

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO PRE-UNIVERSITY FACTORS THAT
COULD INHIBIT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR
LEARNERS FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS: THE
CASE OF HIGH SCHOOL X IN KHAYELITSHA, CAPE TOWN**

BY

KHWEZI BONANI



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SUPERVISOR: DR VENICIA MCGHIE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that AN INVESTIGATION INTO PRE-UNIVERSITY FACTORS THAT COULD INHIBIT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR LEARNERS FROM LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS: THE CASE OF HIGH SCHOOL X IN KHAYELITSHA, CAPE TOWN is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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KHWEZI BONANI



ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors inhibiting learners from low socio-economic backgrounds from accessing higher education. The intention to investigate and identify these inhibiting factors was motivated by the growing body of evidence that suggests that there is a correlation between poverty and lack of education. The aim of the study was to investigate which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. The objective was to identify these factors in order to find ways in which they could be overcome and/or prevented. It was argued that, if the impact of the inhibiting factors could be minimised or eliminated, more learners would be able to access higher education successfully. The theoretical framework used in the study was based on Sen's Capabilities approach. The list of capabilities applied to analyse the data were education and skill, economic resources, employment and working conditions, housing, and family and social integration.



The study was positioned within a qualitative, interpretive research paradigm and used a case study design. The research site was a high school in Khayelitsha near Cape Town. Research participants were purposively selected and consisted of a total of twenty-nine learners from across Grade 10, 11 and 12, as well as three educators. The study used multiple sources of data instruments: secondary data (statistics and other census information about Khayelitsha), the participants' June 2014 progress reports, a demographic information sheet, a reflective questionnaire and three focus group interviews (one per Grade). Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data through a three-stage open coding process.

The list of inhibiting factors discussed in the literature, namely poor schooling, a lack of financial means, a lack of knowledge and information, and sociocultural factors was indeed confirmed by the data collected in this study. Other factors emerged from the data and these were regarded as new

knowledge that this study contributes towards the body of knowledge. Lastly, the findings suggest that the inhibiting factor which had the greatest impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds was a lack of knowledge and information because this factor negatively impacted on all the capabilities listed above. Based on these findings, recommendations were proposed for the parents and community, school and educators, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and for higher education institutions.



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LIST OF TABLES

TABLES	PAGE
Table 2.1: Black learners' Grade 12 pass for year 1991 and 2007	20
Table 3.1: Data collection phases	41
Table 3.2: Demographic information	43
Table 3.3: 2014 mid-year academic results for learners	45
Table 3.4: Educators responses to poor schooling probe	47
Table 3.5: Discussion point No 7	48
Table 3.6: Educators responses to a lack of knowledge and information as inhibiting factor	49
Table 3.7: Learners responses to a lack of knowledge and information probe	50
Table 3.8: Discussion point No 1	51
Table 3.9: Discussion point No 2	52
Table 3.10: Discussion point No 3	52
Table 3.11: Discussion point No 4	52
Table 3.12: Discussion point No 5	53
Table 3.13: Discussion point No 6	54



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	:	African National Congress
CHE	:	Council on Higher Education
CNE	:	Christian National Education
NSFAS	:	National Students Financial Aid Scheme
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RSA	:	Republic of South Africa
UCT	:	University of Cape Town
UWC	:	University of the Western Cape



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii

CHAPTER ONE: THESIS INTRODUCTION

1.1	BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	1
1.2	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM	3
1.3	AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY	4
1.4	MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS	4
1.5	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	5
	1.5.1 Research design	5
	1.5.2 Research site and research participants	6
	1.5.3 Data collection instruments	7
	1.5.4 Data analysis	7
1.6	DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS USED	7
	1.6.1 Learners	7
	1.6.2 High school	8
	1.6.3 Low socio-economic status	8
	1.6.4 Higher education access	8
	1.6.5 Inhibiting factors	9

1.6.5.1	Poor schooling	9
1.6.5.2	Lack of knowledge	9
1.6.5.3	Lack of finances	9
1.6.5.4	Social and cultural factors	9
1.7	THESIS STRUCTURE	9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1	INTRODUCTION	12
2.2	THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION PROVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA	12
2.2.1	The pre-colonial era: 1640 – 1657	12
2.2.2	The colonial and Union of South Africa era: 1658 – 1947	13
2.2.3	The Apartheid era: 1948 – 1990	14
2.3	THE PROVISION OF BASIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA POST 1994	17
2.3.1	Legislative Framework	17
2.3.2	Size and shape of basic education	18
2.3.3	Successes since 1994	19
2.3.4	Challenges facing the provision of education	20
2.4	THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE	21
2.5	ACCESS CHALLENGES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION	22
2.6	FACTORS INHIBITING LEARNERS FROM ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION	23
2.6.1	Poor schooling	23
2.6.2	Lack of knowledge and information	25
2.6.3	A lack of financial means	26
2.6.4	Social and cultural factors	27
2.7	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SEN'S CAPABILITY APPROACH	29

2.8	SUMMARY	33
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CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1	INTRODUCTION	34
3.2	AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY	34
3.3	MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS	34
3.4	PLACING THE STUDY IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM	35
3.4.1	Critiques of qualitative research	36
3.5	CASE STUDY DESIGN	37
3.5.1	Challenges of a case study design	37
3.6	RESEARCH PROCESS	38
3.6.1	Research site	38
3.6.2	Research participants	39
3.6.3	Data collection instruments	40
3.6.4	Data analysis	41
3.6.4.1	Quantitative data sets	42
3.6.4.2	Qualitative data sets	46
3.7	SUMMARY	55

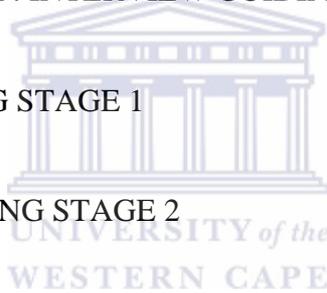
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1	INTRODUCTION	56
4.2	WHAT ARE THE PRE-UNIVERSITY FACTORS THAT INHIBIT LEARNERS' ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION?	56
4.2.1	Poor schooling	57
4.2.2	A lack of knowledge and information	61

4.2.3	A lack of financial means	66
4.2.4	Social and Cultural factors	68
4.3	WHICH OF THESE FACTORS WERE INHIBITING LEARNERS' ACCESS THE MOST AND WHY WAS THAT SO?	76
4.4	HOW COULD THE LEARNERS CHANCES OF ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION BE STRENGTHENED?	80
4.4.1	Provision of academic support – to all learners and subject choices	80
4.4.2	Provision of adequate financial support	81
4.4.3	Provision of adequate career guidance	81
4.4.4	Provision of sufficient information to learners, parents and community at large	82
4.4.5	Enhance the provision of motivational activities and positive role models	82
4.5	SYNTHESIS OF ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION	83
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
5.1	INTRODUCTION	87
5.2	SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS	87
5.3	INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS PER SUB-QUESTION	89
5.3.1	Sub-question 1: What were the pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education?	89
5.3.2	Sub-question 2: Which of these factors were inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so?	91
5.3.3	Sub-question 3: How could the learners' chances of accessing higher education be strengthened?	92
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	93
5.4.1	For the parents and the community	93
5.4.1.1	Parental involvement in school activities	93

5.4.1.2	Visible parental interest in learners' schooling and academic progress	93
5.4.1.3	Community to assist in the fight against crime and other negative factors	94
5.4.2	For the school and educators	94
5.4.2.1	Expanded academic support	94
5.4.2.2	Dedicated career guidance advisor	94
5.4.2.3	Provision of role models and motivation	95
5.4.3	For the Department of Basic Education	95
5.4.3.1	Provision of funding for the appointment of a dedicated career advisor	95
5.4.3.2	Provision of more resources to schools	96
5.4.4	For the Department of Higher Education and Training	96
5.4.4.1	Exempt learners coming from no-fee schools from paying university fees	96
5.4.4.2	Expansion of the National Students Financial Aid Scheme	96
5.4.5	For the higher education institutions	97
5.4.5.1	Formation of long-term partnerships	97
5.4.5.2	Provision of bursaries and loans	97
5.5	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	98
5.6	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	98
5.7	FINAL REFLECTION	99
	REFERENCES	101
	ADDENDUM 1: LETTER OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE	112
	ADDENDUM 2: INFORMATION SHEET FOR LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS	113

ADDENDUM 3: LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS CONSENT FORMS	115
ADDENDUM 4: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET	123
ADDENDUM 5a: ACADEMIC REPORT: JUNE 2014 – GRADE 10 LEARNER	125
ADDENDUM 5b: ACADEMIC REPORT: JUNE 2014 – GRADE 11 LEARNER	126
ADDENDUM 5c: ACADEMIC REPORT: JUNE 2014 – GRADE 12 LEARNER	127
ADDENDUM 6: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS	128
ADDENDUM 7: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS	130
ADDENDUM 8: FOCUS GROUP: INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS	133
ADDENDUM 9: OPEN CODING STAGE 1	134
ADDEENDUM 10: OPEN CODING STAGE 2	139
ADDENDUM 11: OPEN CODING STAGE 3	145



CHAPTER ONE

THESIS INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Higher education participation rates for the youth in South Africa remain at unsatisfactory levels, despite the legislative framework that seeks to correct this. The situation is worse among low socio-economic groups that predominantly comprise Black South Africans (Africans, Coloureds and Indians). According to Hendry, Scott and Yeld (2007: 10), the overall higher education participation rates of the youth aged 20-24 was only sixteen percent in 2005. In 2010 the participation rates increased to eighteen percent, but this increase is still “below the average for Latin America (34%) and Central Asia (31%) (Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2013: 41). Furthermore, these participation rates are racially skewed, with Africans and Coloured participation sitting at 14% in 2011, Indians at 47% and Whites at 57% (CHE, 2013: 41). In South African terms, this racial order correlates with the poverty order where, on average, Africans are the poorest and Whites the wealthiest.

The racially skewed higher education participation rates are a consequence of the apartheid system that privileged the white population group and advanced its superiority in all spheres, including education. According to Kros (2010), the African population group was excluded from meaningful living, including educational achievement. The key driver of the educational exclusion of the African population group was the Bantu Education Act of 1953 that purposefully paralysed the education of an African child (Kros, 2010). The 1994 democratic election in South Africa signaled an end to the apartheid system, while multiple transformation-orientated policies were developed to redress the apartheid injustices. The Department of Education (1997: 7, 1.3) presents the central theme of the purpose of higher education as the contribution and support of the “process of societal transformation outlined

in the Reconstruction and Development Programme, with its compelling vision of people-driven development leading to the building of a better quality of life for all”. It further stipulates the role of higher education in reconstruction and development as including:

- Human resource development: the mobilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society;
- High levels skills training: the training and provision of person power to strengthen this country’s enterprises, service and infrastructure; and
- Production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness that integrate research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstructions (Department of Education, 1997: 10, 1.10).

These redress principles in the South African higher education policy framework highlight the interconnectedness of access to higher education, transformation and development. It places the purpose and the role of higher education at the centre of the economic, labour market and equity/social justice access arguments (refer Section 2.4). It sees access to higher education as a means to human resource development and knowledge production, as well as an opportunity for a better life. However, Fisher and Scott (2011:1) state: “Despite significant progress in expanding access since 1994, higher education in South Africa remains a low participation–high attrition system”. They further note that despite these gains, the participation rate for African people in higher education is extremely low, sitting at 13% (Fisher & Scott, 2011: 1). This situation is inconsistent with the ideal of widening access, as it does not equitably reflect the stated role and purpose of higher education, that is, people-driven development for a better life. One, thus, could argue that the scars of apartheid are very deep and that is why a large number of African youth is still not in higher education. As a consequence, the majority of Africans are still battling poverty, high unemployment, disadvantaged schooling and a lack of financial resources (Moodley, 1995; Tight, 2003).

