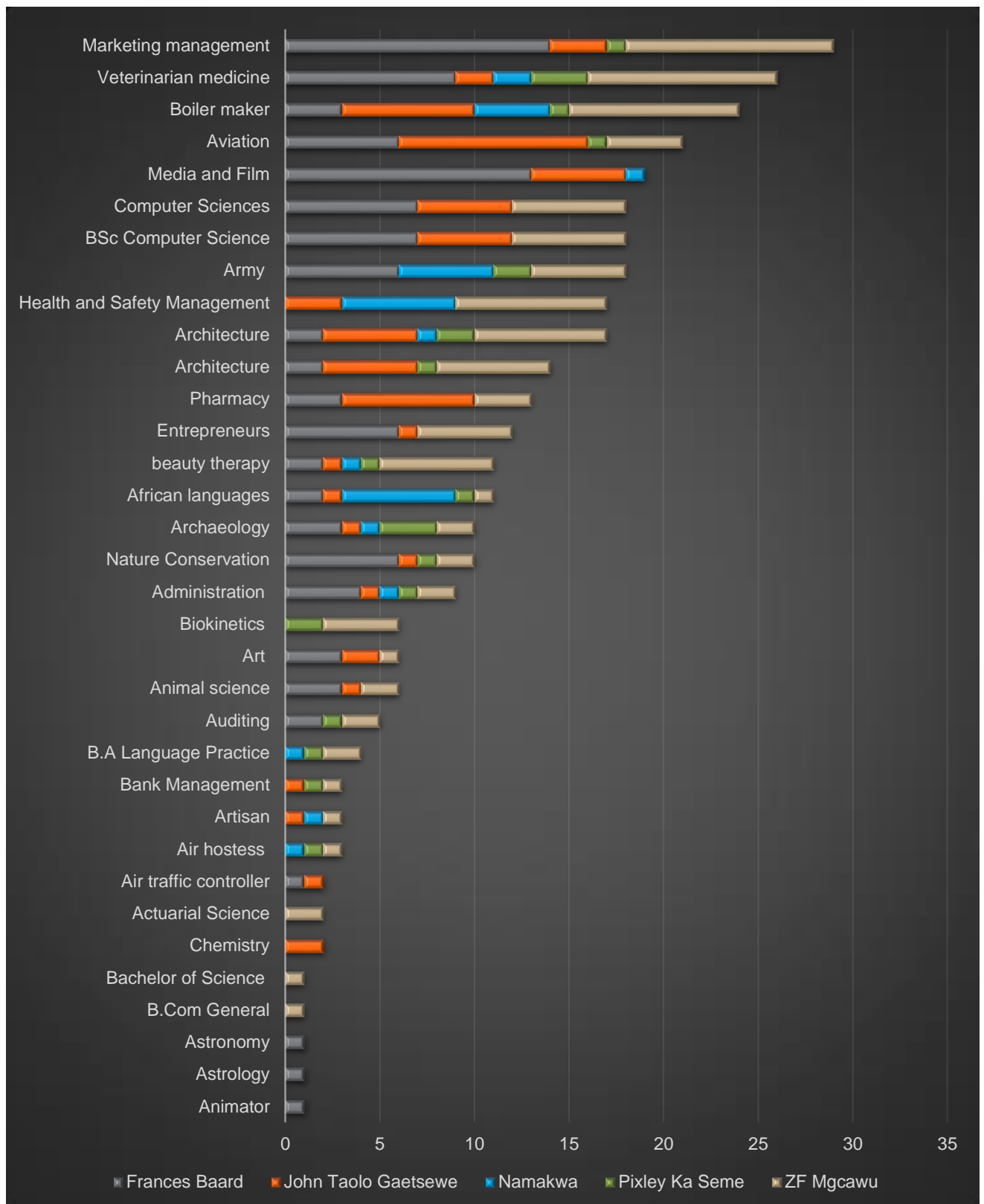
Figure 3.3.2 below, records the second most preferred fields of study, which are (in no specific order) in Business Management, Nursing, Tourism, Information Technology, Drama, Human Resources, Psychology, Agricultural Studies, Electrical Studies, Economics, Law Enforcement and Geology. Together, these fields of study represent 32 per cent (670) of the learner preferences. Again, it is worth noting that only Information Technology is currently offered at SPU. The rest of these preferred fields of study are neither currently offered nor part of the 5 programmes considered to be offered in the future.



