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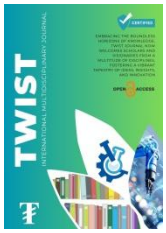

Strategies to Support Accounting Matriculants' Journey Toward Successful Tertiary Education and Professional Careers

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Abstract
Transitioning from secondary to tertiary education presents significant challenges for accounting matriculants, often resulting in academic underperformance and attrition. The study investigated strategies to support accounting matriculants' journey toward successful tertiary education and professional careers. Employing a qualitative research approach grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The study utilised purposive sampling to select 62 first-year accounting students and 10 lecturers from one university. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups, with thematic analysis identifying key themes. Findings revealed that intrinsic motivation drives deeper learning, while early exposure programs enhance confidence in career choices. Findings further indicated the need for faculties such as accounting to emphasise the importance of integrating real-world examples into curricula to improve engagement and relevance. The study recommends the necessity of multifaceted support systems, including mentorship programs, bridging courses, and curriculum redesigns that may align with industry demands. Recommendations include fostering intrinsic motivation through diverse pedagogical methods, implementing outreach initiatives targeting high school students, and revising curricula to incorporate practical applications. By addressing these areas, institutions could enhance academic success rates and strengthen the accounting pipeline.

Keywords
Accounting education, Tertiary transition, Intrinsic motivation, Curriculum design, Industry alignment

INTRODUCTION

The transition from high school to university may be challenging for many accounting matriculants in South Africa. A high pass rate in accounting could demonstrate progress; however, many students may not be fully prepared for the demands of university studies or future careers in accounting (Pasewark, 2021). Students may face challenges such as gaps in foundational knowledge, lack of career guidance, and financial struggles (Grantham & Iachizzi, 2024). The challenges may hinder their academic success and preparation for the accounting profession (Smith et al., 2025). The study investigated strategies to support accounting matriculants' journey toward successful tertiary education and professional careers. The goal was to find ways to support accounting matriculants so they may become skilled professionals who contribute to South Africa's growing economy. Strategies such as mentorship programs, bridging courses, and career guidance may play a key role in helping the accounting student (Bamberger & Smith, 2023).
The following research questions guided the study:

1. What strategies can be employed to assist accounting matriculants in overcoming challenges and achieving success in tertiary education?
2. How do socio-economic factors affect support strategies for accounting matriculants?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Preparedness of Accounting Matriculants

The academic preparedness of accounting matriculants significantly influences their success in tertiary education (Viviers et al., 2023). Research consistently shows that students entering university with a solid foundation in accounting

principles tend to perform better than those without prior exposure (Mappadang et al., 2022). Gaps in foundational knowledge, particularly in mathematics and basic accounting concepts, could lead to difficulties in mastering financial accounting and other core subjects (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2023). These challenges contribute to higher dropout rates and extended graduation timelines (Mujalli et al., 2022). Factors such as inadequate classroom facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a lack of access to resources further exacerbate these issues (Zickafoose et al., 2024). Understanding the specific academic deficiencies of incoming accounting students may be crucial for designing effective interventions and support mechanisms to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education (Ferri et al., 2020).

The Role of Motivation and Learning Strategies in Accounting Education

Motivation and effective learning strategies are pivotal in determining academic success among accounting students (McPherson et al., 2025). Studies indicate a strong correlation between intrinsic motivation and the adoption of deeper learning approaches, leading to better academic outcomes (Thelma et al., 2024). Students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to engage actively with the material, employ effective self-regulated learning strategies, and persevere through challenges (Wang, 2021). Instruments like the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) have been used to demonstrate that motivational beliefs significantly impact learning strategies and academic performance in accounting (Gu et al., 2025). Understanding how to foster intrinsic motivation and equip students with effective learning strategies could be essential for enhancing their academic performance and overall success in accounting programs (Ramsarghey, 2020).

