

MOT SA RESEARCH REPORT
TVET COLLEGE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE MOT
LIFE-SKILLS PROGRAMME

**Research Report prepared by the FET Institute,
University of the Western Cape**

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INTRODUCTION

The MOT programme, first introduced to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in South Africa in 2006, has been growing steadily since. Since 2011, MOT SA has annually surveyed students exiting the programme to determine their experiences of the MOT programme and its perceived impact on their lives. The questionnaire has been finessed through successive iterations, and this 2016 Report will be the fifth successive report since the research was piloted. The 2016 report is based on responses from students who completed the MOT programme in 2015 and filled out the questionnaire.

The intentions of the MOT programme are expressed in the focus areas of the questions addressed to students in the survey. These focus areas concern self-knowledge, personal development, responsibility, caring for others, respect and affirmation - in line with the themes of the programme curriculum. A copy of the questionnaire administered to students is available on request.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

From the 821 students who completed the 3-year MOT programme, 476 responded to the research questionnaire. They included students from 5 TVET Colleges in the Western Cape (Boland College, College of Cape Town, False Bay College, Northlink College and West Coast College). The distribution of MOT students by campus is provided in Figure 1 below.

ANALYSIS OF THE MOT DATA

The questionnaire covered biographical information, and categories of questions related to how the MOT programme had impacted on students' classroom interactions with other students, on their personal values and attitudes, and on their personal choices. Students were asked to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure' in 5 cloze procedure¹ exercises, while the final section asked for written comments on the programme. The questions in each section were based on the content areas that were covered in the MOT curriculum, and students were asked to reflect on their behaviour and attitudes before undertaking MOT and to decide when answering the questions, whether MOT had changed the way they

¹ Exercises where respondents 'fill in the blanks'

thought, felt or behaved. Students were allowed to remain anonymous in the hope that this might make them answer more truthfully.

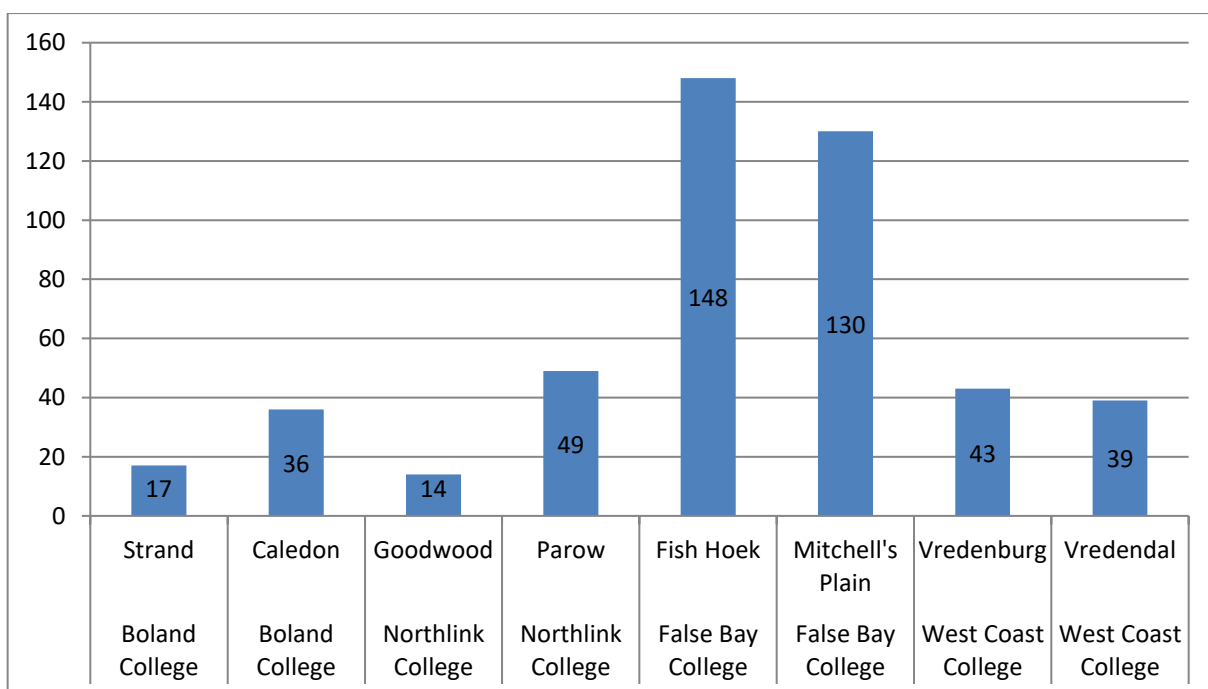
The following overall findings are set out in the sequence in which questions were answered in the questionnaires.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

There were 476 students who completed the MOT questionnaire in 2015 of the 821 who completed the programme². The distribution of respondents by campus is provided in Figure 1. Students were drawn from an age range of 17 to 51 years old, with the mode for students being in the 19-28 year old category (especially 19-22 years old). 11 students reported having a disability. The sample contained 383 females and 91 males.

Students were drawn from a range of subject areas including: Primary Health; Educare; Cosmetology; Beauty Therapy; Educational Development; Office Administration; Automotive Repair & Management; Engineering and Related Development (ERD); Fitting & Turning; Management Assistant; Business Management; Public Management; Public Administration; Financial Management; Information Technology (IT); Finance, Economics & Accounting; and Enterprise & Business Management (E&BM).

FIGURE 1: MOT RESPONDENTS BY CAMPUS



² Mainly accounted for by two large campuses (Atlantis and Gardens) not submitting data.

SECTION 1: ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This section shows the number of students using communication technology and social media.