Source: NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014

The least preferred fields of study are in Astrology, Actuarial Science, Auditing, Archaeology, African Languages, Architecture, Aviation, Beauty Therapy, Biokinetics, Chemistry, Pharmacy, Media and Film, Veterinarian Medicine, Administration, Computer Science, Marketing Management and Bank Management, amongst others. Together these fields of study represent 16 per cent (342) of the learner preferences. This is illustrated in Figure 3.3.3 below.

Course Preferences of High School Learners in the Northern Cape 2014



Source: NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014

It is important to note that 3 of the 5 programmes under consideration for future by SPU fall within this band. These are Archaeology, African Languages and Architecture³. Although 33 per cent learners indicated they would consider these fields (in section 3.2 of the report), they are however not their first choice. On first choice basis, only 2.5 per cent of the learners prefer the 3 fields of study. Neither Heritage studies nor Museum studies were indicated as the first choice fields of study by the learners. This is despite the number of learners who indicated they would consider these two study fields earlier (Section 3.2).

Choice of Study Fields Per District

The areas of interest in the engineering field were:

- civil engineering,
- mechanical engineering,
- chemical engineering and
- electrical engineering among others.

The majority of learners interested in studying engineering came from the John Taolo Gaetsewe district followed by learners from the Z F Mgcawu district, while most of the learners showing interest in the legal field, came from the Frances Baard district. In comparison with other districts, learners in Frances Baard also showed more interest in Economics, Business Management and social work.

Summary of 3.2 and 3.3- Key Findings

In consideration of the objectives of the survey, the following are the key findings as discussed in the preceding sections 3.2 and 3.3 sections of the report.

Firstly the findings above indicate that there is a mismatch between the courses preferred by the learners and those currently offered or anticipated in the near future. The gap is in the three areas of mostly study preferred by learners other than B Education, that is Engineering, Law, Social Work that

³ Noting that specific programme in Architecture considered at SPU is in Restoration Architecture.

are neither currently offered at Sol Plaatjie nor in the pipeline for future programmes.

Secondly, there is a gap between the courses currently offered and the preferred courses. As entailed in Figures 3.3.1 to 3.3.3 above,

- i. A mere 6 per cent (xxx) of the learners indicated Bachelor of Education as their preferred course,
- ii. 2% (58) indicated an interest in information technology (although 117 learners are currently studying computer studies,
- iii. 3% (68) of the learners indicated interest in pursuing Tourism studies (a total of 371 learners are currently studying tourism as a subject at school)
- iv. None of the learners indicated Retail Management as a field of interest.**

Lastly, in consideration of the possible future programmes (Refer to Figure 3.2.1), it can be stated that learners' responses (66 per cent) largely pointed to a lack of interest in all the 5 programmes. However, it must be noted that the minority that had responded positively in terms of whether they would consider the programmes, were certainly not interested in these fields as their first option.

- i. Only 1.5 % of the learners indicated an interest in Architecture as a first option,
- ii. Only 10 learners (0.5%) stated an interest in Archaeology as a first option,
- iii. And 11 learners (0.5%) stated an interest in African Languages as a first option and
- iv. None of the learners indicated an interest in the Museum and Heritage fields of study as a first option.**

