

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 has been growing steadily in South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges since it was first introduced in 2009 by MOT SA. Furthermore, MOT SA has every year since the programme's inception, conducted research with students exiting the programme. The questionnaire has therefore been fine-tuned through these successive iterations, and this 2015 Report will be the fourth successive report since the programme was piloted.

A copy of the questionnaire administered to students is available on request. Briefly, the goals of the MOT programme are expressed in the focus areas of the questions addressed to students regarding their experiences of the programme and the questionnaire places a strong emphasis on self-knowledge, personal development, responsibility, caring for others, respect and affirmation - in line with the themes of the programme content.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

From the 907 students who completed the 3-year MOT programme, 462 responded to the research study 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 thought, felt or behaved. Students were allowed to remain anonymous in the hope that this might make them answer more truthfully.

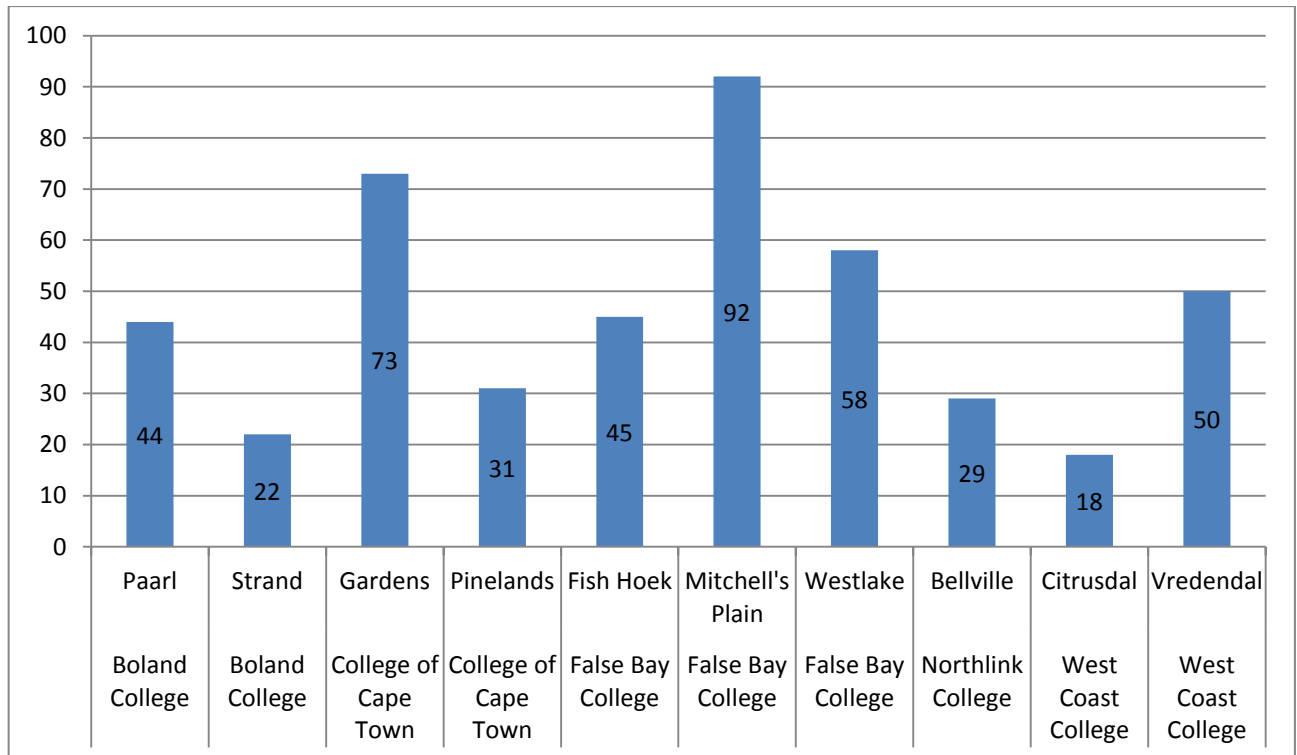
¹ Exercises where respondents 'fill in the blanks'

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

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

There were 462 students who completed the MOT questionnaire in 2014. The distribution of respondents by campus is provided in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: MOT RESPONDENTS BY CAMPUS



SECTION 1: ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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