This study seeks to investigate and identify the factors inhibiting learners from low socio-economic backgrounds from accessing higher education. The intention to investigate and identify these inhibiting factors is derived from the growing body of evidence that suggests that there is a correlation between poverty and the lack of education. Sayed (2008: 53) states: “The lack of education is perhaps one of the most powerful determinants of poverty and unequal access is strongly related to poverty. Thus, the current 77 million children (globally) (GMR, 2007) who do not have access to education are not only poor, but fundamentally suffer from a lack of access because of the multidimensional nature of poverty”. It, therefore, becomes critical for scholars of Development Studies to actively work towards identifying the factors inhibiting access to education, generally, and higher education, specifically, in order to overcome, reduce and prevent their effects.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

South African literature, in line with international literature on access to higher education, identifies poor schooling, lack of knowledge and information, lack of finances, and social and cultural factors as inhibiting factors (Bailey, Coetzee, Jones & Wickham, 2008; Hendry, Scott & Yeld, 2007; Johnson, 2007). Poor schooling, firstly, appears as a general phenomenon for learners who come from low socio-economic backgrounds and, in South Africa, it puts Black learners at a disadvantage compared to their White counterparts. The lack of knowledge and information, secondly, relates to knowledge concerning proper and adequate career guidance, as well as knowledge concerning available higher education funding opportunities. Because learners from low socio-economic backgrounds are not knowledgeable about accessing higher education opportunities, they cannot plan and often do not know how to go about applying for places at higher educational institutions. A lack of finances, thirdly, means that the parents of learners from low socio-economic background will not be able to pay the fees

required to access higher education. Lastly, social and cultural factors refer to the learners' social capital - how strong or weak the motivation is within the family and the neighborhood for the learner to pursue or even aspire to access higher education, as well as to the learners' traditions, norms and values which are part of their culture and which may not support further education and training aspirations. These are the issues that this study is concerned with, and that this study attempted to address.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Based on the identified factors that could inhibit learners' access to higher education, the aim of the study was to investigate which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. The objective was to identify these factors in order to find solutions or ways in which they could be overcome and/or prevented. It was argued that, if the inhibiting factors could be overcome or prevented, more learners would be able to access higher education successfully. If this could be achieved, more young people would live a life with enhanced capabilities and functionings.

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

The main research question was: Which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds?

Sub-questions

In an attempt to find answers to the main research question and to achieve the objective of the study, three sub-questions were used to guide the data collection process and the analysis of the data:

1. What were the pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education?

2. Which of these factors were inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so?
3. How could the learners' chances of accessing higher education be strengthened?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is positioned within a qualitative, interpretive research paradigm. On a broad level, Creswell (2013: 45) states that “qualitative research today involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry and situating the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the researchers, and the reflexivity or presence of the researchers in the accounts they present”. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) explain it in this way: “...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, and understand phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. This was what this study attempted to do, that is, the researcher worked with the learners in their natural everyday settings in order to understand, to interpret and to identify what the factors were that prevent the learners from accessing higher education. Creswell (2013) explains further that a qualitative research paradigm involves the researcher as a key instrument, uses multiple data collection methods, employs complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic, includes participants' meanings and reflexivity; and gives an holistic account of the research process. The researcher attempted to do just that. The qualitative research paradigm is further explained in Section 3.4.

1.5.1 Research design

This study used a case study design. Yin (2009: 18) defines a case study as an inquiry that seeks to “understand a real life phenomenon in-depth but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions – because they were highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study”. Similarly, Stake (1995: xi) states: “A case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important

circumstances”. This definition best serves the intention of this study. Another reason why a case study design was used is because it is one of the many different designs used in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Yin, 2009). The researcher wanted to conduct an in-depth investigation of a particular problem within a specific context. “The intent of the case study may be to understand a specific issue, problem or concern (e.g. teenage pregnancy) and a case or cases selected to best understand the problem” (Creswell, 2013: 98). The specific problem that was probed in this study was the low participation rates of Black student cohorts in higher education, specifically investigating factors that were preventing Black Grade 12 learners coming from low socio-economic background from accessing higher education successfully. The research design is further discussed in Section 3.5.

1.5.2 Research site and research participants

The research site was High School X, one of the twenty high schools in Khayelitsha, a township situated on the outskirts of Cape Town. High School X falls under the Metro East District and is categorised as a quintile 3 school and, therefore, qualifies as a no-fee school. The research site is described in Section 3.6.1.

The research participants in this study were drawn from the registered Grade 10 to Grade 12 learners at High School X. These are the grades where the learners must decide on specific subject choices for higher education career paths. The case comprised twenty-nine learners (ten learners from Grade 10 and 11, and nine from Grade 12), and three educators. A purposive sampling method was used to select the learners, which is more suitable for social research, whose primary concern is not to generalise the findings (Stake, 1995). The selection process is outlined in Section 3.6.2.

1.5.3 Data collection instruments

The study used multiple sources of data: secondary data (census and other statistics about Khayelitsha), the learners' June progress reports, the learners' biographical data, a questionnaire and three focus group interviews (one per grade). The use of multiple sources of data was advantageous because of its capacity to develop “converging lines of enquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration” and this allows for the case study findings and conclusions to be more convincing (Yin, 2009: 16). Furthermore, the use of focus group interviews was beneficial because they tend to “allow space in which people may get together and create meaning among themselves, rather than individually” (Babbie & Mouton, 2009: 292). The data collection instruments are further explained in Section 3.6.3.

1.5.4 Data analysis

Content analysis, using a three-stage open coding process was used to analyse the qualitative data (Henning, 2004). The data was categorised into the three sub-questions and grouped into themes and sub-themes on the basis of the inhibiting factors identified in Section 1.2 above. These themes and sub-themes were discussed and interpreted against the capabilities and functionings outlined in the theoretical framework. A detailed description of the analysis process is provided in Section 3.6.4.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS USED

The following key concepts and their definitions are used throughout the discussions in all the chapters.

1.6.1 Learners

According to the South African Schools Act of 1996, a “learner” means any person receiving education in a school or obliged to receive education in terms of the Act” (Department of

Basic Education, 2011: Chapter 1). In this study a “learner” refers to any person enrolled in an accredited schooling activity ranging from Grade R to Grade 12.

1.6.2 High school

The South African Schools Act of 1996 defines a school as “a public school or an independent school which enrolls learners in one or more grades from grade R (Reception) to grade twelve” (Department of Basic Education, 2011: Chapter 1). For the purposes of this study a “high school” refers to a public or independent school that enrolls learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

1.6.3 Low socio-economic status

The American Psychological Association, (nd: 1) defines “socio-economic status” as a measurement of a “combination of education, income and occupation...conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group.” For this study, “low socio-economic status” refers to a population group whose status is a combination of low levels of education, income, occupation and living conditions.

1.6.4 Higher education access

Tham (2011: 7) writes that “access to higher education” has been defined differently in different spaces and different times. He states that “access as defined in terms of equality of opportunity has embedded within it notions of equity in a broad and inclusive sense. It embraces a sense of justice and fairness as it seeks to provide opportunities for under-represented groups in society, such as those of low socio-economic status, women and girls, ethnic and other minorities, people with disabilities and others denied previous opportunity to enter higher education.” This is the definition of access to higher education that reflects the underpinning view of this study.

1.6.5 Inhibiting factors

“Inhibiting factors” in this study refer to those factors that serve as a barrier to accessing higher education for learners coming from low socio-economic backgrounds.

1.6.5.1 Poor schooling

“Poor schooling” as an inhibiting factor refers to inadequate schooling experience as indicated by limited teaching and learning resources that often results in poor academic results (Bloch, 2009).

1.6.5.2 Lack of knowledge

For the purposes of this study, the concept “lack of knowledge”, as an inhibiting factor, refers to the limited information about funding opportunities and inadequate knowledge regarding career guidance on the part of the learners (Bailey, Coetzee, Jones & Wickham, 2008).

1.6.5.3 Lack of finances

The “lack of finances” as an inhibiting factor refers to the low income of the parents that makes it difficult for them to afford higher education costs for their children (The Southern African Catholics Bishops Conference, 2012).

1.6.5.4 Social and cultural factors

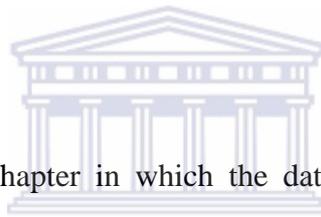
“Social and cultural factors” as inhibiting factors refer to the learners’ social capital - how strong or weak the motivation is within the family and the neighborhood for the learner to pursue or even aspire to access higher education, and to the learners’ traditions, norms and values which are part of their culture and which may or may not support access to higher education endeavours (Denhere, 2013).

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

This chapter provided an outline of the study that is comprehensively described in the four chapters that follow. Chapter Two provides an overview of how education had evolved over the years in South Africa, and the different positions on the debates on access to higher

education. It also reviews relevant literature on the factors that could prohibit learners from low socio-economic backgrounds from accessing higher education, and it discusses the theoretical framework used in this study. The theoretical framework is based on Sen's (1988) capability approach because the argument in this study was that access to higher education could enable and improve Black South African's capabilities and functionings.

Chapter Three is the research methodology chapter which describes the qualitative research approach, the research design, the research site and participants, the data-gathering instruments, and the analytical process followed. In each instance, the different decisions for actions taken are explained and justified on the basis of the existing body of knowledge in the field of qualitative research.



Chapter Four is the analytical chapter in which the data is analysed and discussed. The chapter is divided into three sections according to the sub-questions: Section One reports on the learners and educators' perceptions of the pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education. Section Two evaluates these factors and identifies which factors are the most inhibiting factors that prevent learners from accessing higher education; and Section Three looks at what could be done to overcome and/or prevent these factors in order to strengthen the learners' chances of continuing with university studies.

Finally, Chapter Five, the concluding chapter of this thesis, draws together all the discussions of the previous chapters. The findings are synthesised, compared and related to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. These findings enabled recommendations to be formulated for learners and educators, parents and families, higher education practitioners, governmental bodies, the Department of Education and non-government organisations. I

conclude the thesis with the noting of the limitations of the study, comments on opportunities for future research and a final reflection on my experience as an emerging researcher.

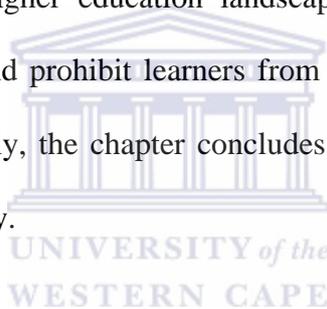


CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study, as stated in Section 1.3, is to investigate which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. The study is about the identification of these factors that could prevent Grade 12 learners from pursuing higher education. The study, therefore, resorts under an educational discourse that seeks to promote equal opportunities for the South African black youth. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the evolution of education in South Africa, the provision of basic education post-1994, and the higher education landscape. Thereafter, I discuss relevant literature on the factors that could prohibit learners from low socio-economic backgrounds accessing higher education. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework of the study.



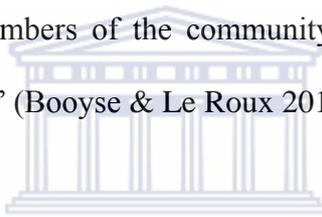
2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION PROVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As a background to the discussion that follows in the next section, it was deemed important to briefly discuss the evolution of higher education in South Africa.

2.2.1 The pre-colonial era: 1640 – 1657

Literature reveals that forms of education were in existence in Africa in general and in South Africa in particular during the pre-colonial period (Booyse & Le Roux, 2010; Hlatshwayo, 2000; Mazonde, 2001). Hlatshwayo (2000: 28) for example states “For countless centuries African non-literary indigenous education has integrated the individual into society from birth to death. Comprehensive in scope, it instils moral values, gives vocational training and inculcates codes of behaviour”. The learning process took place through informal and formal

means of instruction. Informally, knowledge was transmitted through “proverbs and riddles, epic narratives, oration and personal testimony, praise poetry, songs, chants and rituals, stories and folktales” (Booyse & Le Roux, 2010: 44). The formal means were through initiation ceremonies. The main objectives of African indigenous education were to “preserve the cultural heritage of the extended family, clan and the tribe” and to “adapt members of the new generation to their physical environment and teach them how to control and use it and to explain to them that their own future, and that of their community, depends on the understanding and perpetuation of the institutions, laws, language and values inherited from the past” (Mazonde, 2001: 3). From the characteristics of the African indigenous education systems penned in the literature, one can conclude that this was an all-inclusive education system for the benefit of all members of the community, “corresponding to the essential features of the society of the time” (Booyse & Le Roux 2010: 44).