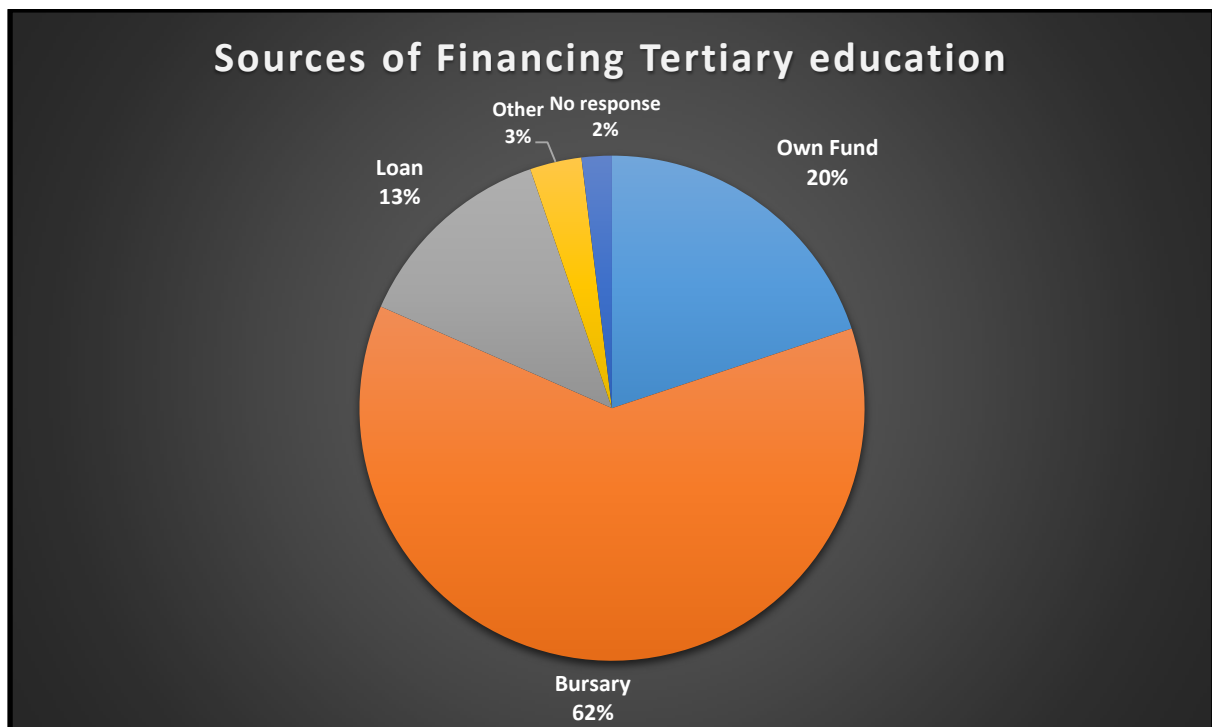
Students were also asked why they opted to study in a specific direction. A number of students indicated that they wanted to become doctors and nurses owing to the shortage of the aforementioned health professionals in the country and a desire to help people *"because our country have a Minimum percentage of doctors and I would like to help ill people and this is my career since I was in primary till now "*. Grade 11 Learner Emang Mmogo Comprehensive High, Kimberley

Other students wanted to become teachers because they enjoyed working with children and to contribute to improving education in our country. One grade 12 learner decided to study law because he, “*wanted people to respect me. Advocates and lawyers are highly respected in their communities*”. Grade 12 Learner Vuyolwethu High, Kimberley

3.4 Sources of funding tertiary education

Generally, the cost of Tertiary education in South Africa has increased significantly over the past years and this make it difficult for people from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to quality higher education. These escalating costs prevent those who cannot afford and are from poor backgrounds, the opportunities to pursue further education leading to their inability to actively participate in the formal economy of the country. Thus this phenomenon, would perpetuate the poverty leading to intergenerational poverty. This is based on observation that tertiary education has proven to increase the income prospects of graduates as opposed to people without any form of tertiary education (See Barro, 1991).