FIGURE 2: STUDENT ACCESS TO CELL-PHONE AND INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

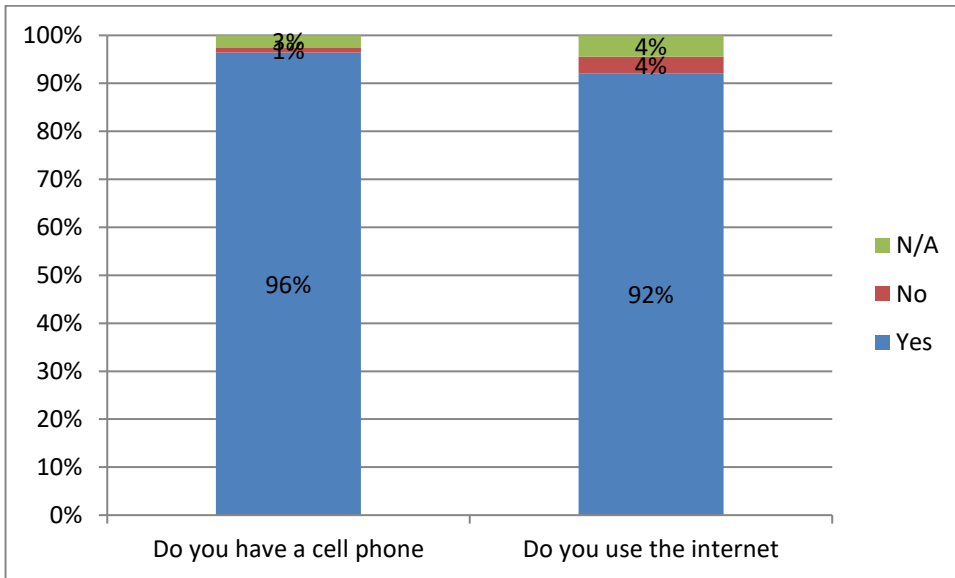
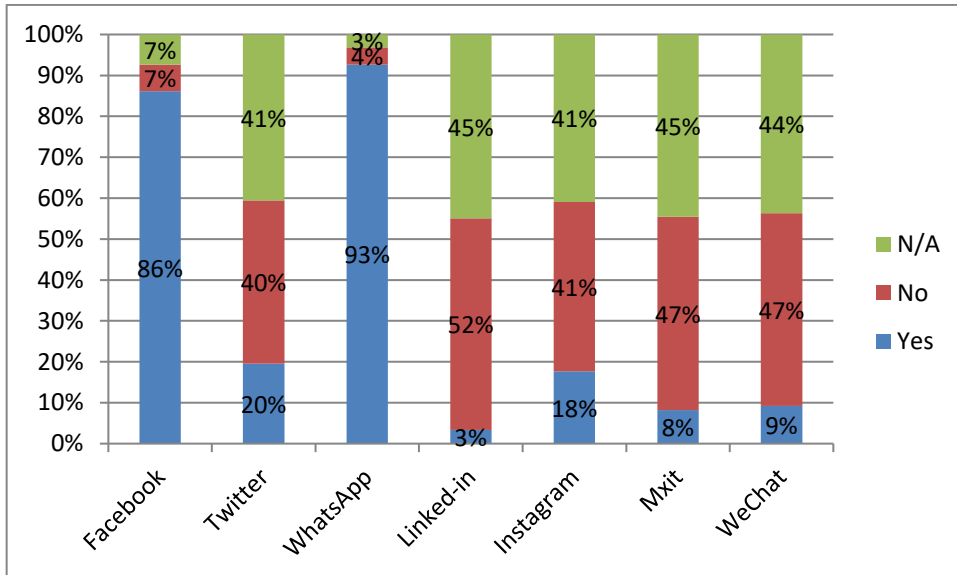


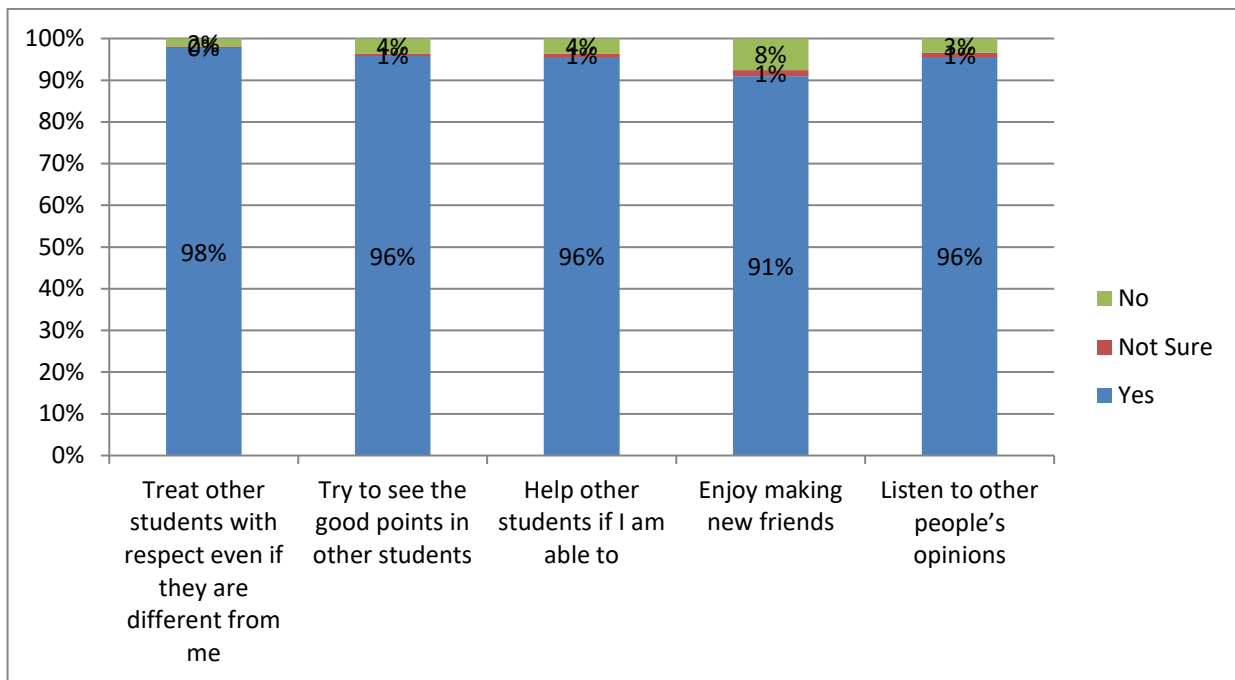
FIGURE 3: STUDENTS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