2.2.2 The colonial and Union of South Africa era: 1658 - 1947

The arrival of western settlers in South Africa in the seventeenth century brought about significant shifts in the provision of education. One significant change was the establishment in the Cape in 1658 of the first formal school for the young slaves who “were to be taught the Dutch language and rudiments of the Christian religion [and] were now being indoctrinated into their master’s world” (Hlatshwayo, 2000: 28-29). Five years later, in 1663, a second school opened for the children of the colonists (Europeans), “non-Europeans” and slaves. Thirteen years later, in 1676, “the Church Council suggested the segregation of schools” – one for the slaves and another for non-slaves, which were further segregated by sex. The establishment of these schools in 1685 marked the beginning of segregation in the South African education system (Hlatshwayo, 2000: 29). For the greater part, the provision of education during this period until the late 19th century was on “complete laissez faire” control

by the state, in the case of Europeans schooling, or the church/missionaries for the indigenous people (Behr, 1988: 19). Following the recommendations of the Watermeyer Commission of 1863 on the organisation and control of schools, the following three categories of schools were established; (A) schools for the white community controlled by the state, (B) schools for poor white and coloured children controlled by the missionaries, together with (C) schools that were reserved for black children (Behr, 1988: 19). The quality of education offered corresponded with the alphabetical categories where (A) was top and (C) the lowest.

During this period, educational provision for Europeans followed the global trends in its development and challenges. However, the provision of education for the indigenous black people was more concerned with “not the cultivation of wisdom and learning” but with the production of people with “strong religious and spiritual tradition” with Western values and “civilisation” strongly instilled in them (Booyse & Le Roux, 2010: 47). Among the many challenges faced by the black community in so far as their educational provision was concerned during this period, was that, by the 1930s, “70% of black children of school-going age were not at school; most black children did not go beyond Std 1, a black pupil in Std 6 was two standards behind a white pupil in Std 6, and about 30% of teachers in black schools were without any qualifications and many under-qualified” (Behr, 1988: 30).

2.2.3 The Apartheid era: 1948 – 1990

The racially segregated provision of education during the apartheid era was characterised by the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, following the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission of 1951 set up by the National Party government to investigate how to respond to the challenges of the provision of education for blacks (Behr, 1988; Booyse & Le Roux, 2010; Hlatshwayo, 2000; Horrel, 1969; Kallaway, 1984). As Hlatshwayo (2000: 59)

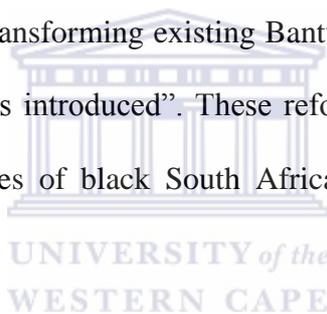
points out “The Eiselen Commission took place within the context of the Christian National Education (CNE) discourse which emphasised racial segregation, white superiority and black inferiority. This served as the blueprint for the commission report, recommending drastic changes in the provision and control of education to black South Africans, in a way that would give effect and maintain the white superiority/black inferiority beliefs espoused by the CNE reports” The Bantu Education Act facilitated the transfer of control of missionary schools to the state together with the training of teachers (Horrel, 1969: 10). At the heart of this early apartheid period was the institutionalisation of racial domination underpinned by the Nationalist Party government’s philosophy of separate development, based on race.

This was to allow the state to effectively design and deliver education to blacks in accordance with their white supremacy beliefs. The then minister of Native Affairs, Dr HF Verwoerd, gave a clear indication of the separatist path the government was taking regarding the provision of education to blacks, when he stated:

The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community, however, all doors are open. For that reason, it is of no avail for him to receive training which has as its aim absorption in the European community while he cannot and will not be absorbed there. Up till now he has been absorbed to a school system which drew him away from his own community and practically misled him by showing him the green pastures of the European but still did not allow him to graze there. Quoted in Behr (1988: 36).

In this period, there was a shift from the colonial era, where the education of blacks was about teaching them to become like Europeans, to teaching blacks to know their subservient and inferior place in society. By the 1980s, another major shift emerged in the thinking of the leadership around the provision of education for blacks. This follows (although not framed within) a period of intense resistance against Bantu Education in the late 1970s. The state established a commission of enquiry, chaired by Professor J de Lange, into all aspects of

education. The report, that recommended drastic reforms, was released in 1981 (Hlatshwayo, 2000; Behr, 1988 & Chisholm, 1983). While the provision of education in South Africa since 1953 up to the 1980s was solely framed within the ideology of racial domination, the De Lange report recommended that the provision of education must be deracialised and of equal quality as that provided to whites. This argument was framed within the economic demands of the country, specifically, the skills shortage, that the white community could not cope with (Chisolm, 1983: 358). The report proposed a two-tier schooling system of formal (academic) and informal (vocational) training. The recommendations were never formally accepted by the political leadership but many of its aspects were implemented, particularly with regards to the expansion of vocational training. Chisholm (1983: 358) points out that “At the end of 1982 a massive programme for transforming existing Bantu Education schools into technical and commercial high schools was introduced”. These reforms, while recording some slight improvement in enrolment figures of black South Africans, still left the racially skewed provision of education intact.



At the end of apartheid, the fragmentation of the management and control of education was at unimaginable levels. Each of the Indian, Coloured and White population groups had their own education authorities. The education provision for the black population, on the other hand, was handled as follows: A Department of National Education controlled policy and budgetary allocations, while the system was “divided between six self-governing territory departments, (with) a central government department administering education for Africans living in ‘White RSA’ and (the) four nominally independent state departments” (Department of Education, 1995: 13). The educational system for the black population was marred by challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, unqualified educators, huge pupil-educator ratios and biased curricula, leaving millions of adult black South Africans illiterate, with

black schools experiencing high-drop out and failure rates, with only a small minority obtaining access to higher education (Department of Education, 2005 & Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2008). The transition to democracy in 1994 meant that the democratic government had to attend speedily to these education challenges. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that in 1984, “nine times as much money was spent on the education of the white child as on that of the African child” (Hlatshwayo, 2000: 88).

2.3 THE PROVISION OF BASIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA POST 1994

The post-apartheid democratic government embarked on a process of democratising and transforming South Africa’s educational landscape, among other projects. The starting point was the development of policy and legislation that effectively abolished the racist and separatist approach to educational provision in favour of a unified, equitable and transformed system. The democratic government dismantled the racially and ethnically orientated education departments by creating one national Ministry of Education for the nine provinces (Harber, 2001: 12). Since 2009, the Department of Education has been divided into three bands, namely: the General Education and Training band, the Further Education and Training band, and the Higher Education and Training band. What follows below is a discussion on the legislative framework that was responsible for the transformation of education post-1994, the current size and shape of basic education, successes since 1994 and the challenges still facing South Africa’s provision of basic education.

2.3.1 Legislative Framework

The White Paper on Education of 1995 marked the shift towards the transformation of educational provision in South Africa, placing education within the principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Another key policy document that reflected the transformative approach to educational provision - from that which was framed within the

apartheid ideology of white supremacy to the one framed within the democratic principles of equality - was the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. In it, Chapter 2 contains the Bill of Rights, where Section 29, specifically, deals with the rights as they pertain to education:

- Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
- Everyone has the right to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 1257).

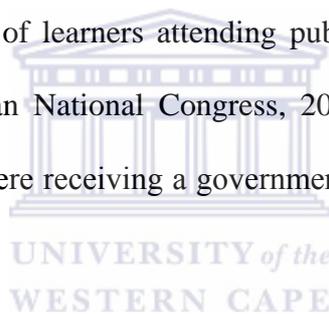
Both the National Education Policy Act of 1996 and the South African Schools Act of 1996 sought to operationalise the principles enshrined in the constitution. The National Education Policy Act allowed for the creation of a single national Department of Education and Training that was tasked to work together, according to the principles of cooperative governance, with the nine different provinces in managing the provision of education in South Africa. In addition, The South African Schools Act “aims to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. It seeks to ensure that all learners have right of access to quality education without discrimination, and it makes schooling compulsory for all children from the year they turn 7 to the year in which they turn 15 or the end of grade 9, whichever comes first” (Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development, 2008: 39). A number of other policy documents and amendments followed which laid the foundations for the transformation of South Africa’s provision of education, notably, the Green Paper on Education (1996), the White Paper 3 on Education (1997) and National Plan for Higher Education (2001).

2.3.2 Size and shape of basic education

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013), in 2011 there were almost 12.5 million learners in South Africa’s public and independent schools, with 93% attending public schools and 4% in independent schools. The total number of schools was almost

26,000, with about 425,000 educators. In the General Education and Training band (Grade R-9), learners were distributed as follows: 32% in the foundation (Grade R-3) phase, 23% in the intermediate (Grade 4-6) phase and 24% in the senior (Grade 7-9) phase. In the Further Education and Training band (Grade 10-12), the percentage of learner distribution in 2011 was 20%. In public schools, the overall learner-educator ratio was 32.3 in 2011 (Department of Basic Education, 2012, 2013).

Public schools were subdivided into five different categories called quintiles that use the economic variables of the communities within which they are situated, with quintile 1 being the poorest and 5 a well-off school. Schools in quintile 1 to quintile 3 are declared no-fee schools, resulting in about 60% of learners attending public schools to receive their basic education free of charge (African National Congress, 2014). By 2012, “virtually all the learners from poor households were receiving a government funded school lunch” (Republic of South Africa, 2014: 48).



2.3.3 Successes since 1994

South Africa achieved an exhaustive list of successes in the provision of education since 1994 (African National Congress, 2014; Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2013; National Planning Commission, 2011; Pretorius, 2010; Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation, 2008; Republic of South Africa (RSA), 2014). Of the most significant achievements was the development of a legislative and policy framework underpinned by democratic principles and equity. Access to basic education improved drastically since 1994 with the help of policy positions, such as compulsory schooling for 7-15 year olds, the introduction of no-fee schools, the training and appointment of more teachers and the provision of resources and infrastructure, such as the building of more schools. South Africa,

thus, is “on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals of achieving universal primary education by 2015” (RSA, 2014: 48). In addition, the matriculation pass rate of 54% in 1994 has shown a significant increase to 78.2% by 2013 (DBE, 2014; RSA, 2014). Table 3.1 below shows the trends for the Grade 12 performance of black learners between 1991 and 2007, reflecting an overall headcount increase.

Table 2.1: Black learners’ Grade 12 pass for year 1991 and 2007

<i>Year</i>	Total Candidates	Total Pass	University Pass
1991	304 315	150 611 (49%)	30 431 (20 %)
2007	458 836	277 941 (61 %)	49 950 (18 %)

(Source: Data drawn from South African Race Relations, 2013)

2.3.4 Challenges facing the provision of education

Despite the successes that were achieved thus far and the increase in black learners passing Grade 12, there are still a number of challenges facing the provision of basic education in South Africa. One of the major challenges relates to the quality of education. The National Planning Commission (2011) and the Department of Basic Education (2013) identify curriculum changes, specifically, the introduction of outcomes-based education as one of the key challenges. While the learner-participation rate is impressive from Grade 1 – 9, the numbers drop drastically in the final phase of schooling, Grades 10 – 12. This was evidenced by the learner distribution across grades in 2012 where Grade 1 accounted for 10% of learners and Grade 12 only 4% (DBE, 2013: 4). Another challenge is the number of dysfunctional schools in South Africa. Non-governmental commentators find 75% to be a true reflection of the number of dysfunctional schools in South Africa “when assessed against standards in comparable countries” (Dyosop, 2012). These standards use a matrix of variables, such as academic performance results, school resources, leadership, teacher

commitments, and the general culture of teaching and learning, among others. The disparity between the previously white schools and previously black schools persist. Learners from the black schools generally “exhibit low proficiency in reading, writing and numeracy – literacy and numeracy testing...demonstrates that Grade 5 learners from historically black schools are performing considerably worse on average than Grade 3 learners in historically white schools” (National Planning Commission, 2011: 270). Improving the quality of educational provision and closing the quality gap between the previously white schools and black schools remain the biggest challenges facing South Africa today.

2.4 THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

During the apartheid era, a number of ethnically defined higher education institutions were established after 1953, such as the University College for Coloured People in 1959 (for Coloureds) and the University of Transkei in 1976 (for Xhosas). Mabizela (2002: 45) states “Black universities were meant to reproduce socially and psychologically inferior black population, which at best was semi-skilled. White institutions played a role in reproducing skills for the top echelons of the labour market”. The private technical and vocational institutions continued to serve as alternate educational providers for black South Africans.