Curriculum Design and Flexibility in Accounting Programs

Innovative curriculum designs and flexible learning options are vital for enhancing accessibility and inclusivity in accounting programs (Mappadang et al., 2022). Traditional accounting curricula may not cater to all students' diverse needs and learning styles, leading to disengagement and attrition (Sam, 2020). Flexible programs that offer accelerated pathways, college credit for high school courses, and online learning options can attract a broader range of students and improve retention rates (Mohzana, 2024). Curriculum designs that incorporate real-world examples, case studies, and experiential learning opportunities may also enhance student engagement and prepare them for the demands of the accounting profession (Grant Jr & Hill, 2020). Exploring and implementing these flexible and innovative curriculum designs is essential for creating a more inclusive and effective learning environment for all accounting students(Grantham & Iachizzi, 2024).

Support Mechanisms for Accounting Students in Tertiary Education

Implementing dedicated support mechanisms is particularly important for helping students navigate the challenges of tertiary education in accounting(Pasewark, 2021). Transitioning from high school to university could be a significant adjustment, and many students may require additional support to succeed(Ramsarghey, 2020). Academic development programs, such as bridging courses, tutoring, and mentoring, have been shown to be effective in enhancing the chances of first-year conversion students obtaining a degree within the standard time limit (Thelma et al., 2024). These programs provide students with the necessary academic and social support to build confidence, develop practical study skills, and integrate into the university environment (Sam, 2020). Further research into the types and effectiveness of different support mechanisms is needed to identify best practices for supporting accounting students in tertiary education (Viviers et al., 2023).

Outreach and Engagement Initiatives for Aspiring Accountants

Outreach and engagement initiatives play a crucial role in influencing high school students' career aspirations and encouraging them to pursue accounting (Mappadang et al., 2022). Connecting high school students with the accounting profession through outreach events, career fairs, and mentorship programs may positively impact their perceptions of accounting as a viable and rewarding career path (Mohzana, 2024). Engagement events led by professional accounting organisations can provide students with insights into the skills and knowledge required for professional success, aligning their expectations with real-world demands (Pasewark, 2021). By fostering early interest and providing guidance, outreach and engagement initiatives can help build a stronger pipeline of talented individuals entering the accounting profession (Thelma et al., 2024).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted Constructivist Learning Theory which posits that learners construct knowledge through experiences and interactions with their environment (Feyzi Behnagh & Yasrebi, 2020). The theory was particularly relevant for accounting matriculants as it emphasised the importance of active learning strategies, such as problem-solving and critical thinking, which are essential in accounting education (MacLeod et al., 2022). By implementing bridging courses and mentorship programs, educators may create environments where students actively engage with accounting concepts, thereby enhancing their understanding and memory of knowledge (Matriano, 2020). The study also adopted the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which focuses on intrinsic motivation and the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Akpomi & Kayii, 2022). For accounting students, fostering inherent motivation may lead to better academic performance (Hsbollah & Hassan, 2022). Personalised learning plans and supportive mentors may help students take charge of their education and inspire a love for their future careers in accounting (MacLeod et al., 2022).

METHODS

Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, prioritising exploring accounting matriculants' lived experiences, behaviours, and perceptions as they navigated the transition to tertiary education (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The approach efficiently investigated the complexities of the social phenomenon (De Leeuw, 2005). A case study research design was employed to provide a focused and in-depth understanding, centering on students and lecturers in one university (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). The case study approach facilitated a deep dive into the distinctions of their experiences within the specific context (Creswell & Creswell, 2003). The study captured rich, detailed insights by emphasising open-ended data collection methods, including interviews and focus groups (Hsbollah & Hassan, 2022). The analytic approach was interpretive, allowing the researchers to identify patterns and themes that emerged organically from the data rather than relying on numerical analysis (Hatch, 2023). The purposive sampling method and thematic analysis aligned with the study's qualitative nature, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how intrinsic motivation, curriculum design, and support mechanisms influenced students' academic success and career readiness (Creswell & Poth, 2016). By prioritising participants' voices and contextual factors, the qualitative design ensured the findings were relevant to real-world educational contexts (De Leeuw, 2005).