Figure 3.4.1: Sources of financing tertiary education



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development 2014)

As illustrated in Figure 3.4.1 above, the majority of learners (62%) stated that they are going to apply for bursaries to fund their studies after matric because their parents cannot afford to pay for tuition fees. In addition, 354 learners (accounting for 13% of participants) said they will use loans to finance their studies further. This means 75% of the learners indicated financial constraints, thus relying on bursaries and study loans for furthering their studies. This indicate that most learners in the province might have difficulty in accessing higher education because of lack of funds, unless they are successful in securing bursaries or study loans

Only 20% learners stated that they would use own funds to finance tertiary education; meaning their parents will pay for tuition fees. An insignificant amount of learners indicated they have other options but did not specify how they are going to finance tertiary education as the questionnaire provided for.

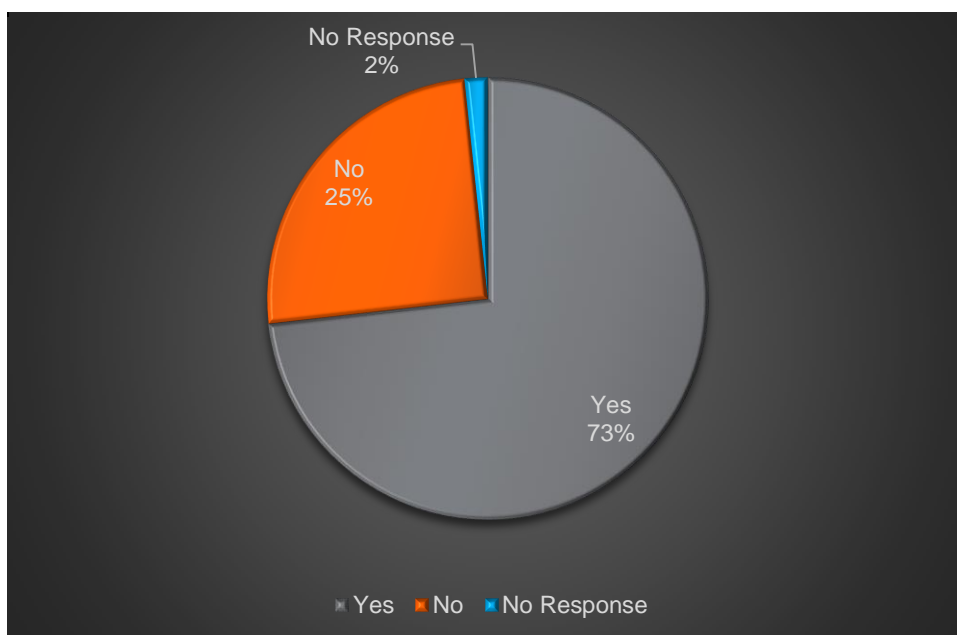
4. LEARNER MIGRATION

This section aims to rank the Northern Cape Province popularity amongst grade 11 and 12 learners for purposes of studying and working. This is to be able to gauge possible migration patterns/brain drain for the province.

4.1. Would you consider enrolling with Sol Plaatjie University?

As revealed by the survey data an overwhelming 73% of learners in the province indicated that they would enrol with SPU **provided** the course they are interested in studying is offered by the institution. It is therefore clear that the University needs to cater to the needs as the indication is 73% of the learners are not against studying at the University but the point of emphasis being the provision of their preferred course of preference by the institution

Fig. 4.1.1 Would you consider enrolling with Sol Plaatjie University?



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014)

Females were the highest proportion of learners who indicated interest in enrolling with the university. In terms of districts migration patterns within the province, the bulk of the migration would be from Z.F Mgcawu at 31% followed by Frances Baard at 30%.

The flow of individuals to acquire education does not only help to maintain an institution's competitiveness it can also be tied to economic opportunities as money spent on tuition and living expenses by students might be quite significant.

25% of the learners who were not interested in studying with Sol Plaatjie University cited reasons such as not knowing anything about the institution, the unavailability of specific degree programs, financial constraints and locality of the institution (Kimberley) as primary motivators in their decision not to enrol with the institution.