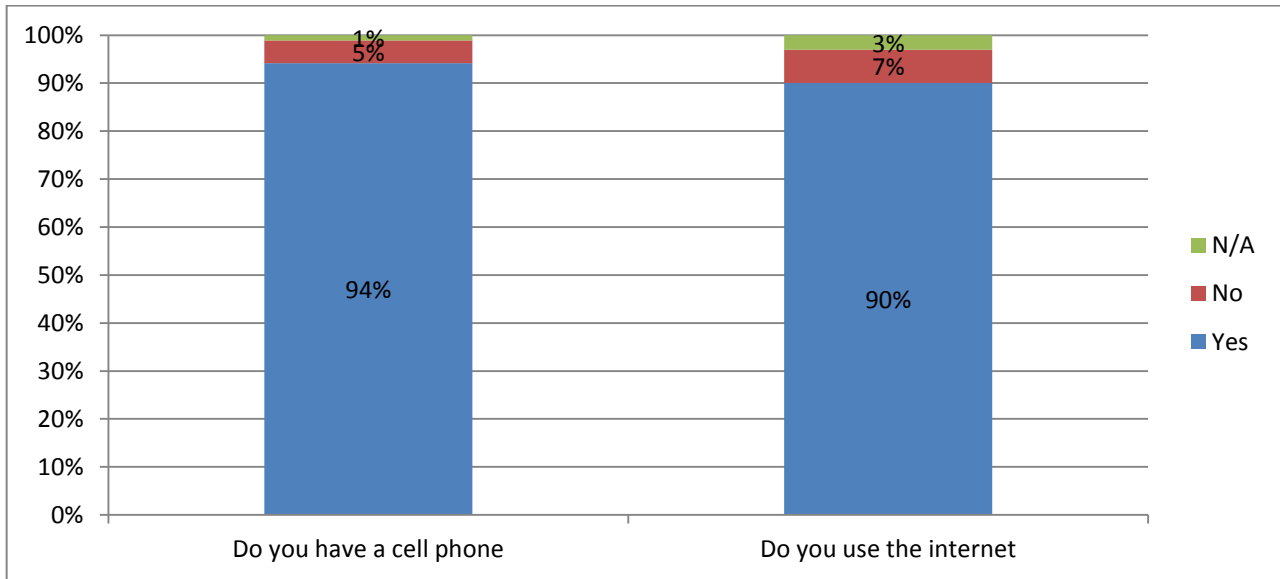
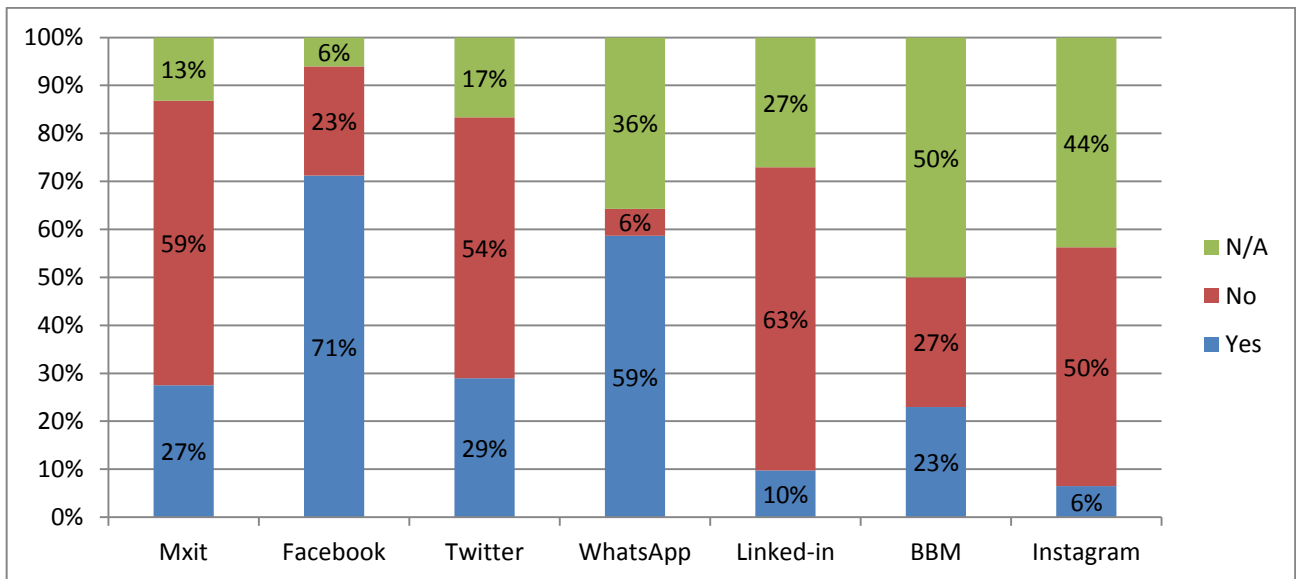