Population and Sampling

Purposive sampling was crucial in the study to select participants who could provide rich insights into the experiences of accounting matriculants (Creswell & Poth, 2016. The study had 62 accounting students and 10 accounting lecturers. First-year accounting students and lecturers were intentionally chosen for their direct involvement in the transition process (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). Students offered firsthand accounts of the challenges they faced, while lecturers provided expert perspectives on effective support strategies and teaching methods (De Leeuw, 2005). The deliberate selection ensured that the sample consisted of individuals with relevant knowledge and experiences to address the research questions. By focusing on these specific groups, the study gathered detailed, context-specific data that enhanced the depth and credibility of the findings regarding strategies to support accounting matriculants' journey (Hsbollah & Hassan, 2022).

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations guided the research process to protect the rights and well-being of the participants and were adhered to by the researchers (Newman et al., 2021). Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement in the study, ensuring they understood the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and their right to withdraw at any time (Hatch, 2023). Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by using pseudonyms in all reports and publications and storing data securely (Mirza et al., 2023). Participants were also assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes and would not be shared with any third parties (Newman et al., 2021). Additionally, efforts were made to minimise any potential harm or discomfort to the participants, and they were provided with contact information for support services if needed (Lim, 2024).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness encompasses the overall quality and integrity of the research process, ensuring that the findings are credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable (Adler, 2022). The researchers employed several strategies to enhance trustworthiness, including prolonged engagement, member checking, triangulation, peer debriefing, and reflexivity (Hatch, 2023). The findings were also grounded in the data, with direct quotes from the participants used to illustrate the key themes and patterns (Lim, 2024). Throughout the research process, the researchers remained mindful of their own biases and assumptions and sought to present a fair and accurate representation of the participants' experiences (Mirza et al., 2023).

Validity

In qualitative research, validity refers to the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Lim, 2024). To ensure validity, several strategies were employed throughout the study (Hatch, 2023). Prolonged engagement with the data through multiple readings and iterative coding helped to develop a deep understanding of the participants' perspectives (Adler, 2022). Member checking was used, where preliminary findings were shared with participants to verify the accuracy and resonance of the interpretations (Hatch, 2023). Triangulation was achieved by comparing data from various sources (interviews and focus groups) to identify consistent themes and patterns (Newman et al., 2021). Reflexivity was maintained by acknowledging and addressing the researchers' own biases and assumptions to ensure that the analysis remained grounded in the participants' experiences (Mirza et al., 2023).

Credibility

Credibility is a crucial aspect of qualitative research, indicating the trustworthiness of the findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). To establish credibility, several measures were implemented (Newman et al., 2021). The researchers ensured prolonged engagement with the data through multiple readings and detailed analysis (Mirza et al., 2023). Peer debriefing sessions were conducted with experienced qualitative researchers to review the coding and interpretations, ensuring that

the findings were grounded in the data (Newman et al., 2021). Thick descriptions were provided to give a rich and detailed account of the participants' experiences, allowing readers to assess the transferability of the findings to other contexts (Adler, 2022). Fourth, purposeful sampling was employed to select participants who could provide in-depth insights into the research questions (Lim, 2024).

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the research process (Lim, 2024). While complete objectivity is not possible, efforts were made to enhance the reliability of the study (Adler, 2022). A detailed audit trail was maintained, documenting all aspects of the research process, including data collection, coding, and analysis decisions. Inter-coder reliability was assessed by having two researchers independently coded a subset of the data and comparing their results to ensure consistency (Mirza et al., 2023). Additionally, clear, and explicit coding guidelines were developed to minimise subjective interpretations. The findings were also presented with sufficient supporting evidence from the data to allow readers to evaluate the rigour and transparency of the research process (Newman et al., 2021).