As shown in Figures 2 and 3 above, nearly all respondents had cell-phones (96%), with only slightly fewer accessing the internet (92%). Of the social media applications, WhatsApp (93%) and Facebook (86%) were by far the most popular social media, followed by with a smaller number using Twitter (20%) and Instagram (18%) with very few using WeChat (9%), Mxit (8%), and Linked-in (3%). Most smartphones are able to access the various applications.

SECTION 2: IMPACT ON CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

FIGURE 4: STUDENT RESPONSES ON POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS



Responses on the positive impact of MOT on classroom interactions with peers were overwhelmingly positive, with all of the elements achieving positive responses in the 90th percentile.

'Treating other students with respect' received the greatest affirmative response (98%), followed by 'try to see good points in other students' (96%) and 'help other students if I am able to' (96%); 'listening to other people's opinions' (96%); and 'enjoy making new friends' being equally positive at 91%. The responses which achieved the highest and the lowest scores are similar to, but slightly higher than, that depicted by previous research with 'treating other students with respect' achieving a slightly higher rating than the 2014 cohort.

SECTION 3: IMPACT ON PERSONAL GROWTH

FIGURE 5: STUDENT RESPONSES TO POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON PERSONAL GROWTH

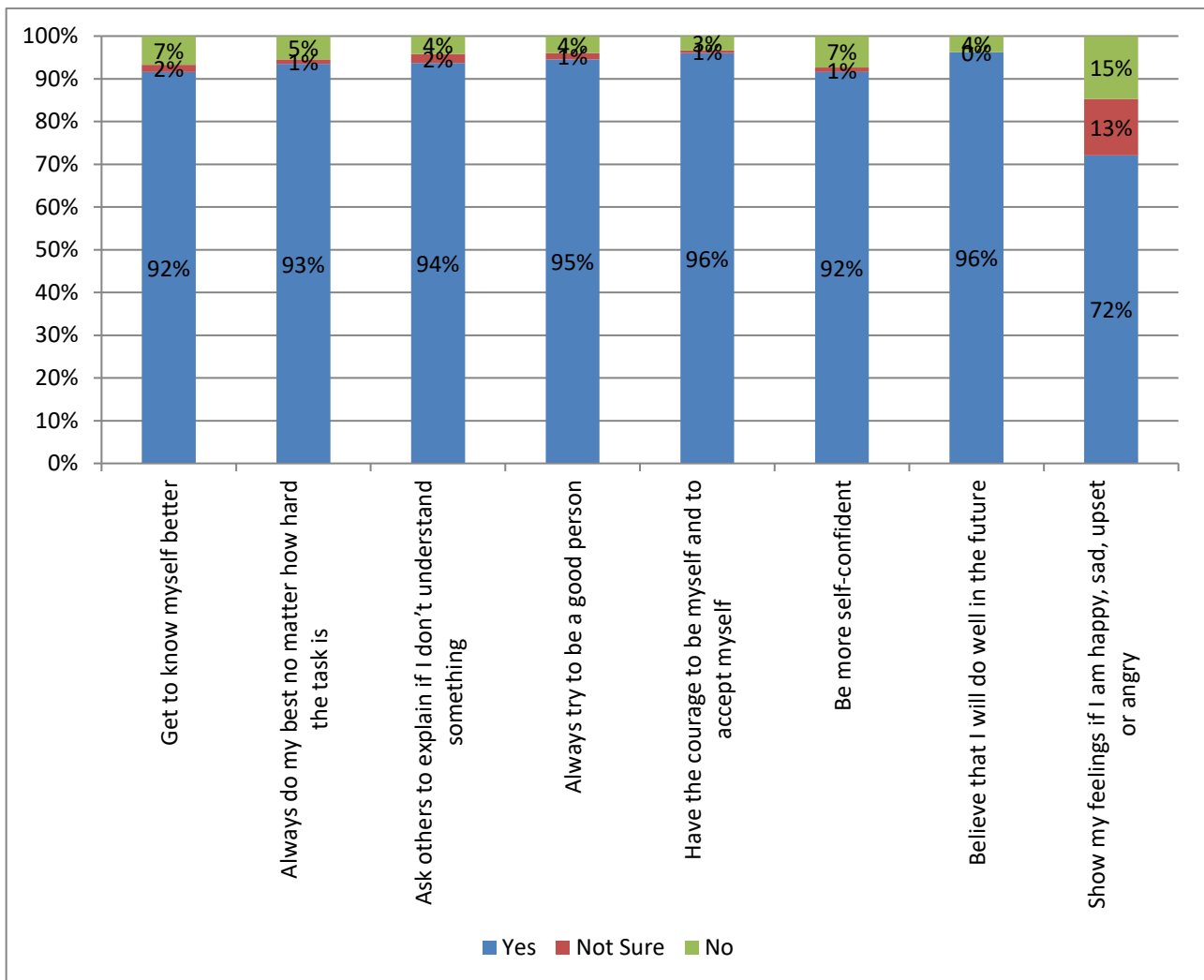
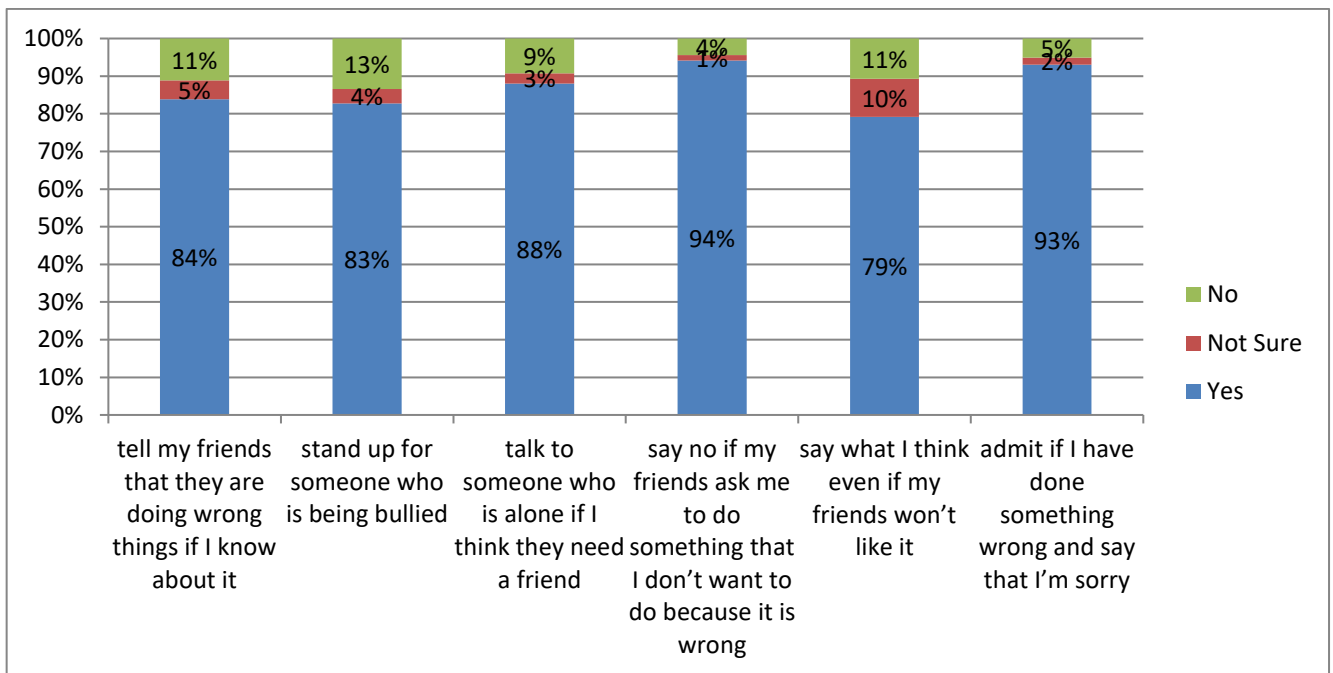


Figure 5 again shows highly positive responses to the impact of MOT on personal growth, scoring consistently in the 90s (with one exception). Self-acceptance and belief in the future (96%) and moral choice (95%) score very highly with the ability to seek help, self-motivation and the impact of the MOT programme on their self-knowledge scoring very closely, with an overall improvement across the categories since the last report. Relative to these high scores, self-expression of emotions was relatively low at 72%, where some students again indicated that they had difficulty ‘to show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry’, a trend which has been consistent in the research, with exactly the same percentage being recorded in the 2015 report. Generally however there has been an improvement in the overall category of students’ personal growth.

SECTION 4: IMPACT ON PERSONAL VALUES

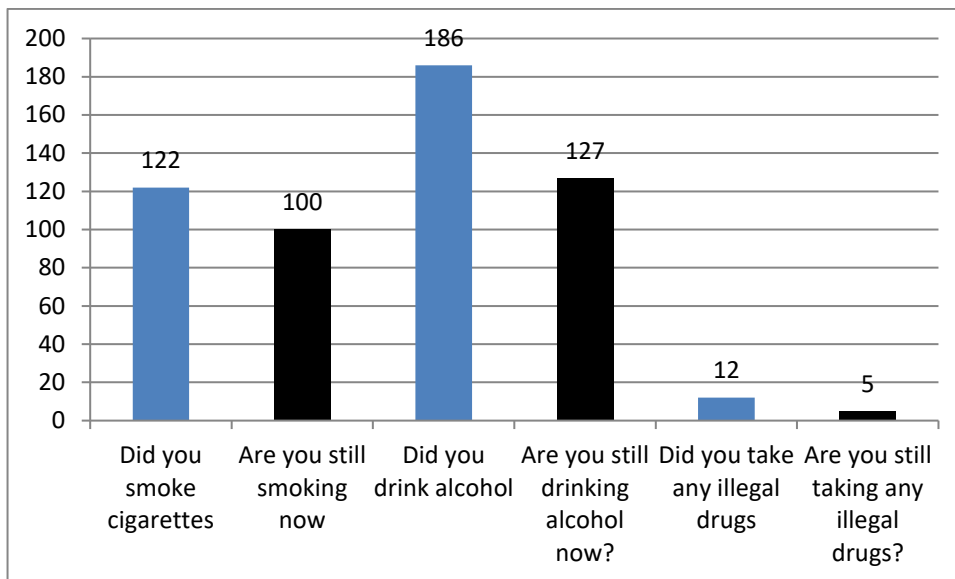
FIGURE 6: STUDENT RESPONSES TO POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON PERSONAL VALUES