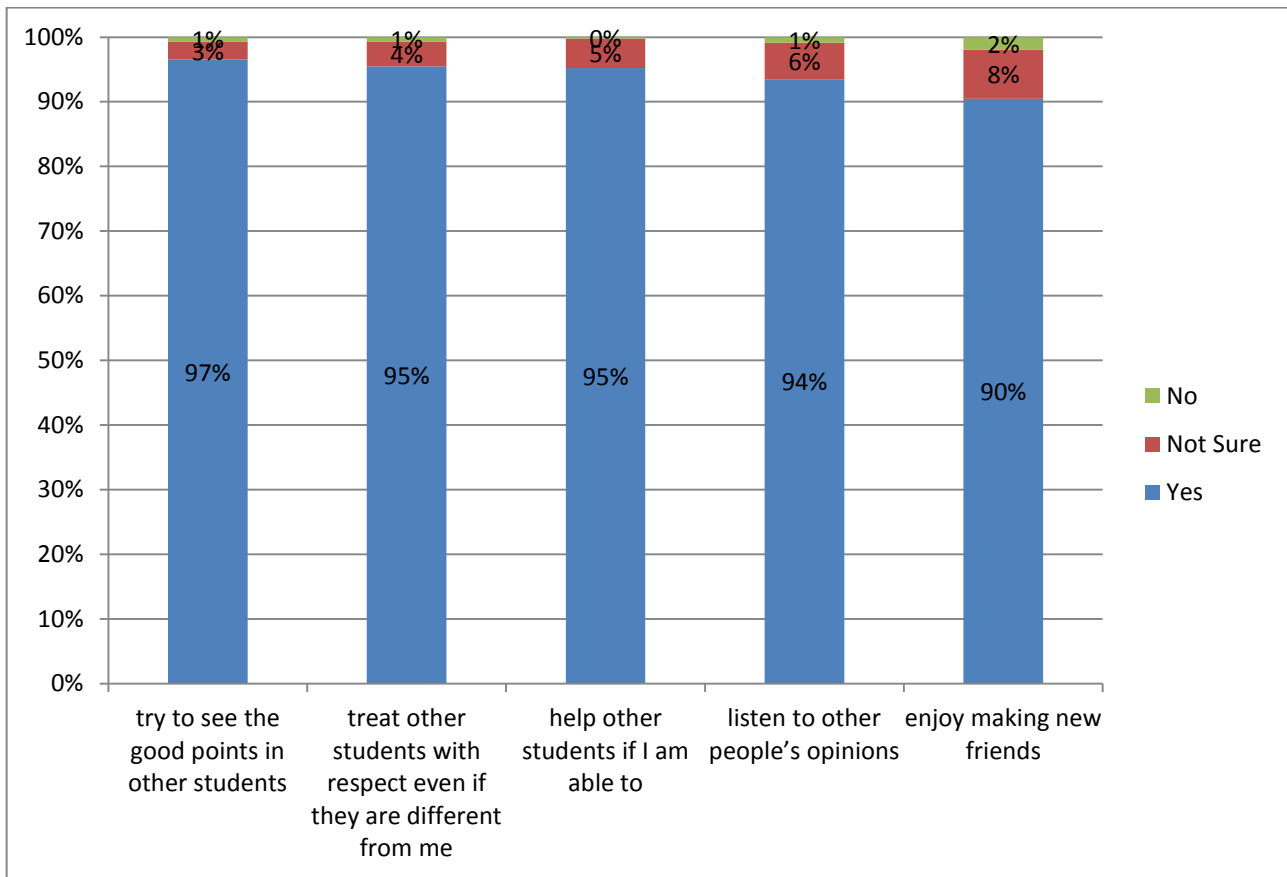
FIGURE 3: STUDENTS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



As shown in Figures 2 and 3 above, nearly all respondents had cell-phones (94%), with only slightly fewer accessing the internet (90%). Of the social media applications, Facebook (71%) users were in the majority, followed by WhatsApp (59%) with a smaller number using Mxit (27%), Twitter (29%) and BBM (23%) and very few using Instagram and LinkedIn. 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 90's. 'Try to see good points in other students' received the greatest affirmative response (97%), followed by 'Treating other students with respect' (95%) and, 'Help other students if I am able to' (95%); 'listening to other people's opinions' (94%); and 'enjoy making new friends' being equally positive at 90%. The responses which achieved the highest and the lowest scores are similar to that depicted in the 2012/3 research with 'try to see good points in other students' achieving a slightly higher rating.