Confirmability

Confirmability in the study was addressed by ensuring the findings were grounded in the participants' narratives and not solely based on the researchers' interpretations (Newman et al., 2021). A detailed audit trail was maintained, documenting all phases of the research process, including data collection, transcription, coding, and analysis (Mirza et al., 2023). The raw data, coding schemes, and analytical memos were carefully preserved. Independent researchers were invited to review the data and analytical processes to verify the consistency of the interpretations (Lim, 2024). Direct quotes from the participants were extensively used in the findings to provide concrete evidence for the identified themes and patterns, allowing readers to assess the extent to which the conclusions were supported by the data findings (Adler, 2022). These measures aimed to minimise researcher bias and enhance the confirmability of the study's conclusions (Hatch, 2023).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied to other contexts or settings (Adler, 2022). Although qualitative research was context-specific, the researchers aimed to enhance transferability by providing thick descriptions of the participants, the setting, and the research process (Mirza et al., 2023). Detailed information about the characteristics of the participants, the context of the study, and the data collection and analysis methods were provided to allow readers to make informed judgments about the applicability of the findings to their situations (Hatch, 2023). Additionally, the researchers made explicit connections between the findings and existing literature to demonstrate the relevance and significance of the study (Newman et al., 2021).

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations were considered when interpreting the findings of the study (Hatch, 2023). The sample was limited to a small number of accountings matriculants and lecturers from one university in South Africa, which limited the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Data were collected through self-report methods, which may have been subject to recall bias and social desirability bias, as guided by (Mirza et al., 2023). The qualitative nature of the study means that the findings are interpretive and may be influenced by the researchers' perspectives (Gelo et al., 2008). The study focused primarily on the experiences of first-year accounting students, and further research could be needed to understand the support strategies' long-term impact on their academic and professional success, as discussed (Lim, 2024).

Data Collection

Data collection was primarily conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to gather rich, qualitative data on the experiences of accounting matriculants (Hatch, 2023). The interviews explored personal challenges faced during the transition to tertiary education, experiences with existing support strategies, and suggestions for additional support mechanisms (Gelo et al., 2008). On the other hand, focus groups facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas among participants, providing a broader understanding of the challenges and strategies from diverse perspectives (Gunter, 2013). All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with the explicit consent of the participants to ensure accurate transcription and analysis (Gelo et al., 2008). The goal was to capture in-depth insights that could not be obtained through quantitative methods alone, aligning with the study's aim to understand the nuances of the transition process (Gelo et al., 2008).

Data Treatment and Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus groups underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. The process involved careful transcription of the recorded data, followed by iterative coding to categories responses based on common experiences, challenges, and perceptions (Newman et al., 2021). The coding process was both inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data, and deductive, guided by the research questions and theoretical framework (Lim, 2024). The identified themes were refined and organised to provide a coherent narrative of the participants' experiences (Gelo et al., 2008). Using thematic analysis enabled the researchers to derive meaningful insights into the effectiveness of various support strategies and the factors influencing accounting matriculants' success in tertiary education (Hatch, 2023).

FINDINGS

Table 1 Themes and Sub-themes

Research Question	Theme	Sub-theme
1. What strategies can be employed to assist accounting matriculants in overcoming challenges and achieving success in tertiary education?	Enhancing Academic Transition and Success for Accounting Matriculants through Strategic Interventions	The Effectiveness of Peer Mentoring and Academic Bridging Programs in Supporting the Transition of Accounting Matriculants
2. How do socio-economic factors affect support strategies for accounting matriculants?	The Impact of Socio-Economic Disparities on the Design and Efficacy of Support Strategies for Accounting Matriculants in Tertiary Education	The Role of Parental Involvement and Family Income in Moderating the Success of Academic Interventions

Research Question: *What strategies can be employed to assist accounting matriculants in overcoming challenges and achieving success in tertiary education?*
Theme: *Enhancing Academic Transition and Success for Accounting Matriculants through Strategic Interventions.*
Sub-theme: *The Effectiveness of Peer Mentoring and Academic Bridging Programs in Supporting the Transition of Accounting Matriculants.*