In order to attract and retain more students SPU should consider among other things increasing their educational programmes, offering merit-based bursaries, opening satellite campuses as the geographic realities of the province make serving the educational needs of students difficult.

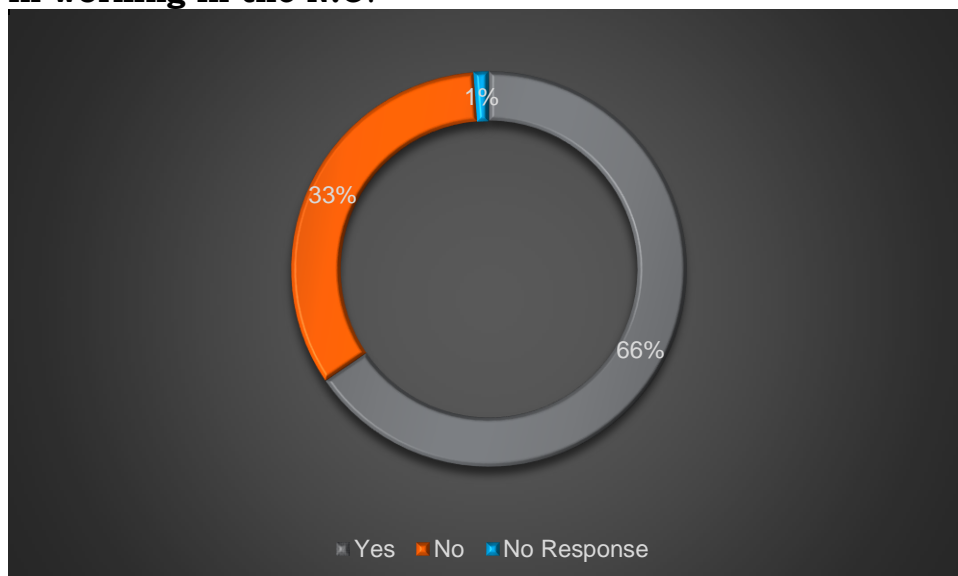
Positive short-term economic benefits provided by the University include among others contribution to employment in the province through the construction of its infrastructure as well as the employment of academic and administrative personnel. Students also represent a valuable pool of talent for employers wishing to boost their labour forces.

However, the most important consideration may be long term economic impact which is, will the students stay and contribute to the provincial economy after they graduate.

4.2. Upon completion of your studies would you be interested in working in the N.C

Individuals decide where to study and this decision cannot be untangled from the decision where they would like to work. The possibilities learners face are to either study and work in the N.C. or alternatively migrate to pursue higher learning opportunities outside but return to the Northern Cape after graduating in order to seek employment. This question sought to give an indication of possible migration patterns with the implications of a possible brain drain to Northern Cape.

Figure 4.2.1 Upon completion of your studies would you be interested in working in the N.C?



Source: (NC-DEDaT Research and Development, 2014)

According to Figure 4.2.1 above, it is clear that the Northern Cape is the province of choice for 66% of the learners, as they indicate they would be willing to work in the Northern Cape after completing their studies.

However, in order to confront unemployment or take preventive measures against brain drain, there is a need to ensure a match between the skills available in the workforce and the demands of the provincial labour market.

33% of the learners indicated reluctance to working in the province after graduating partly because the occupations and industries in which they would seek employment makes it difficult for them to be based in the Northern Cape. Such include music industry, dramatic arts and opera careers, and ocean related careers.