Under the category of values, respondents were challenged to think about whether MOT had assisted them in how they responded to uncomfortable situations involving their friends, and which demanded some adherence to personal values. From Fig. 6 above, students were highly confident that they could own up and apologise for wrong-doing (93%), and refuse to do something if they knew it was wrong (94%); but it appeared that fewer people were confident that they would discourage friends from wrong-doing (84%) or defend a peer against bullying (83%), and especially to express contrary views (79%), though the percentages that were confident still remained fairly high (at about 80%). Again most positive scores were marginal improvements on the 2015 report (which in turn showed marginal improvements on the report before that). An area that could require some attention is that more students are recording a more emphatic 'no' than previous reports (as opposed to 'not sure'), though the reasons for this could be varied. It should be noted though that positive responses were uniformly high, with some higher than others. Fluctuations over the two previous years were marginal.

SECTION 5: IMPACT ON PERSONAL LIFESTYLE CHOICES

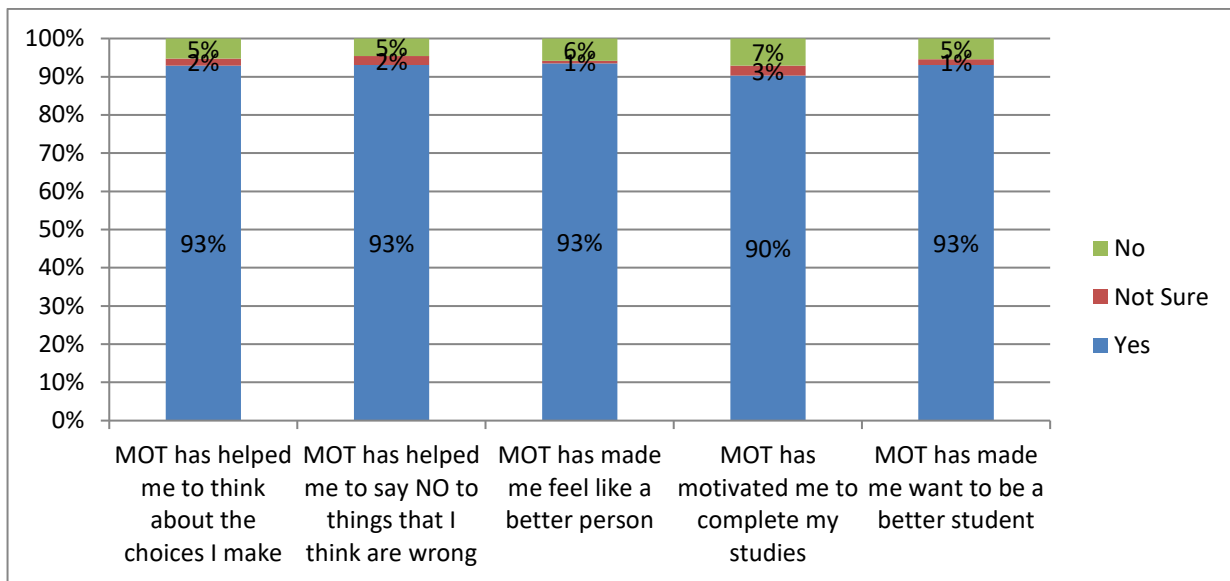
FIGURE 7: STUDENTS' LIFESTYLE CHOICES BEFORE AND AFTER MOT



In terms of MOT's impact on personal lifestyle choices, there was a decline in drug usage, and substantial declines in smoking and alcohol consumption, attributed by respondents to the influence of the MOT intervention. It is encouraging that whilst 122 (29% of the cohort) reported smoking at the start of the MOT programme, this figure dropped to 100 as a result of the MOT intervention. Similarly, of the 186 (37% of the cohort) respondents who acknowledged that they had consumed alcohol prior to the programme, 59 had stopped doing so since the programme. Even though there were relatively few admissions to drug use (12 individuals) prior to the programme, which was substantially fewer than in previous reports, 7 of the 12 had stopped using drugs. This is significant, since the potential negative social impact of these lifestyle choices is considerable. This downward trend in negative lifestyles as a result of the MOT programme has been consistent over the years, and is encouraging in view of the individuals who may have turned their lives around because of MOT.