Currently, the Department of Higher Education and Training is divided into three main categories, namely, higher education institutions, Further Education and Training Colleges, and Adult Education and Training centres. There are now 23 public higher education institutions in South Africa, enrolling close to a million students in 2011, which is almost half the total number enrolled in the other two higher education and training categories (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013: 2). Public higher education institutions consist of 11 traditional universities, 6 universities of technology (previously known as

Technikons) and 6 comprehensive universities (mergers between traditional universities and Technikons).

This language of “higher education and training” places South African higher education firmly within the utilitarian trainers’ access perspective where higher education is seen as a factory that needs to produce a product required by the labour market for the good of the national economy (Williams, 1997). The Higher Education White Paper 3 of 1997 sees access to higher education as a means to human resource development and knowledge production, as well as an opportunity for a better life - the social justice argument used in the access movement perspective. The evidence for this positioning is that the Department of Education (1997: 7) presents the central theme of the purpose of higher education as the contribution and support of the “process of societal transformation outlined in the Reconstruction and Development Programme, with its compelling vision of people-driven development leading to the building of a better quality of life for all”. It further stipulates the role of higher education in reconstruction and development as including:

- Human resource development: the mobilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society;
- High levels skills training: the training and provision of person power to strengthen this country’s enterprises, service and infrastructure; and
- Production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness that integrate research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstructions (Department of Education, 1997: 10).

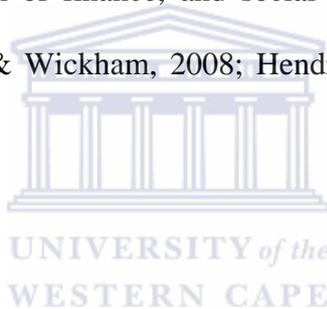
2.5 ACCESS CHALLENGES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION

Fisher and Scott (2011:1) state that “Despite significant progress in expanding access since 1994, higher education in South Africa remains a low participation–high attrition system”. They note that despite the gains, the participation rate for African people in higher education

is extremely low, sitting at 13% (Fisher & Scott, 2011). This situation is inconsistent with the ideal of widening access as it does not equitably deliver the stated role and purpose of higher education, that is, people-driven development for a better life. It is this “widening of Access” to the South African black youth that this study is concerned with.

2.6 FACTORS INHIBITING LEARNERS FROM ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION

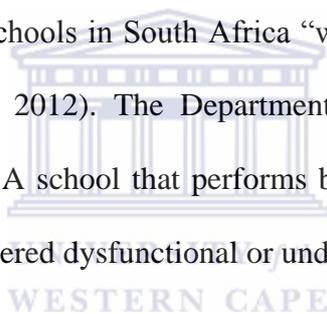
As discussed above, there are still a number of factors that are preventing Black South Africans from accessing higher education successfully. South African literature, in line with international literature on access to higher education, identifies poor schooling, lack of knowledge and information, lack of finance, and social and cultural factors as inhibiting factors (Bailey, Coetzee, Jones & Wickham, 2008; Hendry, Scott & Yeld, 2007; Johnson, 2007).



2.6.1 Poor schooling

Poor schooling is the first inhibiting factor identified in the literature. It appears as a general phenomenon for learners coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. Globally, the majority of learners from low socio-economic backgrounds exiting high school do not achieve the minimum requirements for admission to universities. Johnson (2007) and Scott et al. (2007) make this point in their research conducted on learning and teaching in higher education in South Africa. Johnson (2007:88) states, for example, that “the analysis of the statistics of the three Delft schools indicated an alarmingly low exemption rate, ranging from 0-16%”, while Scott et al. (2007: 33) report that only 5% of learners who had enrolled in Grade 1 in 1995 went on to achieve a matric certificate with an endorsement, the minimum requirement needed to apply for higher education.

In addition, Furlong and Cartmel (2009: 27) posit that “for under-represented groups, the main barrier to accessing higher education stems from having inferior qualifications. Therefore, the first and most significant step to social justice in higher education is about improving the quality of primary and secondary education”. This has been shown to be quite true in the two South African studies cited above. It is further supported by a respondent in Denhere’s (2013: 44) study when she said: “I do not think I was passing material, as we hardly have graduates from the school meeting tertiary entry requirements. The school is termed a dysfunctional school because of its high failure rate. It is poorly resourced and that contributed to high failure”. There is contestation on how to arrive at the conclusion that a school is dysfunctional, but non-governmental commentators find 75% to be a true reflection of the number of dysfunctional schools in South Africa “when assessed against standards in comparable countries” (Dyosop, 2012). The Department of Education uses a simplified indicator of matric performance. A school that performs below 60% in the National Senior Certificate examinations is considered dysfunctional or under-performing.



Mdepa and Tshiwula (2012) argue that the low quality of primary and secondary education in South Africa should be seen within the historical context of apartheid’s purposeful engineering of poor schooling for the Black communities. Bloch (2009: 8-10) further attributes this to the failed corrective measures taken post-apartheid that include poor teacher support and a skills backlog, the introduction of the outcomes-based curriculum, school governance models, and limited resources. Wangenge-Ouma (2012: 4), however, claims that of the five-and-a-half million 18 – 24 year olds in South Africa, 42% of them are not in education, employment or training. But what is more significant about this is the fact that 27% of the 42% “have the requisite academic qualifications to attend tertiary education

institutions” (ibid). This clearly indicates that schooling is certainly not the only inhibiting factor.

2.6.2 Lack of knowledge and information

The lack of knowledge and information is a second constraining factor identified in the literature. It relates to knowledge concerning proper and adequate career guidance, such as a failure to link learners’ high school subject choices with desired university study options, as well as knowledge concerning available higher education funding opportunities (Bailey et al., 2008; Johnson, 2007). Information includes issues such as university admissions and application procedures, due dates, and information on the university’s degree programmes, rules and subject choices. Furlong and Cartmel (2009: 30) assert “An important but frequently overlooked aspect affecting access to higher education is knowledge. Here those from families or from schools who have had extensive contact with universities have a distinct advantage and are able to draw on information about opportunities that other groups lack”. This affirms the lack of knowledge and information as an inhibiting factor for learners coming from low socio-economic backgrounds.

South African literature is also in line with international studies on the issue of a lack of knowledge and information as a limitation to disadvantaged students. Bailey et al. (2008: 45) state: “It is self-evident that many of these disadvantaged students would not have access to information technology such as computers and the internet, neither would they have televisions in their homes. These resources fulfil an important educational function in exposing young people to the outside world as well as to different careers...” A respondent in Denhere’s (2013: 44) study said: “You know, I could make it to higher education cos my matric results were good. The disadvantage that we have in the rural areas is that we do not

get information on funding or university entry requirements”. Therefore, learners from low socio-economic backgrounds have limited access to knowledge and information, both in the form of human resources (family and friends) and technology, and this further inhibits their access to higher education.

2.6.3 A lack of financial means

The lack of financial means is a third inhibiting factor. Because the learners are from low socio-economic background, their parents are not able to pay the fees required to access higher education. The Southern African Catholics Bishops Conference (2012: 3) points out that another “major barrier to education is the high cost of tertiary studies”. Exacerbating these increasing high costs of tertiary studies is the government’s inability to provide adequate funding. Wangenge-Ouma (2012: 5) attests to this when he reports that “unfortunately the growth in enrolments was not sustainable, and from 2001 onwards state allocations to higher education started dipping...the ‘massification’ agenda was effectively discarded in 2004 when the government imposed enrolment caps citing financial constraints”. This indicates that both the state and individual families, particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds are struggling to afford higher education.

Furthermore, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) that supports financially needy students with their fees in South Africa does not cover study costs in full. The Ministerial Committee Report on the review of NSFAS highlighted underfunding as one of the major shortcomings of the scheme. It states that “current estimates are that NSFAS has only half of the funds it would need to meet the demand for student financial aid from qualifying applicants. Some institutions choose to enhance the principle of access by awarding some NSFAS funding to all qualifying students, resulting in students having to

settle the difference between the award and the actual cost of study” (Department of Higher Education & Training, 2010: 73). This situation leaves the burden of having to find gap funding for the fees on the already financially struggling student. For learners coming from low socio-economic families, where they attended no-fee or low-fee schools and government provided them with meals, there is sometimes not even enough money for food and proper shelter. Having to pay R100 or more to an institution just for an application fee alone may be out of their reach and already a barrier to accessing higher education, let alone the study fees and other costs related to studying at a higher education institution.

2.6.4 Social and cultural factors

Lastly, social and cultural factors were identified as a challenge for learners coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. The social factor speaks to the learners’ social capital - how strong or weak the motivation is within the family and the neighbourhood for the learner to pursue or even aspire to access higher education. One of the respondents in Denhere’s (2013: 45) study responded: “You see, I have got a car already. Immediately after completing grade 12 I went to look for work. Now I make a lot of money transporting people’s produce to the city. I always see some who are learned but are still struggling in life”. There are a number of similar documented cases of inhibiting social factors, such as that of a woman who responded that, even though her matric results were good enough for her to access university, her parents “were encouraging my boyfriend to marry so that they could get the bride price” (Denhere, 2013: 44). The Southern African Catholics Bishops Conference (2012) also highlights inhibiting social factors, such as early childhood health and nutrition that have a direct correlation with the learners’ mental development. Gentile (2012) asserts that “a well-balanced diet can improve energy, alertness, concentration, attention, and

cognition. However, a nutritionally inadequate diet may have the opposite effect, resulting in fatigue, impairments with concentration and attention, and difficulty in decision-making”.

Coupled with these social factors is the cultural factor. Culturally, the literature points to the disconnect between the traditional middle class higher education participants and the non-traditional working class participants, with the latter having doubts about their “fit” in the university environment (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009: 31). Denhere (2013: 46) confirms this in his findings of a South African study by stating that “most of the matriculants were reluctant to leave their family and peers... [highlighting] the considerable social and emotional dislocation inherent in having to leave family and friends and enter a metropolitan environment which is considered to be relatively alien”. Badat (2010: 34) discusses cultural dynamics in South African higher education institutions as inhibiting factors, such as the “language of tuition and administration, overwhelming predominance of white academics and administrators, and the under-representation of black academics and role models. These factors could all combine to reproduce institutional cultures that are experienced by Black women, working class students, and rural students as discomforting, alienating, exclusionary and disempowering”. Phillips (2012) concurs with this inference when he states that learners from low socio-economic backgrounds do not identify with the dominant culture found in many higher education institutions. Denhere’s (2013) findings also highlight cultural expectations that inhibit learners’ access to higher education, such as young women being expected to get married and raise children, and young men having to find work and provide for their families.

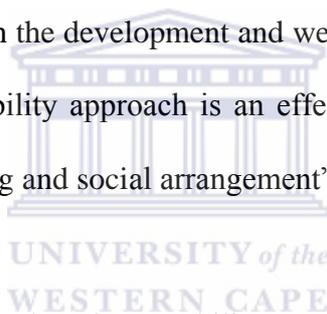
It is argued that these social and cultural factors could be the underlying causes for all the other factors explained so far. There could be a general sense or feeling of despair among

school leavers because of their cultural influences. Rightfully, they could ask questions, such as *Why must I bother studying hard? University is not for my people?* or *Why must I attempt searching for university information or funding opportunities when I am expected to find work immediately after school and look after my family?* Therefore, the socio-culturally framed “hopelessness attitude” could give rise to the multiplicity of cross-cutting inhibiting factors discussed. It is, however, acknowledged that other restraining factors could be identified in the data and that those factors could also influence the learners’ decision-making process.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SEN’S CAPABILITY APPROACH

Given the context described above, and since this study is about an investigation of the factors that could prevent Grade 12 learners from accessing higher education, a capability approach was deemed the most appropriate theoretical framework to use for the study. Robeyns (2005: 94) points out that “The approach has been pioneered by an economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (1988) and has more recently been significantly further developed by Martha Nussbaum”. With the emergence of the capability approach in the 1980s, Sen brought about a shift in how development had traditionally been measured. The tradition had been to evaluate development by looking only at the Gross National Product (GNP) per head. The modification brought about by the capability approach was to look beyond the mere economic growth to how that growth was distributed among the population (Sen, 1988:5). Later, Sen and Nussbaum (1993: viii) emphasised that “just knowing how much money is available for a given number of people will not take us very far - for we also need, at the very least, to ask about the distribution of these resources and what they do to people’s lives”.