“I am passionate about serving the country and there are less people in the South African Defence Force especially the youth, however the navy and air force base are not located in the Northern Cape” Grade 11 Learner Vuyolwethu High, Kimberley

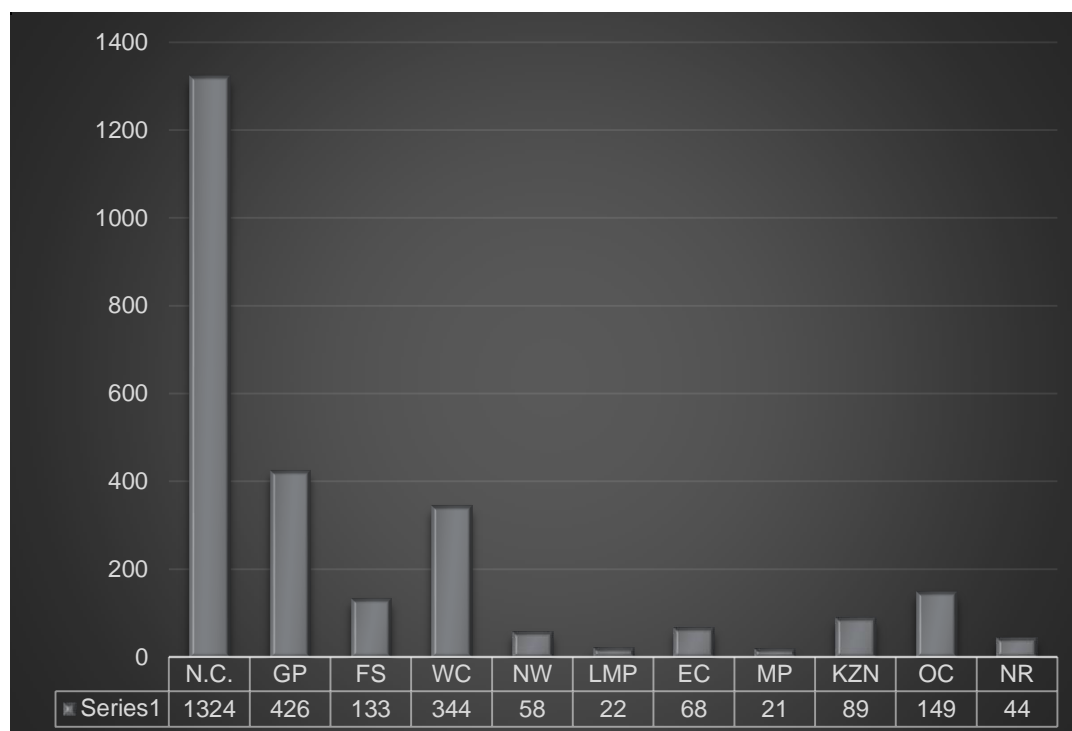
Wanting to explore, appealing scenery and, better opportunities also appear to draw learners to urban centres.

It is therefore important to determine and anticipate the skills requirements of key sectors that have the potential to spark growth and job creation in the province.

4.3 Which province would you prefer to live and work in?

According to the Figure 4.3.1 below it is clear that learner migration patterns are more in favour of Northern Cape as the most preferred province to live and work in. It is therefore important for the province to take advantage of this to ensure minimal brain drain and its impact on the economy by ensuring better and market related opportunities in the future.

Figure 4.3.1 Preferred province to live and work in



Source: (NC DEDaT Research and Development, 2014)

The availability of employment opportunities, wanting to play a role in the provincial development, giving back to their communities and being closer to family and friends were cited by many learners as reasons for choosing the Northern Cape as their preferred province. *“Because I’ll be near my parents and it will not cost a lot of money like traveling fees when I need to visit”* Grade 11 Learner Ratang- Thuto High, Postmansburg.

Gauteng and the Western Cape also fared well recording 426 and 344 respectively, learners who prefer to live and work outside the borders of South Africa recorded a modest 149. Mpumalanga was the least preferred at 21, while those that did not specify their preference recorded 44. This startling finding rings true as it corroborates the StatsSA findings with regards to the migration patterns in the province. According to the StatsSA 2014 Mid-year population estimates, Gauteng and Western Cape constituted 49.5 percent of the outwards migration destination for people migrating from the Northern Cape. What is also key is the fact that similar to the least sought-after migration destinations, Limpopo and Mpumalanga were highlighted by StatsSA.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this survey will afford SPU as well as policy makers in the province to better position the institution to cater for the needs of the learners in the province. Although an overwhelming 73% of learners indicated they would possibly consider studying at the University, the crucial proviso, is the availability of their preferred courses.