SECTION 3: IMPACT ON PERSONAL GROWTH

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

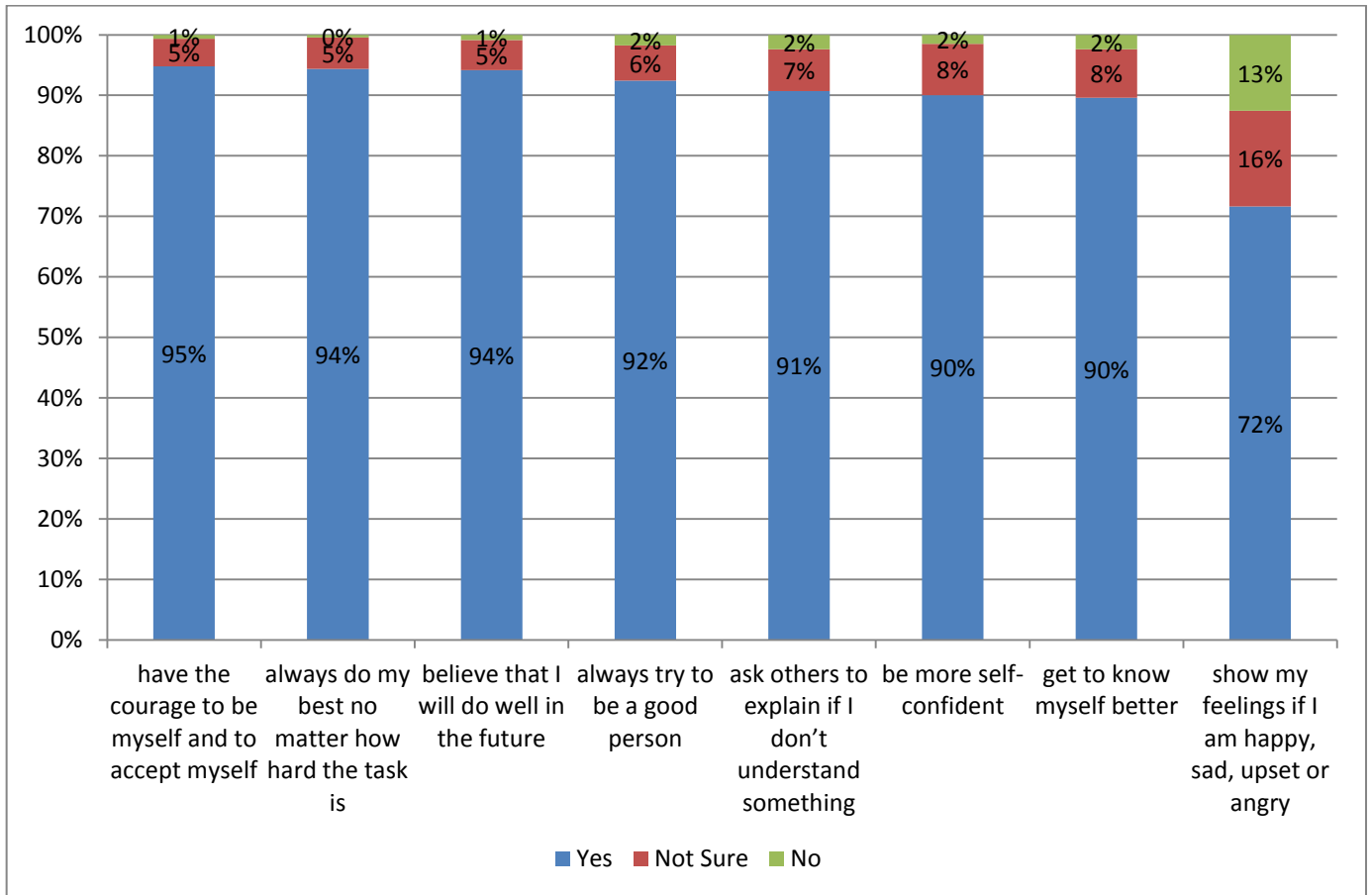
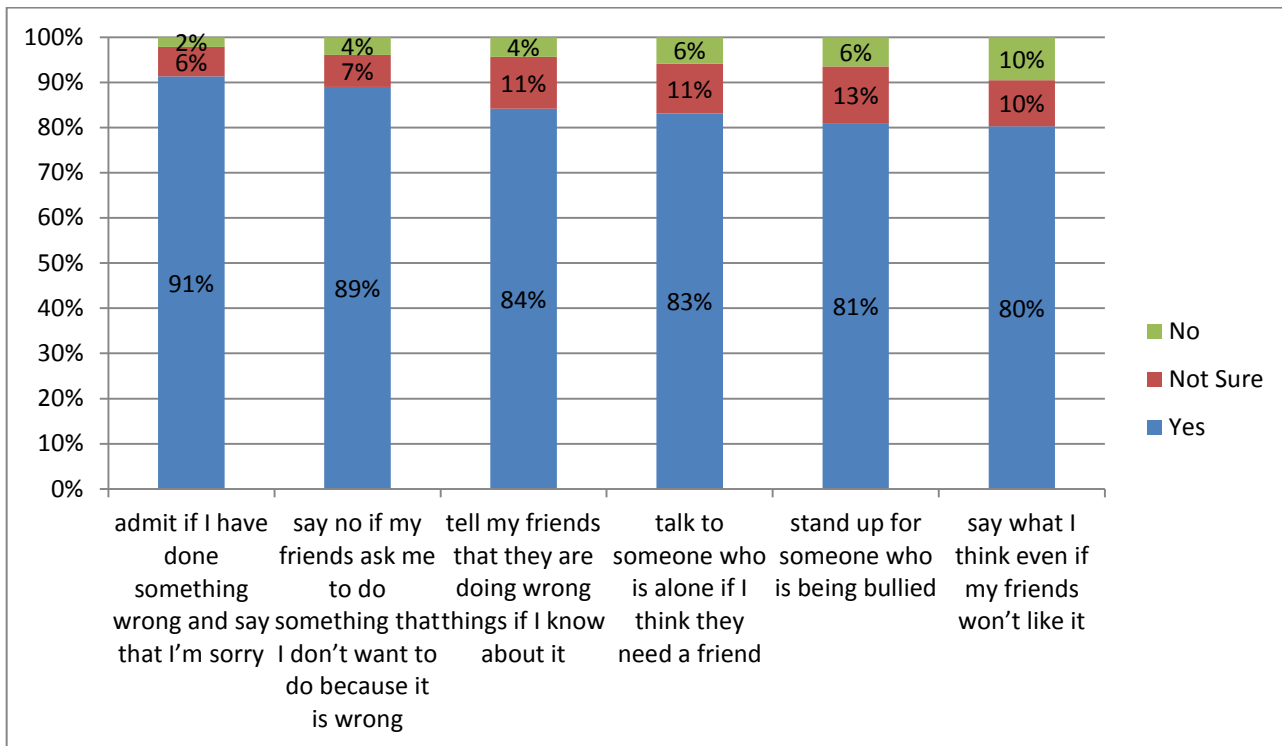


Figure 5 again shows highly positive responses to the impact of MOT on personal growth, scoring consistently in the 90s (with one exception), particularly self-motivation, belief in the future and moral choice). Self-confidence and self-knowledge were slightly lower at 90% relative to the other attributes together with the ability to seek help (91%). Self-expression of emotions was relatively low at 72%, where 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. Generally however there has been an improvement in the overall category of students’ personal growth.