Sen (1988: 30) defines his capability approach "...as a combination of various 'doings and beings', with quality of life to be assessed in terms of the capability to achieve valuable functionings". Sen (1988: 31) sees "functionings" as representing "parts of the state of a person – in particular the various things that he or she manages to do and be in leading a life". He states that the "capability of a person reflects the alternative combinations of functionings the person can achieve, and from which he or she can choose one collection" (Sen, 1988: 31). Simply put, functionings refer to what an individual is able to be and do, while capability refers to choices and opportunities - meaning the possible range of choices individuals can choose from in order to be and do. In essence, Sen's capability approach evaluates development through the lenses of functionings and capabilities. To this end, a capability approach theory is concerned with the development and wellbeing of human beings. Robeyns (2005:94) postulates that a capability approach is an effective tool for the "evaluation and assessment of individual wellbeing and social arrangement".



Nussbaum (2003), however, felt that the capability approach developed by Sen was too generalised and she argues for a clearly defined list of what she called "the central human capabilities" (Nussbaum, 2003: 41). According to Nussbaum (2003), this would strengthen the evaluation purpose of the capability approach as it would do away with the vagueness of the generalist stance. She arrived at a list of ten central human capabilities against which people's wellbeing or development should be evaluated. These are:

1. Life;
2. Bodily health;
3. Integrity;
4. Senses, imagination and thought;
5. Emotions;
6. Practical reason;
7. Affiliation;
8. Other species;
9. Play; and
10. Control over one's environment

In contrast, Sen did not provide a definitive list of capabilities because he argues that it should not only be about a “canonical list” based on theory and used for every purpose, but “...any list should thus be context-specific and flexible” (Agarwal, Humphries & Robeyns: 2005: 7). Following Sen’s viewpoint, different sets of lists emerged that sought to respond to the problem of a one-size-fits-all criticism levelled against Nussbaum’s list. Robeyns (2003) discusses these lists in great detail. She compares, for example, Nussbaum’s list to those of Alkire and Black’s (1997), Erikson’s (1993) and Erikson and Aberg’s (1987). The central theme running through the development of these lists is context-specific awareness. Robeyns (2003: 72) provides the following set of criteria that one can use as guidelines when deciding on a list for a specific purpose:

- The criterion of explicit formulation – Of this she argues that the list should at a basic level be explicit, discussed and defended;
- The criterion of methodological justification – This is about clarifying and scrutinising the method used to generate the list and its justification for the issue at hand;
- The criterion of sensitivity to context – the list must fulfil the objective it is used for within its context;
- The criterion of different levels of generality – This calls for a clear understanding of the aims of the list and, upon such realisation, one may decide on a pragmatic list or an ideal list and;
- The criterion of exhaustion and non-reduction – the listed capabilities should include all important elements.

Given that “applying capabilities approach implies that we choose the relevant capabilities and indicate how important each will be in an overall judgment”, for the purposes of this study, five of Erikson (1993: 68) capabilities list are deemed the most relevant. These capabilities will assist with evaluating the learners’ wellbeing in relation to the factors that could inhibit them from accessing higher education. These are:

- **Education and skill** – In Sweden, this capability evaluated the years of education and level reached by study participants. In this study, this capability is used to determine the parents’ or guardians’ and the families’ levels of education.

- **Economic resources** – For the Swedish survey, this capability assessed the income and wealth, property, and ability to cover unforeseen expenses of up to 1000 dollars within a week. In this study, this capability is used to determine the parents' income levels, and whether or not they earn below household subsistence levels.
- **Employment and working conditions** – From the Swedish perspective, the indicators for this capability are the unemployment experiences, physical demands of work, and possibilities to leave the place of work during work hours. The indicators for this capability in this study are whether or not the parents or guardians are employed, and if they are able to leave the place of work during work hours to attend to the learners' school needs.
- **Housing** – The Swedish approach indicator is the number of persons per room and available amenities in the household. In this study, this capability is used to determine how many people are in a household, and whether or not it is a safe and an enabling environment for further learning.
- **Family and social integration** - The Swedish approach looked at this capability from the marital status, contacts with friends and relatives. This capability is used in this study to analyse the social capital of the learners, their relations within family, friends and the community at large, and the impact of that in relation to access to higher education.

It is argued that, if these capabilities are in place, human beings' (including learners and students) overall wellbeing and social arrangements could be satisfying and worthwhile. However, as discussed so far, because of apartheid and the "backlog" it created with regard to the wellbeing of Black South Africans, most of these capabilities are not in place for them. That is why this study used the capability approach as theoretical framework. The identified inhibiting factors that were discussed earlier - poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of finance, and social and cultural factors are all in contrast with the capability approach. It signals thus that there is a need for transformation, an urge for a meaningful and lasting change in the lives of so many Black South Africans, especially the youth.

In addition, the transformation discourse on access to higher education points to these capabilities. It is an attempt by the National Department of Education to make these capabilities more accessible to more citizens. Thus, the argument in this study is that access

to higher education could enable and improve Black South African's capabilities and functionings. It could afford them the opportunity to enjoy adequate and safe housing conditions where they could live with integrity, and love and provide for their families and their communities; to become educated and contribute to the economic growth of the country; and have the ability to seek and find employment on an equal basis with others. It was the objective of this study to find possible solutions for the inhibiting factors and to make recommendations that could decrease the impact of these factors and even prevent some of them, in order for more young people to be empowered with as many capabilities and functionings as possible.

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter attempted to contextualise the study. It did so through a discussion of literature pertaining to how education has evolved over the years in South Africa, the provision of basic education post-1994, and the higher education landscape. Thereafter, relevant literature on the factors that could prohibit learners from low socio-economic backgrounds from accessing higher education was discussed. Lastly, the chapter concluded with a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework that is used in this study. I now move on to Chapter 3 in which I describe and explain the research process followed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the literature review and the theoretical framework that formed the basis upon which the interpretation of the data was anchored. In this chapter, I provide a detailed explanation of the research process followed in this study. I begin by restating the aim and objective of the study, and the main research question and sub-questions. Thereafter, a discussion of the qualitative research paradigm, within which the study is situated, is presented. Lastly, an explanation and justification of a case study design is given, as well as a comprehensive account of the research process followed and the data analysed.

3.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Based on the factors identified in the previous chapter that could inhibit learners' access to higher education, the aim of the study was to investigate which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The objective was to identify these factors in order to find solutions or ways in which they could be overcome and/or prevented. It is argued that, if the inhibiting factors could be overcome or prevented, more learners would be able to access higher education successfully. If this could be achieved, more young people would live a life with enhanced capabilities and functionings.

3.3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

The main research question was: Which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds?

Sub-questions

In an attempt to find answers to the main research question and to achieve the objective of the study, the following sub-questions were used to guide the data collection process and the analysis of the data:

1. What were the pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education?

2. Which of these factors were inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so?
3. How could the learners' chances of accessing higher education be strengthened?

3.4 PLACING THE STUDY IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Since the main research question and sub-questions are qualitative in nature, the study is situated in a qualitative research paradigm. Babbie and Mouton (2001), Creswell (2013), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), and Flick (2006) all agree that qualitative research is about the meanings people assign to a situation or problem. The goal of research conducted within a qualitative paradigm is to understand and describe phenomena within a natural setting, rather than to predict it. "Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them", as Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3) explain. Babbie and Mouton (2001) refer to this as an "insider perspective". Bailey, Hennink and Hutter (2011) highlight another important aspect of a qualitative research which is its interpretive nature. They state that this is an integral part of a qualitative research as "it recognizes that reality is socially constructed as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts" (Bailey, Hennink & Hutter (2011: 9).

While the definitions of qualitative inquiry may vary from author to author, there appears to be a general consensus on what its main characteristics are. Creswell (2013: 43) refers to an "evolving definition" which points to the "ever-changing nature of qualitative inquiry..." Qualitative research is characterised by the presence of such things as natural setting, researcher as key instrument, multiple methods, complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic, participants' meanings, reflexivity, and holistic accounts (Creswell, 2013: 45-46). Flick (2006: 14) provides, as follows, what he calls "essential features of qualitative research":

- appropriateness of methods and theories;
- perspectives of the participants and their diversity;
- reflexivity of the researcher and the research; and
- variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research.

The justification for placing this study within a qualitative paradigm is that the researcher sought to understand and describe a social problem (causes of low participation rates in higher education affecting learners from low socio-economic backgrounds). Babbie and

Mouton (2009) express this as a goal of qualitative inquiry. This study sought to investigate what high school learners (specific natural setting) believe (perspective of participants) to be the factors inhibiting them (everyday life experiences) from accessing higher education. Furthermore, the study is best located within the qualitative paradigm because of the researcher's reflexivity element. Regarding reflexivity, Yin (2009) explains that researchers can decide to conduct qualitative research, be involved in the collection process and ask open-ended questions to generate rich data. The researcher in this study has a lot of experience within the area of higher education access and he designed the instruments, including the use of open-ended questions and collected the data himself. These actions firmly positioned the study within a qualitative research paradigm.

3.4.1 Critique of Qualitative Research

The researcher is mindful of the critique that is levelled against qualitative research. Babbie and Mouton (2009), Flick (2006), Stake (1995) and Silverman (1993) reveal that the predominant critique of qualitative research revolves around its reliability and validity. Stake (1995: 45), under the heading "Recognition of Faults", lists qualitative research faults that touch on the issues of validity and reliability, and writes: "Qualitative researchers have a respectable concern for validation of observations, they have routines for triangulations...but they do not have widely agreed-upon protocols that put subjective misunderstandings to a stiff enough test".

To counter this critique, the proponents of qualitative research highlight that the absence of the traditional measures of validity and reliability, often associated with quantitative paradigm, must not be loosely translated into the absence of reliability and validity in the findings of qualitative research (Silverman, 1993). Babbie and Mouton (2009) suggest that there should be differentiation in how one views notions of objectivity between quantitative and qualitative researches. They (2009: 275) add: "When enhancing validity and reliability in the qualitative paradigm we would be more concerned with triangulation, writing extensive field notes, member checks, peer review, reasoned consensus, audit trail, etc". Thus, qualitative researchers can overcome the challenges by ensuring that the data is triangulated, and that discussions and interpretations are backed by empirical evidence and sound theories (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Silverman, 1993; Stake, 1995). I attempted to follow this advice in this study.

3.5 CASE STUDY DESIGN

A case study design was elected for the study because of its qualitative nature. Yin (2009: 18) defines a case study as an inquiry that seeks to “understand a real life phenomenon in-depth but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions – because they were highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study”. Similarly, Stake (1995: xi) states: “A case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”. Stake (2000: 23) clarifies that a case does not have to be an individual...“it can be whatever “bounded system” is of interest - an institution, a programme, a population can be a case”. These definitions serve as justification for opting for a case study design.

The study investigated what learners believe to be the factors inhibiting them from accessing higher education. Creswell (2013: 98) states that “The intent of the case study may be to understand a specific issue, problem or concern (e.g., teenage pregnancy) and a case or cases will be selected to best understand the problem”. Indeed there is a specific issue or problem that this study sought to describe and understand in depth. The specific problem that was probed in this study was the low participation rates of Black student cohorts in higher education, specifically, investigating factors that were preventing Grade 12 learners, coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, from accessing higher education successfully.

A group, consisting of ten Grade 10, ten Grade 11 and nine Grade 12 learners were identified and selected to achieve the aim and objective of the study. This choice of learners and levels was, as Creswell (2013: 98) puts it, to “define a case that can be bounded or described within certain parameters such as a specific place (school) and time (learners currently at school)”. In brief, this study had an interest in an in-depth investigation of a particular problem and focused its attention on a specific case so as to best arrive at its goal.