There appears to be a possible mismatch or gap between what the institution is currently offering and the preferences of learners in the province. Learners have indicated no interest at all in Retail Management. An interest in the other currently offered courses (as a first option) was indicated for Education, Tourism and Information Technology. Engineering, Law and Social Work fields are amongst the top preferred courses.

Although 33% of the learners indicated they would consider the 5 other programmes (African Languages, Heritage studies, Museum studies, Restoration Architecture and Archaeology) currently considered to be offered by the SPU in the future, it must be noted that these were not first option preferences. Only 1.8% learners indicated they would consider African Languages, Architecture and Archaeology as first options, while none of the learners would consider Heritage and Museum studies as first options.

Northern Cape has been declared as a province of preference to live and work in by 66% of the participants. Sound reasons were cited for the preference like wanting to help in the development of their birth province, wanting to give back to communities, wanting to bring in scarce skills and so on. Hence it can be said that migration patterns strongly favour the province. Outward migration to either GP or WC will be the source of brain drain for the province, but not to a large extent.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The report would fail in its endeavours, if it could not succinctly provide well-thought out recommendations. Thus, the following are the recommendations based on the research and conclusion thereof:

- Parents and educators must ensure that learners choose subjects that are in line with their career aspirations. This can be done by merely asking the learners what they intend to study after completing matric and educator can then give guidance on the suitable combination of subjects taking into consideration learner abilities or strong-points. Educators are in a better position to assess and give proper advice as they are always in contact with learners and know their academic potentials.
 - A need to fully-capacitate Educators offering Life Orientation at schools, as it is the fundamental premise wherein the Learners could establish their career paths, based on sound advice of an astute and well-informed Educator.
 - Also, a need to critically discern the Learners potential career path at an early age. Psychometric tests could be used during the Grade 9 to assess learners' capabilities and thus based on the scientific assessment, a learner could be aptly able to follow a career path wherein they would have the competitive edge.
- Furthermore, the provincial departments including the Office of the Premier and private businesses operating in the province must intensify their effort to award qualifying learners bursaries and must also target rural areas. In addition, departments must collaborate with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) in their efforts or initiatives of career counselling and guidance in high schools and generally with the youth.
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and relevant stakeholders like schools must provide learners with full information

about possible funding mechanism or mechanisms like National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and learners must know when and where they must apply.

- The new SPU must go on road-shows to high schools in an effort to promote and market the university and advertise various study options offered by the university, this might have a positive effect in increasing enrolment numbers and making learners aware of the institution.
 - The report found that more students were interested in the Engineering, Law and Social Work careers, thus it would be incomprehensible if the University and the DHET, were not to consider the inclusion thereof.
- Sol Plaatjie University to increase its educational programmes in an effort to attract and retain students as well as to promote its competitiveness.
 - Premised on the skills requirements in the Northern Cape, the educational programmes at the University should be geared at redressing skills shortage. While also meeting the needs of the strategic sectors as identified and outlined in the Northern Cape Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS), to ensure synergy in the attainment of sustainable economic development in province. This is not to downplay the importance of learner indicated preferences (needs) against the SPU currently offered or future planned courses (supply).
- The SPU and the DHET should embark on a feasibility study to assess the possibility of establishing satellite campuses at the major Towns in the province, owing to:
 - The rural nature of the province and its widely dispersed population – which could be a hindrance in the prospective student journeying to Kimberley due to financial constraints.

- The Northern Cape is the most diverse province in terms of its needs and its gifts, thus satellite campuses could discern the needs of each district and based on the gifts found in those areas, establish educational programmes that address the needs.
- Better coordination is essential between institutions of learning, government and the private sector in order to address skill deficiencies and boost employment potential in the province.

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