SECTION 6: CHOICES AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

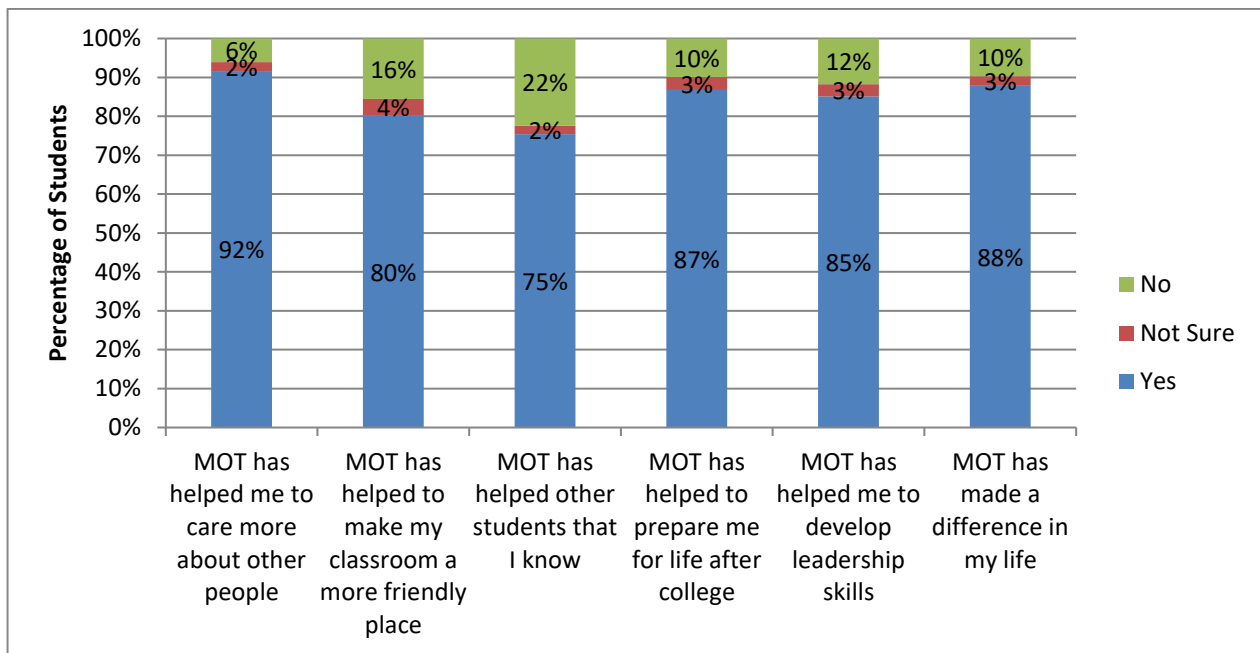
FIGURE 8: IMPACT ON CHOICES AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY



Section 6 of the questionnaire dealt with the impact of the MOT programme on student choices and taking responsibility. Figure 8 above shows the percentage of students who credited MOT with positively influencing them in their above named behaviours/attitudes. The questions covered a range of issues regarding MOT's impact on choices, motivation towards studies, caring for others, preparation for life, making a difference and classroom atmosphere. Even though there were slightly larger numbers of 'no' responses than in the 2015 research, the positive responses were consistently above 90%. MOT's influence on 'thinking about choices I make', 'wanting to be a better student', 'feeling like a better person' and willingness to 'say no to things that I think are wrong' all received a 93% positive response. Moreover the impact on 'motivation to complete my studies', was also high at 90%.

SECTION 7: RESPONSES TO THE MOT PROGRAMME

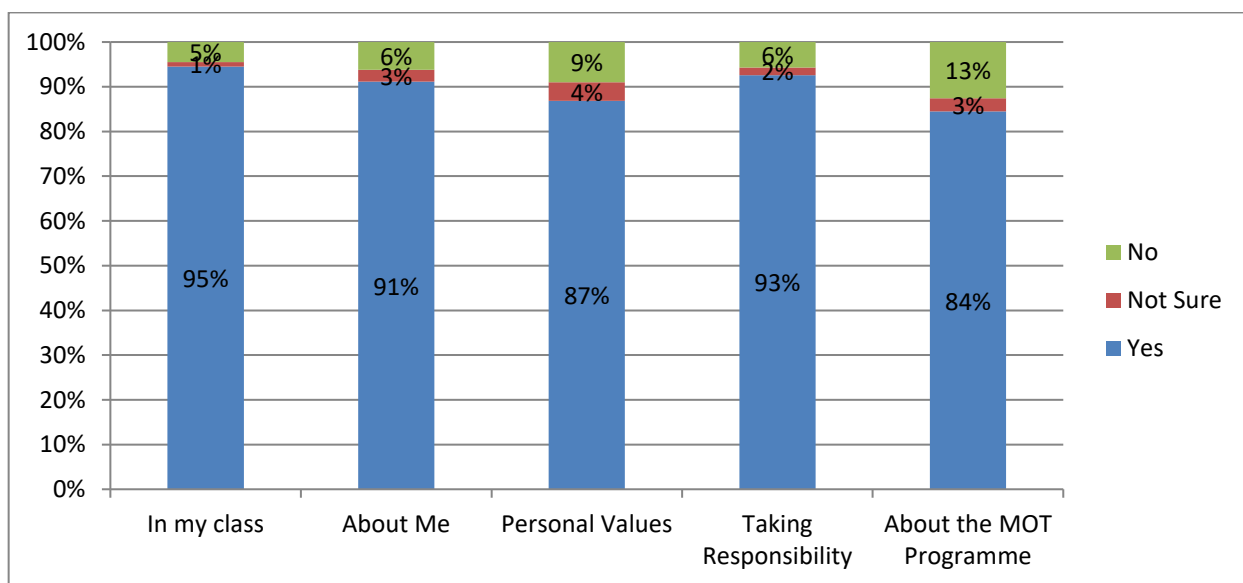
FIGURE 9: STUDENT RESPONSES TO OVERALL IMPACT OF MOT



Section 7 of the questionnaire required students to assess the overall positive impact of MOT, including a category to ‘develop leadership skills’ which had been introduced in 2014. The questions covered broader issues of MOT’s impact on their caring or preparing for life beyond college, others being helped or the classroom environment improving, their own journey towards changing, and the new element: being developed as leaders. The results are shown in Figure 9, above. In terms of personal change, high percentages of students reported that the MOT helped them to ‘care more about other people’ (92%) and ‘prepared me for life after college’ (87%). Similarly, high percentages of positive responses reported that MOT ‘made a difference in my life’ (88%) and ‘helped make the classroom a more friendly place’ (80%), though the latter was lower than the 89% reported in the 2015 report. Somewhat lower was the number of students responding that MOT had ‘helped other students I know’ (75%). The previous report noted that the new category of ‘develop leadership skills’ was relatively low at 54% having been introduced that year (2013). However, in 2013 MOT SA introduced the MOT Youth Peer Education Programme which is showing significant development of leadership skills among the students at the colleges. As predicted, the outcomes of this 2015 survey show a substantial increase in leadership development to the current 85%.