SECTION 4: IMPACT ON PERSONAL VALUES

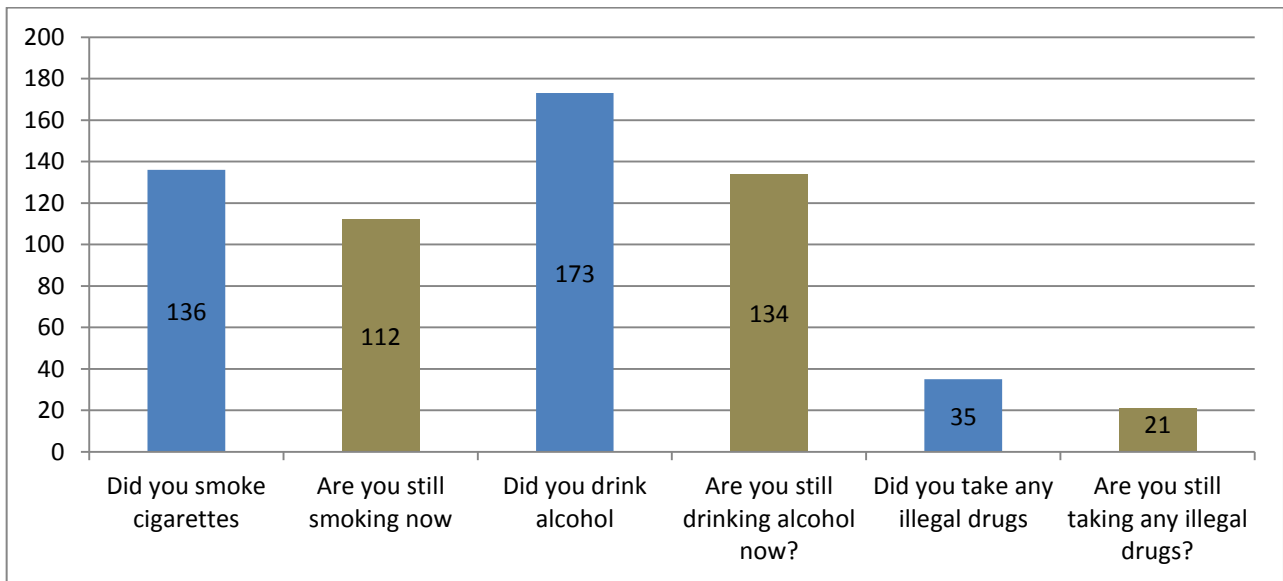
FIGURE 6: STUDENT RESPONSES TO POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON PERSONAL VALUES



Here 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 (91%), and refuse to do something if they knew it was wrong, (89%); but it appeared harder to discourage friends from wrong-doing (84%) and to defend a peer against bullying (81%), or to express contrary views (80%). Most scores were marginal improvements on the 2013 research. Few students however indicated an emphatic 'no' (5%) around defending a peer against bullying. 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

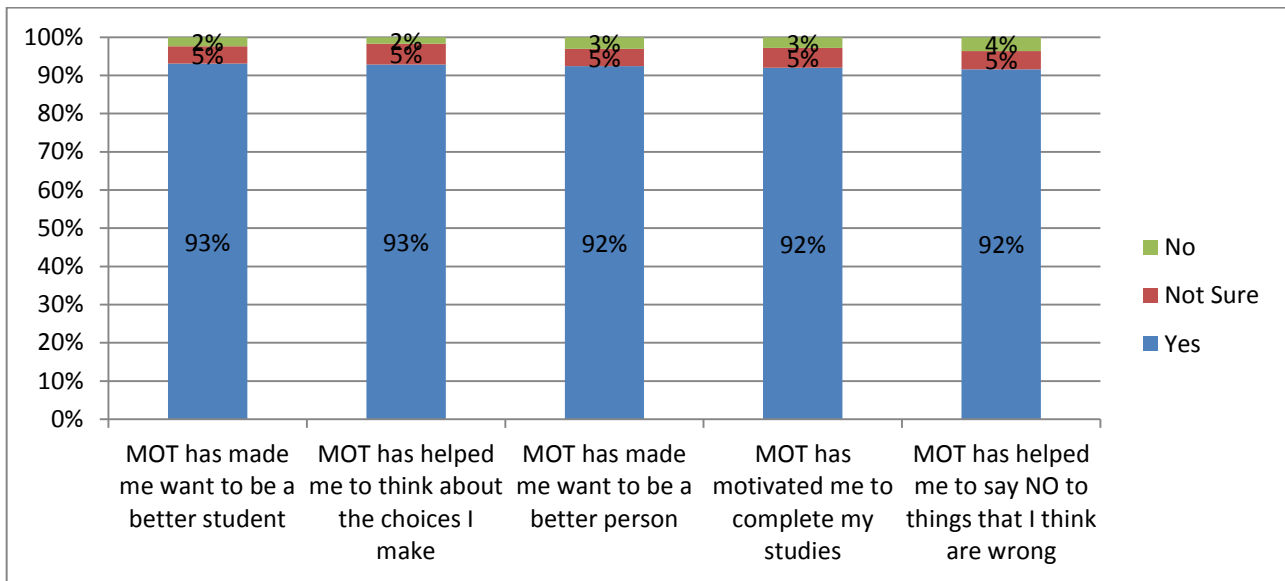
FIGURE 7: STUDENTS' LIFESTYLE CHOICES BEFORE AND AFTER MOT



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 136 (29%) reported smoking at the start of the MOT programme, only 112 reported that they were still smoking. Similarly of the 173 (37%) respondents who acknowledged that they had consumed alcohol, 134 continued to do so. Even though there were relatively few drug users (35 individuals or 8% of respondents), the potential negative social impact of these lifestyle choices is considerable, therefore the indication that 14 people stopped using drugs is significant. In addition, 24 stopped smoking and 39 stopped using alcohol. This is significant and encouraging for the MOT programme.