Two of the participants narrated:
Student Response: *"Honestly, without the peer mentoring program, I don't think I I would have made it through the first semester. Just having someone who had been through it, who knew the lecturers, the tricky concepts, and the unwritten rules of university life, made a massive difference. They helped me with everything from understanding assignments to managing my time. It was more helpful than just listening to lecturers because the mentors understood where we were coming from as new students. It gave me hope and direction."*
Lecturer's Response: *"We have seen a significant improvement in the performance of students participating in the academic bridging program. The structured support, particularly in reinforcing foundational concepts that they might have missed in high school, is invaluable. It boosts their confidence and equips them with the necessary skills to tackle the more challenging tertiary-level coursework. It is not just academics, but the bridging programs help students socially integrate and navigate university processes. It addresses a gap we saw before we introduced this program."*

These participant responses strongly suggest that structured support systems, such as peer mentoring and academic bridging programs, are invaluable for accounting matriculants transitioning to tertiary education. The student's experience highlights peer mentors' personalised guidance and relatable support, filling gaps not always addressed by traditional lectures. The lecturer's perspective corroborates and emphasises the tangible improvements observed in students participating in bridging programs, particularly in solidifying foundational knowledge and enhancing social integration. The interventions address critical transitional challenges, fostering both academic confidence and a sense of belonging, which are key to student success.

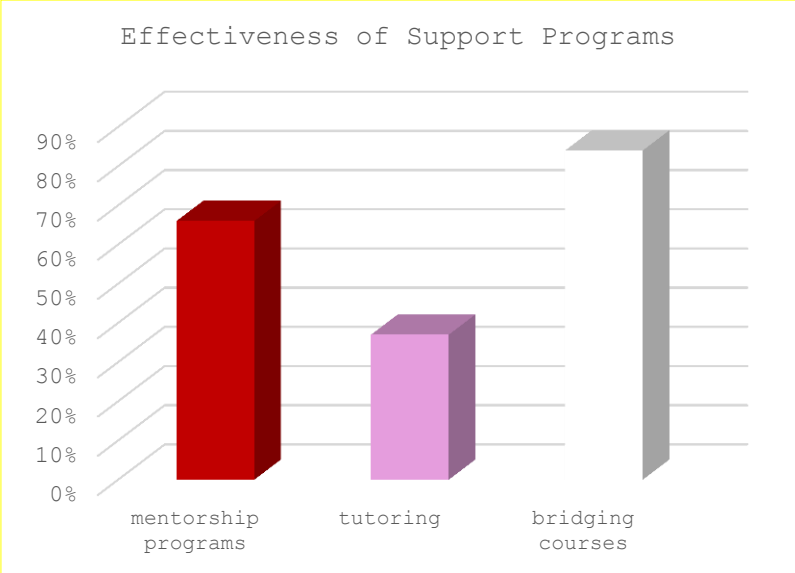

Fig. 1 Effectiveness of Support Programs

Fig. 1 shows the effectiveness of support programs: mentorship programs 60%, tutoring programs 30% and bridging courses 79%.

Research Question: How do socio-economic factors affect support strategies for accounting matriculants?
Theme: The Impact of Socio-Economic Disparities on the Design and Efficacy of Support Strategies for Accounting Matriculants in Tertiary Education
Sub-theme: The Role of Parental Involvement and Family Income in Moderating the Success of Academic Interventions

Student Response: *" It is tough. My parents want to support me, but they did not finish high school, so they do not really understand what I am going through in accounting. Plus, with my younger siblings, money is always tight at home. I know some students have parents who can afford extra tutoring or can help them with networking, but I must figure everything out on my own. It also makes the academic interventions harder to take advantage of because I also have to help out at home."*
Lecturer Response: *"We have noticed that students from lower-income families often face additional barriers to success, even when we provide academic support. Some struggle to attend tutoring sessions because they need to work part-time to support their families. Others may lack access to reliable internet or a quiet study space at home. Parental involvement is also a key factor. Students whose parents actively engage in their education, regardless of their educational background, tend to be more resilient and resourceful."*