3.5.1 Challenges of a Case Study design

The main challenge of a case study design is said to be with the identification of the case. Creswell (2013: 102) states: “Selecting the case requires that the researcher establishes a rationale for his or her purposeful sampling strategy for selecting the case and for gathering information about the case...some case studies may not have clean beginning and ending points and the researcher will need to set boundaries that adequately surround the case”. In this study, the case had a clear beginning and ending point (the learners were selected at the

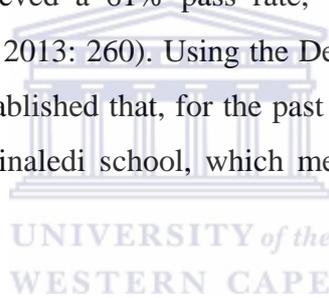
middle of April 2014 and the data collection process was completed in July 2014). The case was clearly identifiable (twenty-nine high school learners and three educators) within a specific high school context (set boundary).

3.6 RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process included decisions on the research site, research participants, the data collection instruments, and how the data were analysed. These are explained below.

3.6.1 Research site

The research site was High School X, which is one of the twenty high schools situated in the Khayelitsha Township, on the outskirts of Cape Town. High School X falls under the Metro East District and is categorised as a quintile 3 school and, therefore, qualifies as a no-fee school. High School X's National Senior Certificate results have been improving over recent years. In 2011, the school achieved a 61% pass rate, 71% in 2012 and 82% in 2013. (Department of Basic Education, 2013: 260). Using the Department of Education's indicator of a functional school, it was established that, for the past three years, the school has been a functional school. It is also a Dinaledi school, which means that it is a Mathematics and Science-focus school.



Khayelitsha is classified as a low socio-economic community and that made it a fitting site for this investigation (Information & Knowledge Management, 2005). Census 2011 revealed that 19% of the Khayelitsha population had zero income and 30% earned a monthly income of up to R1600, which means almost 50% of the population earns between zero and R1600 per month (Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, 2013: 4). Furthermore, Khayelitsha has a 38% unemployment rate, with only 5% of the population having post-matric qualifications and over 60% grade 11 or below educational qualifications; 55% of the residents live in informal dwellings (*Ibid*). These statistics imply a correlation between the lack of education and underdevelopment, with respect to the educational levels, unemployment rate and income, and living conditions. It is, therefore, envisaged that improved access to higher education will contribute towards alleviating poverty levels in

Khayelitsha. The researcher's personal relationship and years of liaison with school X also aided the researcher's access to the research site.

3.6.2 Research participants

My research proposal was submitted to the Higher Degrees Committee of the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty in compliance with the masters' degree requirements before I could embark on the selection of research participants and the data collection process. Subsequently, I obtained my ethical clearance from the Senate Research and Study Leave Committee on 14 April 2014 (refer Addendum 1).

The research participants were selected through a purposive sampling method. This method falls within a non-probability sampling technique, which is more suitable for social research whose primary concern is not to generalise the findings (Stake, 1995). I approached the school principal with the ethics clearance letter, the data collection instruments, the consent forms and the information sheets and requested permission to use the school as the study site and the learners from Grade 10 – 12 as research participants. He granted permission and delegated, as my liaison, the deputy principal who assisted me with further engagement with the school. I shared with the deputy principal that I wanted to purposively select 30 learners and 3 educators to participate in the study. The brief, which the deputy principal was meant to follow in selecting the learners, included both academically performing and underperforming learners from each grade. They were needed to get a balanced view of responses, thus, allowing for a full exploration of the inhibiting factors discussed in Chapter 2. For the purpose of this study, under performance was defined by an overall average less than 40%, while good performance was defined by an average above 60%.

After selecting the group (as per the brief) of ten learners per grade, the deputy principal organised a meeting where I met the selected group of learners and briefed them about the study and what I wanted them to do. After questions and clarifications, I provided each one of the learners with an information sheet and consent form, which they signed with full understanding of their rights and responsibilities as the study participants (refer Addendum 2 and 3 respectively). At the end of this meeting, I gave one each of them a biographical data information sheet and a learners' questionnaire to complete in their own free time. They

returned both these two instruments at the next meeting when the three focus group interview sessions took place.

Throughout the data collection period, I assumed, without initiating any checks and balances that the deputy principal had selected the participants in accordance with the brief. It only came to my attention during the data analysis stage that the participants were not as academically balanced as I had initially requested. Most of them were relatively good performers, a factor that impacted my findings, see Chapter 4.2 and 4.3 for a further discussion on this matter.

The educators were selected on the basis of the three designated grades (that is, one educator from Grade 10, one from Grade 11 and one from Grade 12). At the end of the meeting, only twenty-nine learners returned their questionnaires, with one Grade 12 learner opting out. It is believed, however, that the twenty-nine learners, as Stake (1995: 4) puts it, “maximised what we could learn from this case study”.

3.6.3 Data collection instruments

The study used multiple sources of data instruments: secondary data (statistics and other census information about Khayelitsha), the learner participants’ June 2014 progress reports, a demographic information sheet, a reflective questionnaire and three focus group interviews (one per Grade). The use of multiple sources of data is advantageous because of its capacity to develop “converging lines of enquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration”, allowing for the case study findings and conclusions to be more convincing (Yin, 2009: 16). Furthermore, the use of focus group interviews was beneficial because they tend to “allow space in which people may get together and create meaning among themselves, rather than individually” (Babbie & Mouton, 2009: 292). The multiplicity of data collection methods allowed for rich qualitative data that contributed to the validity and credibility of the findings.

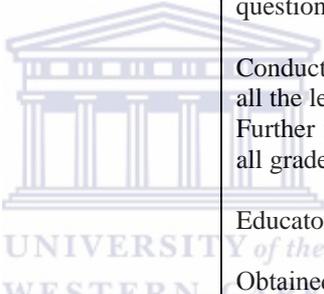
The empirical investigation was conducted in two phases, namely:

Phase 1: The identification and selection of learner and educator participants (middle April 2014)

Phase 2: The data collection process began at the end of April 2014 until the end of July 2014. A further brief, follow-up session to fill in the missing information was conducted in October.

Table 3.1 below provides a summary of the phases, the time frames and the data sets collected.

Table 3.1: Data collection phases

<p>Middle April 2014</p>	<p>Phase 1: Approached the school principal with my ethics clearance letter and research documentation.</p> <p>Meetings with deputy principal and finalising the process.</p> <p>Meetings with the learners and educators, and explained the study and process.</p> <p>Asked their permission to be participants, letting them sign the consent forms and giving them the information sheets.</p>	
<p>End April 2014 until end of May 2014</p> <p>Middle of July 2104</p>		<p>Phase 2: Learners completed the demographic information data sheets and the learners' questionnaire.</p> <p>Conducted three focus group interviews with all the learners, i.e., one grade per session. Further follow up: one focus group session for all grades.</p> <p>Educators completed their questionnaire.</p> <p>Obtained learners' June reports.</p>

The learners' June reports and the demographic information were used to triangulate their answers given in the questionnaire and the discussions in the focus group interviews. The secondary data provided a contextual background and was also used for triangulation purposes. I could listen to the participants' voices recorded at the interviews and I wrote notes to capture their discussions. The notes, too, were used for triangulation purposes - ensuring reliability and validating their answers in the questionnaire (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). Listening to the learners allowed me to gain further insight into how they perceived the inhibiting factors and the impact it had on their decision to access higher education or not, as well as assisting me with the interpretation of their responses in Chapter 4.

3.6.4 Data analysis

I started analysing the data from the beginning of June 2014 and completed the analysis in August 2014. Below is an explanation of the analysis process.

3.6.4.1 Quantitative data sets

As reflected in Table 3.1 above, I collected two sets of quantitative data: the learners' demographic information and their 2014 June results. Two tables representing the quantitative data are presented below.

Demographic information (Addendum 4)

The demographic information provided me with the following data: the age of the research participants, their gender, social security grant status, grades, parents/guardian employment status, and income, as well as the highest level of education of their parents/guardians (refer Table 3.2 below). This information was deemed important because it assisted me to contextualise the learners' backgrounds and low socio-economic status (together with the secondary data), and it was also used to triangulate the learners' answers in the questionnaire and their discussions in the focus group interviews.

Table 3.2 shows that the research participants consisted of twenty nine learners, ten from Grades 10 and 11, and nine from Grade 12. There were eleven males and nineteen females who participated in the study. The table also shows that the age spread was by and large in accordance with the grades the learners were in, with only one exception of an 18 years old learner in Grade 11. Sixteen learners (55%) received social security grants in the form of child support grants. Ten learners (30%) reported that their parents/guardians were unemployed. The majority of the learners, whose parents were employed, did not know how much their income was. Of the few (24%) who knew their parents' income, the lowest was R500 per month. Fifteen (52%) out of the twenty nine participants selected the option that they had at least one member of their household who had obtained a university/college education.

Despite the fact that the data show high levels of employment (70%) and education (52% university/college) among these participants' households, the reality is that all these learners attended a-no fee school. In addition, sixteen of them (55%) received a child support grant and three reported a monthly income of R2000 and below - indicators placing them well within the low-socio economic band of society.

Table 3.2 Demographic information

Learner	Age	Gender	Social Security Grant		Grade			Parents/Guardian Employment Status – Y, N or blank	Parents Income per month	Household Highest level of education
			Learner	Other in family	10	11	12			
1	15	M	Y	Y	X			N	None	University/college
2	16	F	Y	N	X			Y	Unknown	University/college
3	15	M	N	N	X			Y	Unknown	University/college
4	16	F	N	Y	X			Y	Unknown	University/college
5	15	F	N	Y	X			Y	Unknown	Grade 10 - 11
6	15	F	Y	Y	X			N	None	Grade 10 -11
7	15	F	Y	Y	X			Y	Unknown	Matric
8	16	F	Y	Y	X			N	None	University/college
9	16	F	N	Y	X			Y	Unknown	University/college
10	15	M	N	N	X			Y	Unknown	University/college
11	17	F	Y	Y		X		N	None	Grade 10 - 11
12	17	F	Y	Y		X		N	None	Grade 10 - 11
13	17	M	N	N		X		Y	Unknown	University/college
14	17	M	Y	N		X		Y	R1800	University/college
15	17	F	Y	Y		X		N	None	University/college
16	16	F	N	N		X		Y	Unknown	University/college
17	16	F	Y	Y		X		N	None	Grade 10 -11
18	18	M	Y	Y		X		Y	R1600	Matric
19	16	F	Y	Y		X		Y	Unknown	Matric
20	16	F	Y	N		X		N	None	Matric
21	18	F	N	Y		X		Y	R1500	Matric
22	18	F	N	Y		X		Y	R2800	Matric
23	18	M	N	N		X		N	None	University/college
24	18	M	Y	Y		X		Y	Unknown	Matric
25	17	F	Y	Y		X		Y	Unknown	University/college
26	17	F	Y	Y		X		N	None	Matric
27	18	M	N	Y		X		Y	R2000	Matric
28	17	M	N	Y		X		Y	R3500	University/college
29	18	M	N	Y		X		Y	R500	University/college

June 2014 progress results (Addendum 5)

The learners’ overall average in Table 3.3 reflects the performance of the learner in all their seven subjects, not just for Maths and Physics. Beyond reflecting the overall average of the seven subjects, I have highlighted the percentage mark of the Mathematics and Physics subjects for each of the participants and indicated the grade average for both these subjects. The grade average mark (in red) in these two subjects, Maths and Physics, is an indication of the performance of all the learners taking these subjects in each grade, as opposed to just the ones participating in the study. This data shows that the study participants score much higher than the overall grade performance in the two subjects. For instance, the average percentage

mark for the Grade 10 study participants is 58%, while the average mark for all the learners in Grade 10 is 25%. Thus, while the study participants' progress reflects a good academic picture, the grade averages, at least in the two subjects of Maths and Physics, show that the general academic picture is not quite the rosy one painted by the study participants. Also, these two subjects were prioritised because, with a good pass in this subject combination, one can access any field of study in higher education.

Table 3.3 shows that of the twenty-nine learners who participated in the study, only twenty-six submitted their June 2014 results, while three Grade 11 learners did not hand in their reports. All the study participants have Mathematics as one of their subject choices, with none of them taking Math Literacy. Nineteen out of the twenty six learners (73%) take Physics as a subject, with 50% of them in Grade 10, 100% of them in Grade 11 and 78% of them in Grade 12). This is testimony to the school being a 'Dinaledi' – a Mathematics and Science-focus school.