Figure 10 below shows averages of the responses across all the items within each of the sections of the questionnaire. As in the 2015 report, this 2016 report shows that the impact of MOT was strongest on classroom interactions, taking responsibility and personal growth (95%, 93% and 91% respectively). The impact on personal values came in slightly lower at 87%. This averaged response shows that the overwhelming majority of students responded positively to the programme and found that it helped them across all the areas of the MOT programme goals. Compared to the previous report (on the 2014 student cohort), the overall positive response to the MOT programme’s impact on their lives improved slightly to 84%, an upward trend which occurred across all the categories.

FIGURE 10: AVERAGED RESPONSES BY SECTION



To conclude this section on the quantitative research findings, a ranked table is provided below, listing the individual attributes referred to in the MOT questionnaire, and showing how students responded in a ranking order from highest to lowest (for positive responses) on all the items tested. It begins to highlight the areas in which MOT apparently had the highest success rates. From the table below, and consistent with the responses from the previous report, attributes most positively affected by MOT (all above 95%), were mostly in relation to respect for difference, self-knowledge and self-belief. This contrasts somewhat with lower scores, between 70-80%, which were attributed to challenging others and being honest/open about personal feelings.

TABLE 1: RANKED LISTING OF ATTRIBUTES BY PERCENTAGE³ OF STUDENTS POSITIVELY AFFECTED

Question	Yes	Not Sure	No
MOT has helped me to treat other students with respect even if they are different from me	98%	0%	2%
MOT has helped me to try to see the good points in other students	96%	1%	4%
MOT has helped me to help other students if I am able to	96%	1%	4%
MOT has helped me to have the courage to be myself and to accept myself	96%	1%	3%
MOT has helped me to listen to other people's opinions	96%	1%	3%
MOT has helped me to believe that I will do well in the future	96%	0%	4%
MOT has helped me to always try to be a good person	95%	1%	4%
MOT has helped me to ask others to explain if I don't understand something	94%	2%	4%
MOT has helped me to say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong	94%	1%	4%
MOT has helped me to always do my best no matter how hard the task is	93%	1%	5%
MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make	93%	2%	5%
MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong	93%	2%	5%
MOT has made me feel like a better person	93%	1%	6%
MOT has made me want to be a better student	93%	1%	5%
MOT has helped me to admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry	93%	2%	5%
MOT has helped me to get to know myself better	92%	2%	7%
MOT has helped me to care more about other people	92%	2%	6%
MOT has helped me to be more self-confident	92%	1%	7%
MOT has helped me to enjoy making new friends	91%	1%	8%
MOT has motivated me to complete my studies	90%	3%	7%
MOT has helped me to talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend	88%	3%	9%
MOT has made a difference in my life	88%	3%	10%
MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college	87%	3%	10%
MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills	85%	3%	12%
MOT has helped me to tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it	84%	5%	11%
MOT has helped me to stand up for someone who is being bullied	83%	4%	13%
MOT has helped to make my classroom a more friendly place	80%	4%	16%
MOT has helped me to say what I think even if my friends won't like it	79%	10%	11%
MOT has helped other students that I know	75%	2%	22%
MOT has helped me to show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry	72%	13%	15%

³ Rows may not add up to 100% as some rounding off may have occurred.

SECTION 8: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY STUDENTS ON THE MOT PROGRAMME

At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to write general comments on their experience/impressions of the MOT programme and/or their MOT presenter. Commonly stated themes are illustrated in the extracts below. The selected extracts show the range of student comments, which were overwhelmingly positive:

- *By the time I encountered the MOT programme, I had no belief in myself. ...now I believe in myself.*
- *Thank you for encouraging us Level 4s to succeed and prosper. We have grown together as a class and we have made it to our final exams together.*
- *Thank you for encouraging us as a class to work together as a team. We have learned to have courage to care, to live, to love, to learn and to prosper.*
- *I am a quiet and shy person, but through the programme my classmates became friendly and caring towards me. Because of that, I wanted to be more involved personally and not only academically. I now have friends and people I share interests with.*
- *I would say the MOT campaign did help me, because it made me want to stay at college. After all I have been through, MOT gave me courage to be who I want to be and to not look back.*
- *Through MOT I have gained awesome friends and bonds.*
- *It made me realise that I am not the only one going through personal problems and it gave me the courage to speak about my problems without the fear of being judged.*
- *The MOT sessions helped me to cope with family crises and relationship problems.*
- *MOT is the only reason I joined the Student Representative Council on campus. I have discovered leadership skills, learned about my weaknesses and I am definitely working on them.*
- *I was always unsure of myself but with MOT along my side, I managed to achieve greater results.*
- *Today I am part of the top achievers because of the love and caring MOT showed me. Thank you MOT.*
- *I became the treasurer of the SRC in 2014.*
- *During the MOT sessions I laughed a lot, which was nice.*
- *It was very life changing.*
- *Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this eye opening programme.*
- *MOT also helped me personally, by helping me to understand myself. Before MOT I used to underestimate myself, but now I know my position and my duties. I am a girl of noble character.*
- *I have come to a point where I understand that I don't always have to be silent, I can ask for help.*
- *The MOT programme helped me think before I make a decision, now I know what I have to do when I'm having problems in life.*