These responses highlight how socio-economic disparities shape the effectiveness of academic support strategies for accounting matriculants. The student's account highlights the dual challenges of limited parental guidance and financial constraints, which hinder access to resources like tutoring and networking opportunities. The lecturer's perspective corroborates by noting systemic barriers such as part-time work obligations and inadequate home environments undermining intervention participation. Parental involvement emerges as a critical moderating factor, with engaged families fostering resilience despite educational gaps. The insights suggest that support strategies, such as financial aid and flexible tutoring formats, could address structural inequities to ensure equitable access to academic success.

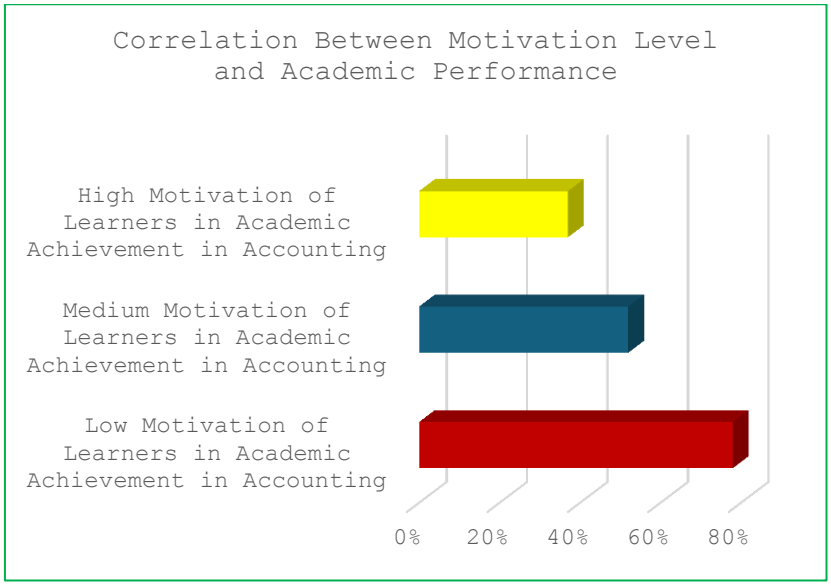

Fig. 2 Correlation Between Motivation Level and Academic Performance

Fig. 2 illustrates the correlation between motivation level and academic performance: high motivation of students in educational achievement in accounting 78%, medium motivation of learners in academic achievement in accounting 50%, and low motivation of learners in academic achievement in accounting 36%.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings highlighted the critical role of structured academic support systems in facilitating accounting matriculants' transition to tertiary education. Peer mentoring programs and academic bridging courses emerged as pivotal interventions, with participants attributing improved academic performance and social integration to these initiatives. For example, bridging programs reinforced foundational knowledge gaps, while peer mentors provided relatable guidance on navigating university processes, addressing challenges identified in prior studies about inadequate high school preparation and systemic resource shortages as highlighted by (Pasewark, 2021). Programs like the University of North Texas' mentorship circle demonstrated how combining peer ("buddy") and professional mentoring fosters academic resilience and career readiness, with mentees reporting improved confidence in internship recruitment and CPA exam preparation as discussed on constructivism theory by (Akpomi et al., 2022). Similarly, peer mentoring initiatives in economics and accounting have shown that weekly motivational support and concept clarification enhance mentees' understanding of complex material, directly boosting retention and pass rates, as shown by the findings in *Figure 5.1* showing the need for motivation.

Socio-economic disparities further shaped the efficacy of support strategies. Students from lower-income backgrounds faced compounded barriers, including limited parental involvement due to educational gaps and financial

constraints that restricted access to tutoring or quiet study environments. These findings align with broader research on systemic inequities in South African education, where structural factors such as part-time work obligations and unreliable internet access hinder academic success (Zickafoose et al., 2024). Peer mentoring programs, however, have mitigated such gaps by fostering belonging and resource access, particularly for first-year students who lack familial guidance. For example, the Mentor Accountant Project at Dundee University revealed that peer mentors helped first-year accounting students navigate academic and social challenges, improving their adaptability to tertiary demands (Ferri et al., 2020).