The mean percentage for the seven subjects of participating learners is 61% in Grade 10, 67% in Grade 11 and 64% in Grade 12. This is how the participating learners performed in all their seven subjects in the June 2014 examinations, with both Grades 10 and 12 in the lower 60's but Grade 11 in the higher 60's. The average for study participants in each grade is 58% for Math and 57% for Physics in the Grade 10, 59% for Math and 62% for Physics in the Grade 11, and 46% for Math and 42% for Physics for Grade 12. Looking at the participants' average marks for Mathematics and Science one can see a picture of good academic performance in Grades 10 and 11 (upper 50's and lower 60's) with a drop in Grade 12 to below 50% in both subjects.

A different picture emerges when one looks at the performance of all the learners, beyond the study participants. In Grade 10, the average mark for all learners is 35%, in grade 11 it is 46% while in grade 12 the average mark is 43%. The data also shows that the overall grade averages for Math and Physics are very low, with the exception of grade 11. Grade 10 and 12 are shown to be severely underperforming, with Grade 11 being just under 50% overall.

Table 3.3: 2014 mid-year academic results for learners

Learner	Grade			Overall Participant Learner Average %	Participant learner Math %	Physics/Business & Physics %
	10	11	12			
1	X			63	Math 74	Physics 62
2	X			62	Math 60	Business
3	X			76	Math 92	Business
4	X			45	Math 29	Business
5	X			67	Math 90	Physics 68
6	X			51	Math 27	Business
7	X			56	Math 21	Business
8	X			52	Math 47	Physics 43
9	X			75	Math 85	Physics 68
10	X			63	Math 57	Physics 46
	Mean			61	58	57%
				All learners average	All learners average	All learners average
	Overall Grade Average			35%	Math 25	Physics 29
11		X		68	Math 70	Physics 71
12		X		75	Math 74	Physics 74
13		X		50	Math 34	Physics 38
14		X		72	Math 72	Physics 72
15		X		79	Math 87	Physics 85
16		X		61	Math 51	Physics 55
17		X		62	Math 28	Physics 41
		Mean		67	59	62%
				All learners average	All learners average	All learners average
		Overall Grade Average		46%	Math 49	Physics 55
18			X	81	Math 79	Physics 75
19			X	55	Math 32	Physics 45
20			X	75	Math 72	Physics 70
21			X	61	Math 25	Physics 40
22			X	59	Math 17	Business
23			X	64	Math 56	Business
24			X	61	Math 33	Physics 51
25			X	52	Math 32	Physics 34
26			X	72	Math 66	Physics 61
			Mean	64	46	42
				All learners average	All learners average	All learners average
			Overall Grade Average	43%	Math 29	Physics 35

3.6.4.2 Qualitative data sets

The qualitative data consisted of two self-reflective questionnaires, one for the learners (refer Addendum 6) and one for the three educators (refer Addendum 7), as well as the three focus group interviews. It is important to note that the focus group interviews were conducted in an open discussion method, with key discussion' guiding questions (refer Addendum 8).

As stated in Section 1.5.4, content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. Following Creswell (2013), Henning (2004) and Neuman (1997), I used a three-stage, open coding process for the content analysis. According to Neuman (1997:422), "Coding is two simultaneous activities: mechanical data reduction and analytic categorization of data". This is a process where one begins to sort the data collected into smaller, manageable and orderly pieces of information and assign a label, category or theme to each of them. Creswell (2013) refers to this as the heart of a qualitative data analysis process.

Stage 1 in the open coding process involved a general reading and noting of all the qualitative data (refer Addendum 9). In Stage 2, the data were sorted into categories and themes. The categories were based on the three sub-questions of the study; while the four identified inhibiting factors, as discussed in Section 2.5, were used as broad themes (refer Addendum 10). Stage 3 was the last stage in the open coding process and the data were further reduced to sub-themes (refer Addendum 11). These categories, themes and sub-themes served as the basis for the analysis and discussion in Chapter 4, placing the study analysis within a deductive approach. However, new sub-themes emerged from the data collected which also added an inductive approach to the analysis. The three categories were:

- pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education;
- factors inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so?
- how to strengthen learners' chances of accessing higher education.

The themes were:

- poor schooling;
- a lack of knowledge and information;
- a lack of financial means; and
- social and cultural factors

I now present the data and how it was analysed under each category, theme and sub-themes.

Category 1: Pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education

As a starting point for a deductive analysis approach, I first wanted to probe whether or not the pre-identified inhibiting factors in the literature would indeed be confirmed or disproved

by the responses. To this end, a number of questions were posed in the various data sets to elicit responses from the participants.

Poor Schooling as inhibiting factor

To probe this inhibiting factor, the following questions were asked in the educators’ questionnaire:

- *Do you think that there are factors that could play a role in a learner’s decision to continue to higher education after grade 12?*
- *How would you rate the quality of education learners receive from this school?*

The table below reflects the educators’ responses to these questions.

Table 3.4 Educators responses to poor schooling probe

Poor Schooling	
<i>Do you think that there are factors that could play a role in a learner’s decision to continue to higher education after grade 12?</i>	<i>How would you rate the quality of education learners receive from this school?</i>
Yes = 3 respondents Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Peer pressure • Inadequate career guidance • Financial advice for parents re registration fees • Poor academic performance 	Good = 3 respondents Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers try their best in spite of limited resources • Too many demands from the department prevents the school from obtaining excellent quality of education • All educators are qualified to teach their specialisation subjects • Effective use of time • Performance of learners and educators is adequately monitored • Output = majority of learners admitted to higher education

Table 3.4 shows that the educators’ responses to the two questions are similar to the discussion in Section 2.5.1. These are: poor academic performance, limited teaching and learning resources, and absence of excellent quality education.

The learners’ focus group discussion also probed the poor schooling inhibiting factor further by asking the following question:

- *Do you receive support for your education from the school?*

Table 3.5 below shows the learners responses to the above question.

Table 3.5: Discussion point No 7

Poor Schooling	
<i>Do you receive support for your education from the school?</i>	
<p>Positive responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having Saturday classes • University visits for career days • Motivation from teachers and excellence acknowledgement awards • Motivational talks from guest speakers organised by the school 	<p>Negative responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited learning facilities and resources • Support limited to top performing learners and Math and Physics subject choices

Table 3.5 reveals that, while there were positive comments regarding support received from the school, learners also highlighted the aspects of poor schooling as an inhibiting factor, such as limited facilities and resources, together with the extra support limited to the few top performing learners, as well as, to Mathematics and Physics subject choices.

A lack of financial means as an inhibiting factor

A lack of financial means as inhibiting factor was probed in the quantitative data (refer Table 3.2). While the table shows that 76% of the participants' parents were employed, it appears that all of them earned low incomes, with one participant citing a pay of R500 per month. The low pay conclusion is deduced from the fact that 55% of the respondents received child support grants and all of the participants attended a no-fee paying school.

A lack of knowledge and information as inhibiting factor

A lack of knowledge and information was probed through the educators' and learners' questionnaires. In the educators' questionnaire the following questions were asked:

- *Do learners at this school receive adequate career guidance?*
- *Does the school organise career expos for the learners?*

Table 3.6 below shows educators' responses to these questions.

Table 3.6 Educators responses to a lack of knowledge and information as inhibiting factor.

A lack of knowledge and information	
<i>Do learners at this school receive adequate career guidance?</i>	<i>Does the school organise career expos for the learners?</i>
Yes, very well = 2 respondents Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During life orientation periods • Career exhibitions Somewhat = 1 respondent Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare committee for needy learners • 1 social worker per district 	Yes, annually or more = 2 respondents Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners attend career exhibitions organised by higher education institutions Sometimes = 1 respondent Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are sometimes taken to career exhibitions organised by higher education institutions

Table 3.6 shows a split in the educators’ responses where two selected the highest positive option and one chose the average answer for both questions. All respondents indicated that career exhibitions are organised by higher education institutions.

To further probe this inhibiting factor, the learners were asked the following questions:

- *List the university/college funding opportunities you know of, e.g., bank loans, bursaries, other types of financial support?*
- *What subject choices are required for your preferred study field? (If you don’t know, you can simply write, “I don’t know”).*
- *What are the minimum admissions points required for your preferred field? (If you don’t know you can simply write, “I don’t know”).*

Table 3.7 below reveals that thirteen learners (45%) did not list the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in response to the question on funding opportunities; only eleven (38%) listed the required subject choices for their preferred study options accurately; and no one knew the minimum admissions points required for their preferred study fields. The emerging theme here is that there is little to no knowledge of career information. Lastly, the last 2 rows in Table 3.7 show that eight respondents (28%) were interested in the field of Commerce and the overwhelming reason for the preferred choice of study was passion (38%), rather than strength which was at the lowest (7%).

Table 3.7: Learners responses to a lack of knowledge and information probe

<p>A lack of knowledge and information</p> <p>List the university/college funding opportunities you know of, e.g., bank loans, bursaries, other types of financial support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSFAS: 16 respondents • NGO/Corporate Scholarships: 14 respondents • Private Sector Funding (Loans and Bursaries): 8 respondents • Higher Education Institutions: 5 respondents • Did not answer the question: 1 respondent
<p>What subject choices are required for your preferred study field? (if you don't know, you can simply write, "I don't know")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure : 1 respondent • Listing of multiple subjects without focusing on the required subject choice: 6 respondents • Listing of accurate subject choices: 11 respondents • Inaccurate subject choices: 8 respondents • I don't know: 3 respondents
<p>What are the minimum admissions points required for your preferred field? (If you don't know you can simply write, "I don't know").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know: 5 respondents • Guessing but inaccurate: 2 respondents • I don't remember: 1 respondent • Decisive but inaccurate: 21 respondents
<p>What would you like to study at University/College?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field of Commerce: 8 respondents • Field of Health Sciences: 6 respondents • Field of Engineering: 6 respondents • Field of Science: 5 respondents • Field of Arts and Social Sciences: 4 respondents
<p>Why do you want to study in this field?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion: 11 respondents • Community & People Development: 5 respondents • Interest in the study field: 4 respondents • Interest in the profession: 4 respondents • Better job/career opportunities: 2 respondents • It's my strength: 2 respondents

Social and cultural factors as inhibiting factor

The social and cultural inhibiting factors were probed in the questionnaires, as well as in the focus group interviews. In the educators' questionnaire, I asked the following questions:

- *In your view, are learners at this school aspiring to go to university/college after grade 12?*
- *In your view, is it worthwhile for learners from this school to go to university/college after grade 12?*

All three respondents responded positively to the above questions, with the main comments highlighting the motivation learners receive from their teachers and the motivational

activities put together by the school as key to ensuring learners’ aspirations. With regards to the second question of whether or not it is a worthy exercise for learners to pursue higher education, the comments in support of the positive responses cited knowledge gain, improving living conditions, and job competitive advantage (refer Section 4.2 for a detailed discussion of these responses).

In their questionnaire, the learners were asked the following question with regard to their own aspirations: *What are your plans after completing Grade 12?*

Twenty-eight (97%) learners selected “Go to University/college” option, with only one (3%) learner selecting the “I don’t know” option.

The learners’ focus group discussions probed several aspects of the sociocultural inhibiting factors. These were all done in an open discussion forum with one grade at a time. I asked leading questions and allowed the discussion to flow, while taking notes of the main points raised. The tables below summarise the main discussion points that emerged.

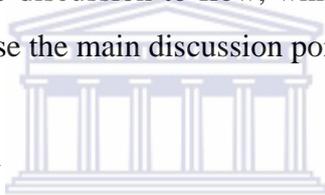


Table 3.8: Discussion point No 1

<i>Is there value in pursuing higher education studies?</i>	
Affirmative	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves competitive advantage in the job market • Expands one’s career opportunities • Empowers one’s mind and increases knowledge • Improves family situation • Contributes to the betterment of SA economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It depends on one’s career ambitions – some careers do not require a higher education qualification.

Table 3.8 shows that during the discussions there were more arguments put forward in the affirmative. Only one argument was negative and this was only raised by one discussant.

Table 3.9 below shows a balanced view on the support received from family for learners’ education. Broadly, it appears that, on a personal level, parents are supportive. However, they are structurally trapped in a system that renders them to appear unsupportive (refer Section 4.2 for a detailed discussion of these responses).