SECTION 6: CHOICES AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

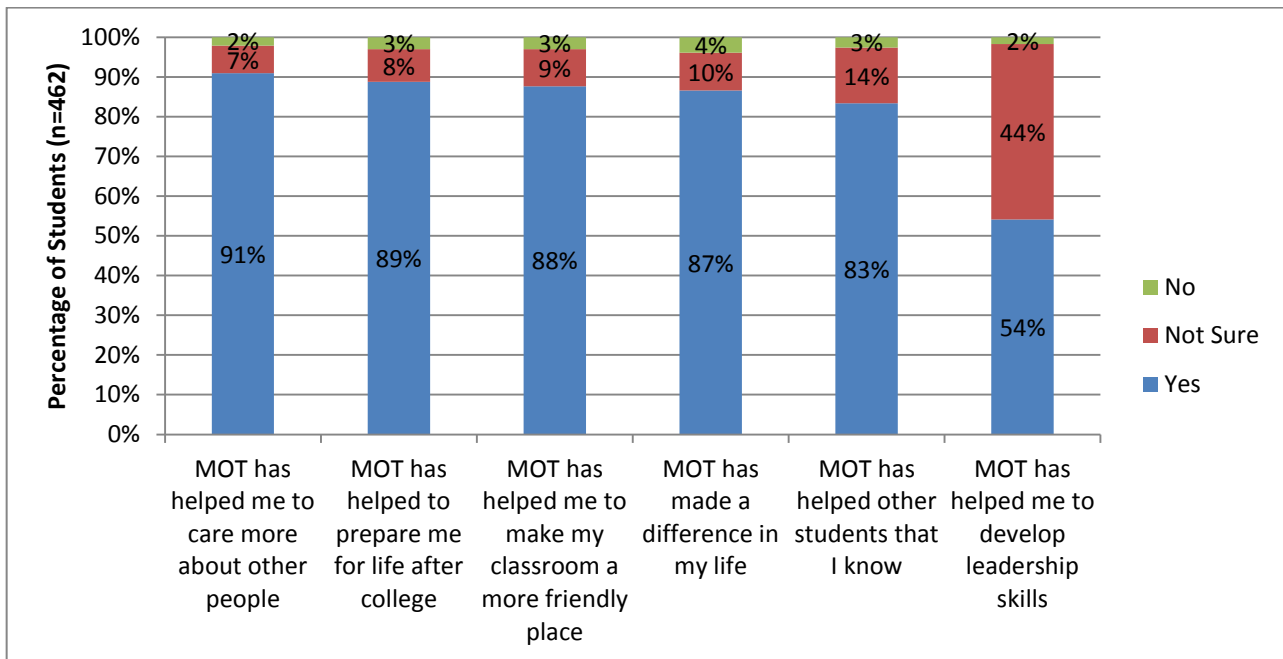
FIGURE 8: IMPACT ON CHOICES AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY



Section 6 of the questionnaire dealt with the impact of the MOT programme on student choices and taking responsibility, represented in Figure 8 above, which shows the percentage of students who attributed MOT with positively influencing them in the above behaviours/attitudes. The questions covered a range of issues regarding MOT's impact on choices, motivation in studies, caring for others, preparation for life, making a difference and classroom atmosphere. Even though there were slightly larger numbers of 'not sure' responses than in the 2013 research, the positive responses were consistently above 90%. MOT's influence on 'thinking about choices I make' was evident as 93% respondents agreed on this as well as 'wanting to be a better student'. Moreover the impact on 'motivation to complete my studies', 'wanting to be a better person' and willingness to 'say no to things that I think are wrong' was also high at 92%.

SECTION 7: RESPONSES TO THE MOT PROGRAMME

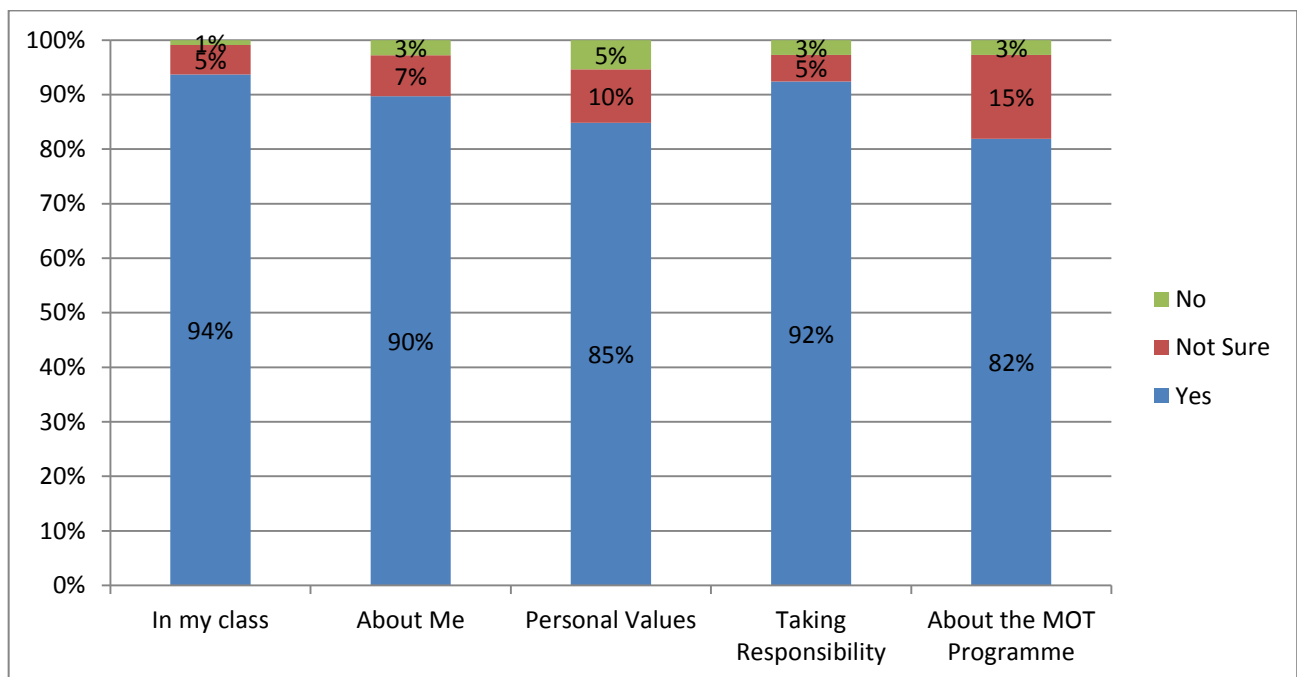
FIGURE 9: STUDENT RESPONSES TO OVERALL POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT



Section 7 of the questionnaire required students to assess the overall positive impact of MOT, including a category not present in previous years, to “develop leadership skills”. 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 leadership. The results are shown in Figure 9, above. There was a larger number of ‘not sure’ responses than in previous years, but a low percentage of negative responses. In terms of personal change, the high percentages of students reported that the MOT helped them to “care more about other people” (91%) and “prepared me for life after college” (87%). Similarly high percentages reported on more immediate impacts like ‘making the classroom a more friendly place’ (88%) and “making a difference in my life”. The element ‘...to make my classroom a more friendly place’, which previously had a 7% negative response (low, but high relative to the other elements) was reduced to a 3% negative response in the current research. Slightly lower was the number of students responding that MOT had “helped other students I know” with a relatively high ‘not sure’ count. The new category of ‘develop leadership skills’ was relatively low at 54%, though it should be noted students were undecided rather than negative in this category. 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. This initiative may change the outcomes of the 3-year MOT programme in the research study of 2015.

Figure 10 below shows averages of the responses across all the items within each of the Sections of the questionnaire. It shows that the impact of MOT was strongest on classroom interactions, taking responsibility and personal growth (94%, 92% and 90% respectively). The impact on personal values came in slightly lower at 85%. 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. The overall positive response as to the MOT programme’s impact on their lives whilst still high declined somewhat to 81% from the 91% of 2013 (primarily due to the inclusion of a new category ‘leadership skills’), however an average of only 3% indicated that MOT did not have an impact, the remainder 16% were undecided. The overall positive response across all questions averaged at 88,4%.

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 ranked 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, 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 related to challenging others and being honest/open about personal feelings.

TABLE 1: RANKED LISTING OF ATTRIBUTES BY PERCENTAGE² OF STUDENTS POSITIVELY AFFECTED

Question	Yes	Not Sure	No
try to see the good points in other students	97%	3%	1%
treat other students with respect even if they are different from me	95%	4%	1%
help other students if I am able to	95%	5%	0%
have the courage to be myself and to accept myself	95%	5%	1%
always do my best no matter how hard the task is	94%	5%	0%
believe that I will do well in the future	94%	5%	1%
listen to other people's opinions	94%	6%	1%
MOT has made me want to be a better student	93%	5%	2%
MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make	93%	5%	2%
MOT has made me want to be a better person	92%	5%	3%
always try to be a good person	92%	6%	2%
MOT has motivated me to complete my studies	92%	5%	3%
MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong	92%	5%	4%
admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry	91%	6%	2%
MOT has helped me to care more about other people	91%	7%	2%
ask others to explain if I don't understand something	91%	7%	2%
enjoy making new friends	90%	8%	2%
be more self-confident	90%	8%	2%
get to know myself better	90%	8%	2%
say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong	89%	7%	4%
MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college	89%	8%	3%
MOT has helped me to make my classroom a more friendly place	88%	9%	3%
MOT has made a difference in my life	87%	10%	4%
tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it	84%	11%	4%
MOT has helped other students that I know	83%	14%	3%
talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend	83%	11%	6%
stand up for someone who is being bullied	81%	13%	6%
say what I think even if my friends won't like it	80%	10%	10%
show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry	72%	16%	13%
MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills	54%	44%	2%

² 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:

- *The MOT programme has helped me a lot, it has made me a better person and it also change my life, I really enjoyed this programme. Now it is time for me to focus on the bigger picture and do more for my future, because our future is in our hands.*
- *MOT has helped me a lot, I feel motivated and grown. I was smoking when I joined Boland College and the MOT sessions in 2012, but I quit everything that same year in October because I realised that I am more than that. There's more in me than a human eye can see. I am the conqueror. I passed my level 4 with pride.*
- *MOT has helped me a lot because I know now that other people are also much important as I am and helping other people is very good and people must see the good in you when you are always willing to go the extra mile. I want to say to the MOT presenter to remain the good person that she is and always be willing to motivate the students. God bless you and your family.*
- *MOT has taught me confidence and to always pursue my dreams. Thanks to MOT I know that I am different but it's what makes me unique.*
- *The MOT programme let or opened my mind to understand and be grateful for who I am and set realistic goals for my future. My MOT presenter was easily teachable and open to use. She was my role model because she told us that she started with nothing but by joining MOT she started setting goals and she made sure she pursued them and that is what I am doing.*
- *I would like to say thank you for MOT, it really made me think further in life about what I want to be in the future. MOT really helped me in so many ways and I look forward to my future.*
- *The MOT programme has helped me gain confidence and accept myself the way I am. The MOT presenter has helped most of us become who we want to be by encouraging us and gave us some advice on how to live a healthy lifestyle.*
- *MOT has changed my life and the approach to viewing challenges on my life and I have good problem solving techniques because of MOT.*
- *MOT is one of the best motivational programmes or group that helps students to feel free about showing their feelings in the classroom. Continue helping the students, because what you do makes a huge difference.*
- *MOT has helped me with lots of things such as gaining confidence and listening to others opinions. I thank MOT very much they made me be a better person.*
- *MOT has motivated me in so many ways in life and changed me a lot.*
- *At first I found the MOT programme to be boring but as the sessions came along I came to understand what it was all about. The MOT presenters managed to make all the students enjoy the sessions and helped each one of us in different ways. I would like to become a MOT presenter or peer educator.*

- *I don't talk much and I like keeping my opinions to myself, but I would like to thank the MOT presenters who assisted during the session. It actually does help when one takes time out to reflect on oneself and to know others in a more comforting way.*
- *MOT is a very nice and enjoyable programme that helps us to know what is right or wrong. MOT gave us courage to say "NO" and the presenter was a good friendly person.*
- *The MOT programme helped a lot of people to realize their strengths and improve on their weaknesses. The MOT presenters made the programme more enjoyable and interesting.*
- *Well, for starters, the MOT programme was great in a way that it lifted my spirit, boosted my confidence, made me aim high in life for myself, and made me feel like a different person in a good way. Where by it made me believe I have a purpose in life and it made me more focused and follow my goals. I would like to say keep up the good work you guys are doing across the globe you are changing lives.*
- *MOT has brought a huge change in me I couldn't talk to people I'm not use to but now I'm a new different person, I communicate to anyone. MOT is a life changing programme I wish they can introduce themselves to high schools as teenagers are facing many problems. The MOT presenters we had were fabulous and fun to work with.*
- *MOT sessions helped me a lot. I am more confident to say no to the wrong things and I tend to care a lot about others. I know my priorities and I gained much more self-esteem. I really enjoyed the sessions and the presenters were very nice and motivating.*
- *I would like MOT to go to schools and teach the students how to love, accept and be yourself. They need to know about MOT.*
- *It's a good programme and it motivates students who need it the most. I think it is a good programme to be held at colleges and schools.*
- *MOT has been a great and a life changing experience for me it has made me a better person especially the MOT presenters. They encourage us to follow our dreams and they encourage us to dream big.*
- *I feel that our presenter is prepared and always include herself in the discussions so that we as students do not feel left out. That thing in our life makes our situations and choices are better. I feel that I'm more confident in reaching my dreams and always be generous and helpful towards others.*
- *The MOT programme has taught me a lot about being courageous in life and be able to stand up for myself in un-calming situations. The MOT presenters are great because she is easy and approachable and I have learnt a lot.*
- *MOT has helped me in many ways, I'm so thankful for this programme and the presenter. I look at my life differently since MOT has started, I always look forward to MOT.*
- *It has been fun, different and wonderful all at the same time. The MOT presenters are very understanding and organised.*
- *The MOT presenter was really friendly and hard working. She made me feel at ease when we did things.*

Summary of students' views

Students spoke glowingly of the impact of MOT in their personal lives. From the comments, there were many references to the 'enjoyable' nature of the sessions, and that students looked forward to attending the programme. Students mentioned various aspects of their lives in which they had clearly experienced impact, for example: being more purposeful and goal directed; building on their strengths and improving weaknesses; being courageous; deciding what was right and wrong. They were emphatic about the influence of MOT in their own lives and of others.

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: (93-97%):

- *try to see the good points in other students*
- *treat other students with respect even if they are different from me*
- *help other students if I am able to*
- *have the courage to be myself and to accept myself*
- *always do my best no matter how hard the task is*
- *believe that I will do well in the future*
- *listen to other people's opinions*
- *MOT has made me want to be a better student*
- *MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make*

Areas of moderate strength of the MOT programme (84-92%):

- *MOT has made me want to be a better person*
- *always try to be a good person*
- *MOT has motivated me to complete my studies*
- *MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong*

- *admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry*
- *MOT has helped me to care more about other people*
- *ask others to explain if I don't understand something*
- *enjoy making new friends*
- *be more self-confident*
- *get to know myself better*
- *say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong*
- *MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college*
- *MOT has helped me to make my classroom a more friendly place*
- *MOT has made a difference in my life*
- *tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it*

Areas which show relatively weaker results (scores of 54%-83%):

- *MOT has helped other students that I know*
- *talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend*
- *stand up for someone who is being bullied*
- *say what I think even if my friends won't like it*
- *show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry*
- *MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills*

From the above it would appear that the MOT programme continues to make positive gains regarding how 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. Students 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.