The correlation between motivation levels and academic performance underscored the need for interventions that foster resilience and resourcefulness. High motivation levels corresponded with more substantial achievement (78%), as revealed in (*Figure 5.2)*, suggesting that support strategies may integrate psychological scaffolding alongside academic bridging (Viviers et al., 2023). Peer mentoring's dual role in enhancing study habits and emotional well-being—evidenced by mentees' improved time management and exam preparation skills—supports the integration as discussed by (Bamberger, & Smith, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The qualitative case study explored the experiences of accounting matriculants at one university to identify effective support strategies for a successful transition to tertiary education. The findings emphasised the crucial role of mentorship programs in providing personalised guidance and building confidence, particularly in navigating university life's academic and social complexities. Academic bridging courses were also deemed valuable for reinforcing foundational knowledge and enhancing study skills. Furthermore, the integration of real-world applications into the curriculum was shown to increase student engagement and preparedness for professional practice. Addressing socio-economic disparities by providing resources and creating inclusive learning environments emerged as essential for ensuring equitable access to success. By prioritising these multifaceted approaches, institutions could significantly improve the academic outcomes and career readiness of accounting matriculants, strengthening the accounting pipeline in South Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following for the study:

Implement Comprehensive Mentorship Programs

Mentorship programs may be institutionalised and expanded to provide personalised support for accounting matriculants. Mentors, whether senior students, alums, or industry professionals, can offer guidance on academic expectations, career pathways, and navigating university life. The success of these programs hinges on the careful matching of mentors and mentees based on shared interests and career goals, as well as on providing training and resources for mentors to effectively support their mentees. Regular check-ins, feedback sessions, and networking opportunities should be integrated into the program to foster a keen sense of community and belonging.

Develop Targeted Academic Bridging Courses

To address gaps in foundational knowledge, targeted academic bridging courses should be designed specifically for incoming accounting students. These courses could focus on reinforcing essential concepts in mathematics, basic accounting principles, and study skills. Delivery methods should be flexible, incorporating online modules, workshops, and small group tutoring sessions to cater to diverse learning styles. Regular assessments and personalised feedback may be provided to help students track their progress and identify areas for improvement. The content of these courses should be aligned with the requirements of the first-year accounting curriculum to ensure a seamless transition to tertiary studies.

Integrate Real-World Applications into Curriculum

Accounting curricula may be revised to integrate more real-world applications and case studies, enhancing the relevance and engagement of course content. Faculty could collaborate with industry professionals to develop case studies that reflect current business challenges and practices. Experiential learning opportunities, such as simulations, internships, and guest lectures, may be incorporated into the curriculum to provide students with hands-on experience. This approach will enhance their understanding of accounting concepts and equip them with the practical skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the profession.

Promote Early Career Exposure Initiatives

Early career exposure initiatives could be promoted to inspire interest in accounting and provide students with insights into career opportunities. High school outreach programs, career fairs, and site visits to accounting firms may expose students to the profession early on, helping them make informed decisions about their future studies. Collaboration with professional accounting organisations to offer high school students' workshops, seminars, and mentorship opportunities may further enhance their understanding of the field. These initiatives may also help dispel misconceptions about accounting and highlight the diverse career paths available to graduates.

Foster a Supportive and Inclusive Learning Environment

Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment is crucial for promoting the well-being and success of all accounting students. Faculty may strive to create a classroom climate that values diversity, encourages open

communication, and fosters a sense of belonging. Peer support networks, study groups, and social activities could help students build connections and feel more connected to the university community. Additionally, providing access to mental health services, financial aid, and other resources may help address the holistic needs of students and support their overall well-being.

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