- *I remember when we started the sessions, I had little confidence and I had many doubts about my life and career ...I noticed a change in my self-esteem. I now have high self-esteem, and I see things more positively. I know now how to handle challenging situations. I am very bold and I know who I am and where I'm going. I have expectations for my future.*
- *I feel happier, and my leadership skills have improved a lot.*
- *MOT has changed my life choices, and encouraged me to think before I act. It has also encouraged me to make my wrongs right.*
- *MOT helped me be more friendly, caring and thoughtful.*
- *I've learned who I am, and who my friends are.*
- *MOT has given me courage to try to believe in myself. By the time I encountered the MOT programme, I had no belief in myself. It was easy to give up and undermine myself, but now I believe in myself.*
- *The MOT programme helped me find myself.*
- *I now have the courage to be myself, and accept me the way I am.*
- *MOT helped me to be confident about myself, and to respect other people even if they're from a different culture.*
- *MOT has helped me a lot. It has made me love myself more.*
- *It has created a friendly atmosphere for me at this college. Thank you!*
- *It helped me with my personal motivational levels, and it improved my self-esteem and self-image. For that I am grateful.*
- *Ever since starting MOT, I saw the change it made in my life.*
- *Do my best whenever I can, whether it is being a good person or a hard worker. Thank you MOT.*
- *After MOT I believed more in myself even when others didn't.*
- *Some characteristics I thought I didn't have, others saw in me.*
- *It has showed me that there are other people who can help me, and people I can help.*
- *Instilled certain values in me that I might or did not even know I had.*
- *I grew emotionally confident.*
- *It helped me to express myself freely.*
- *Now I have become a better leader for the college, my community and other children.*
- *I am a different person because of you. My life will never be the same again.*
- *It helped me cope with daily stress and to be resilient.*
- *MOT helped me to know that I am a better person.*
- *It has changed my view on what I thought I knew.*
- *MOT helped me to become a better student and a better child for my parents.*
- *Now I know where I am, where I want to be and how to get there.*
- *MOT has made me a better student, and it has prepared me for the pressure that we get in college.*
- *It also helped me realise that I have to study my books with interest and understanding.*
- *Helped with my walk in college life.*

- *It made me continue my studies because there was limited time when negativity came my side.*
 - *It gave me the positive push to continue with my studies.*
 - *It made my journey at False Bay College much easier than what it could have been.*
 - *My first year at college was the most difficult, but if it was not for MOT, I would have quit my studies.*
- Comments about the MOT Presenter:*
- *She uses examples that I can relate to.*
 - *She listens to your story.*
 - *She's not only my lecturer, but my friend as well.*
 - *I love her a lot, and she changed my life.*

SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' VIEWS

Though students were asked to speak about the MOT programme, many elected to speak about themselves and how they had changed. Besides imbibing the many themes in the programme (not included in the selection of comments), a number commented that the MOT programme helped them continue their studies, and in one case a student attributed her being a top achiever to the programme. Others spoke of how they learnt to love themselves and others, with self-confidence being a constant theme. A few students provided an inkling of their life stories, suggesting that MOT had helped them through a difficult patch. Students typically referred to MOT as being life-changing.

The impact of the presenter was also clearly articulated, and it was evident that the presenters had made a strong positive contribution to students' experience of the programme. Students found that they could relate to the presenter and enjoyed the empathy and warmth of the sessions. There were no negative views in this regard.

CONCLUSIONS

From the overall data which is summarised below in descending order of emphasis, the perceived benefits of the MOT programme were considerable in the lives of the participating students.

Areas of key strength of the MOT programme: (93-98%):

- *Treat other students with respect even if they are different from me*
- *Try to see the good points in other students*
- *Help other students if I am able to*
- *Have the courage to be myself and to accept myself*

- *Listen to other people's opinions*
- *Believe that I will do well in the future*
- *Always try to be a good person*
- *Ask others to explain if I don't understand something*
- *Say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong*
- *Always do my best no matter how hard the task is*
- *MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make*
- *MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong*
- *MOT has made me feel like a better person*
- *MOT has made me want to be a better student*
- *admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry*

Areas of moderate strength of the MOT programme (85-92%):

- *Get to know myself better*
- *MOT has helped me to care more about other people*
- *Be more self-confident*
- *Enjoy making new friends*
- *MOT has motivated me to complete my studies*
- *Talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend*
- *MOT has made a difference in my life*
- *MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college*
- *MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills*

Areas which show relatively weaker results (scores of 72%-84%):

- *Tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it*
- *Stand up for someone who is being bullied*
- *MOT has helped to make my classroom a more friendly place*
- *Say what I think even if my friends won't like it*
- *MOT has helped other students that I know*
- *Show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry*

The results reported above are fairly consistent with previous years, with marginal differences. From the results it would appear that the MOT programme continues to make positive gains regarding how TVET college students perceive themselves and others, building positive attitudes and increasing resilience and influencing better choices. Students in the MOT programme have also reported being more motivated to become better students and to complete their studies, an important influence given the high drop-out and failure rates at TVET colleges. Though a majority of students report positive responses, there are a number of students who continue to demonstrate the kind of peer

pressure that they are under and that it is difficult to confront peers who act out wrong behaviours.

As in previous reports, it is suggested that students who have experienced the MOT programme at college are tracked at later points in their lives in order to ascertain whether there have been any lasting impacts of the MOT programme, or whether they have retained the positive attitudes that they reported so soon after their MOT experiences.