Table 3.9: Discussion point No 2

<i>Do you receive support for your education from your family?</i>	
Affirmative	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents provide financial support • Parents provide motivation and encouragement • Parents look up to learners for an escape from poverty • Educated family serves as motivation – learners do not want to be the black sheep • Uneducated family serves as motivation – learners want to be the first in the family (to attend university) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents put pressure on learners to complete studying quickly to go make money – short courses • Parents are overworked – don't have time to look at learners books and attend to school activities • Parents discouraged by university dropouts in the neighborhood • Parents discouraged by unemployed graduates in the neighborhood • Household chores taking study time – cooking, cleaning, babysitting • Lack of knowledge about available financial support

Table 3.10: Discussion point No 3

<i>Do you receive support for your education from your community?</i>	
Affirmative	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community takes pride in the only child from the neighborhood doing well at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witchcraft from community members because of jealousy • Living conditions – shacks, surrounded by taverns • Crime – gangsters • Lack of positive role models – more dropouts, unemployed, drug and alcohol abusers • Dropouts discouragement

Table 3.10 shows that the learners raised more arguments in the negative when it came to community support. These negative sentiments were split between the systemic (living conditions) and personal (witchcraft) aspects (refer Section 4.2 for a detailed discussion of these responses).

Table 3.11: Discussion point No 4

<i>Do you receive support for your education from your peers?</i>	
Affirmative	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping good company seen as source of strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad company seen as source of weakness

Table 3.11 shows that support from peers is dependent on the company one keeps.

Table 3.12: Discussion point No 5

<i>What are your distractions?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dating• Social media• Bad company• Living conditions and environment

Table 3.12 shows that learners blamed themselves for being distracted from their studies, but they also reported that their living conditions and environment are also distractions.

Category 2: Factors inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so?

The themes that emerged from the preceding section formed the basis of the data collected in this section and its analysis. Table 3.13 below shows that learners are of the view that the factors poor schooling and a lack of financial means are not major. They do not inhibit learners' chances of accessing higher education the most. The lack of knowledge and information, as well as social and cultural factors are viewed by the learners as being the most inhibiting factors. A detailed discussion on these responses is provided in Section 4.3.

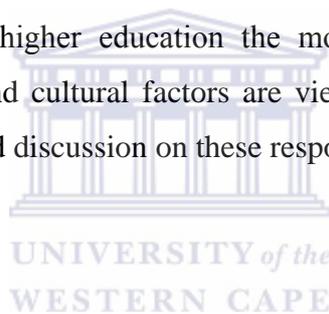


Table 3.13: Discussion point No 6

<i>Choosing between poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of financial means, and social and cultural factors, which of these factors inhibit learners chances of accessing higher education the most?</i>	
Poor schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners still receive good results despite limited teaching and learning resources • Academic results have been improving at the school over the past 3 years • Poor schooling not a major factor at the school
A lack of financial means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bursaries and scholarships are available • Government funding NSFAS also available • Teaching and Social Work and general scarce skills; government funding also available • Finances are also not a major barrier
A lack of knowledge and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners do not know all the details about available funding opportunities early enough • Learners are not properly educated about various post-matric career options • Learners are not properly educated about post-matric subject choice requirements for various study options • Learners lack knowledge about admissions requirements of various study options • This is a major factor inhibiting learners chances of accessing higher education
Social and cultural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited support from family and community • Witchcraft and crime in the community • Lack of positive role models • Poor living conditions • Pressure from family to find work quickly • This is another major factor inhibiting learners chances of accessing higher education

Category 3: How can learners’ chances of accessing higher education be strengthened?

Both the educators and learners suggested that the following factors needed to be in place in order to strengthen the learners’ chances of accessing higher education successfully. These were the provision of:

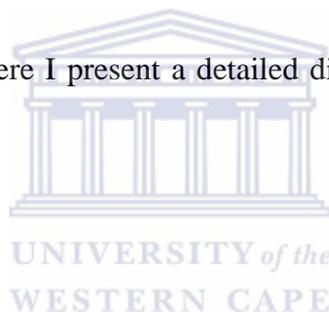
- Academic support – to all learners and learning areas
- Adequate financial support
- Adequate career guidance
- Sufficient information to learners, parents and community at large
- Motivational activities and positive role models

These factors are discussed in detail in Section 4.4. This concludes the analysis of the qualitative data collected.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a detailed description and justification of the research process followed in this study. I found working with the qualitative data that I had collected extremely challenging because I had to ensure that the decisions that I took during the research process were backed by evidence that support the overall objectives of this study. In hindsight, it was an oversight on my part not to put the necessary checks and balances in place with the selection of the research participants. The selected participants, however, did not alter the objectives of the study, but, instead, offered slightly alternative insights which are discussed in Chapter 4. The decision not to use research assistants during the data collection process meant that I was immersed in the process and had first-hand insights into the environment within which the participants functioned. Overall, the research methodology process described above has left me with a great sense of achievement, despite the mistakes I may have committed along the way.

I now move on to Chapter 4 where I present a detailed discussion and interpretation of the data analysed.



CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

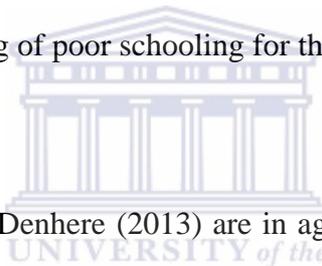
The previous chapter described the research process followed in this study. In this chapter, I present the discussion and interpretation of the data. Throughout the discussion, I attempted to link the responses of the participants to the literature review and the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 to unpack and interpret the data obtained from the research participants. The data is organised according to the study's three sub-questions. Section one analyses the data as it relates to sub-question one: What are the pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education? Section two analyses data relating to sub-question two: Which of these factors were inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so? Finally, section three analyses data relating to sub-question three: What could be done to overcome and/or prevent these factors in order to strengthen the learners' chances of accessing higher education successfully? The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the analysis.

4.2 WHAT ARE THE PRE-UNIVERSITY FACTORS THAT INHIBIT LEARNERS ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

The data pertaining to this sub-question is presented in the order of the inhibiting factors discussed in Chapter 2 (refer Section 2.5). These are: poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of financial means, and social and cultural factors. In each section, the questions posed to the educators and the learners are listed first, and thereafter, the discussion of their responses is presented.

4.2.1 Poor schooling

Poor schooling conditions are the first inhibiting factor identified in the literature (refer Section 2.6.1). Nationally, the majority of learners exiting high school from low socio-economic backgrounds do not achieve the minimum requirements for admission to universities. Johnson (2007: 88) states that “the analysis of the statistics of the three Delft schools indicated an alarmingly low exemption rate, ranging from 0-16%”. Similarly, Scott et al. (2007: 33) report that only 5% of learners enrolled in Grade 1 in 1995 went on to achieve a matric certificate with an endorsement, which is the minimum requirement needed to apply for university admission. Mdepa and Tshiwula (2012) argue that the low quality of primary and secondary education in South Africa should be seen within the historical context of apartheid’s purposeful engineering of poor schooling for the Black communities.



Furlong and Cartmel (2009) and Denhere (2013) are in agreement with the views of Mdepa and Tshiwula in that they also explain that the sub-standard quality of primary and secondary education is as a result of poorly resourced teaching and learning facilities. To explore poor schooling as an inhibiting factor, two questions were asked in the educators’ structured questionnaire and one question in the learners’ focus group interviews. The 2014 June academic reports for participating learners were also collected and are used to triangulate the qualitative data. The questions asked in the educators’ structured questionnaire were:

1. *Do you think that there are factors that could play a role in a learner’s decision to continue to higher education after grade 12?*
2. *How would you rate the quality of education learners receive from this school?*

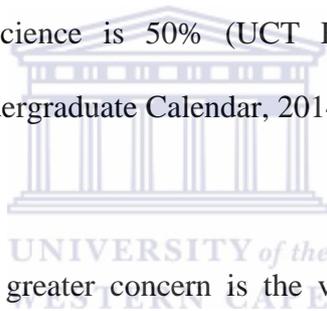
In the learners’ focus group interviews, the following question was asked: *Do you receive support for your education from the school?*

The responses to these questions affirmed some of the issues raised in the literature review. All three educators said “yes” to the first question and they selected “good” instead of “excellent” as a response to the second question. Poor academic performance was provided in support of the response to the first question. In support of the response to the second question, limited teaching and learning resources, as well as too many administrative demands on educators, came up strongly.

The learner’s responses to the focus group interview question about the support they receive from the school for their education further highlighted limited teaching and learning resources, and that the limited support they receive from the school is in itself reserved for the top performing learners only, as well as for those who are doing Mathematics and Physical Science subjects (refer Table 3.5). The limited learning and teaching resources, mentioned both in the educators’ and learners’ responses, refer to the absence of science laboratories, limited and restricted access to computer labs, and insufficient teaching time for educators due to too many administrative demands, among others. These factors were also identified in the literature review (refer Section 2.6.1).

High School X’s academic results have been improving over the last three years despite the sub-standard and limited teaching and learning resources. As stated in Section 3.5.1, in 2011 the school achieved a 61% pass rate, 71% in 2012 and 82% in 2013 for their Grade 12 results (Department of Basic Education, 2013: 260). The challenge, however, is still to improve the quality of these passes, as the number of bachelor endorsements is still low. A bachelors’ endorsement in Grade 12 is the basic minimum requirement for admission to university studies. The June 2014 academic results of the school reveal some worrying trends in the

results of both participants and non-participating learners (refer Table 3.3). On the one hand, the academic results of the learner participants are seemingly encouraging. The participants' academic performance in June 2014 ranged from "good" to "excellent", with only one participant achieving an overall average of below 50% in the seven subjects across all three grades. While the overall averages for the seven subjects' range from "good" to "excellent" for the participants, their mean pass mark in Mathematics for Grades 10 and 11 is in the 50's, Physical Science is in the 50's for Grade 10 and in the 60's for Grade 11. The picture changes in Grade 12, where it matters the most in terms of access to higher education. The Grade 12 participants' mean pass mark for Mathematics, is only 46% and for Physical Science 42%. This is problematic, as the minimum mark required at university in degrees that require Mathematics and/or Physical Science is 50% (UCT Health Science and Engineering Calendars, 2014; UWC EMS Undergraduate Calendar, 2014).



On the other hand, a cause for greater concern is the very low average percentages for Mathematics and Physical Science for all the Grade 12 learners in the school, not just the research participants. The overall Grade 12 Mathematics percentage is 29%; and 35% for Physical Science. Learners in Grade 11 performed much better than both Grades 10 and 12 learners (Mathematics 49% and Physical Science 55%). It is not clear why Grade 12 learners performed more poorly than those in Grade 11, even though the limited resources and better educators are reserved for Grade 12 classes, and these learners also receive extra support in Mathematics and Physical Science (refer Table 3.4). Furthermore, the overall average mark for all learners in each grade is under 50%, with Grade 10 achieving the lowest mark of 35%, followed by Grade 12 at 43% and Grade 11 performing better than the two grades at 46% overall average.

While the learners' academic results appear to look good (61% pass rate, 71% pass rate and 82% pass rate for the past three years), including the 2014 June results of the research participants, it is the quality of the passes that will inhibit learners from accessing higher education, particularly considering the fact that 86% of the participants indicated that they wish to access post-school study fields that require both Mathematics and Physical Science (refer Table 3.7). This point is further discussed under Section 4.2.2 below.

The data also revealed the presence of school-based mitigating factors, such as how the educators assist the learners. Among these is the comments made by the learners in the focus group interview discussion that educators organised Saturday classes and motivational talks (refer Tables 3.4 and 3.5). One educator commented that they try their best even with limited resources to support and motivate learners. It is because of these mitigating factors – extra support from the educators (as it will be shown in Section 4.3 below) that the learners do not believe the poor schooling factor is the most inhibiting factor for them.

The responses of the learners above highlight the fact that their learning opportunities were restricted by limited teaching and learning resources and insufficient support that prioritised certain subject choices only. Therefore, as per the theoretical framework (refer Section 2.7) learners operate within a limited range of choices to choose from for the improvement of their quality of life. In this particular instance, the question to be answered is: *What possible range of choices (capabilities) could these learners choose from in order to learn (functionings)?* For example, they could not choose to use a science laboratory because it did not exist.

Learners, however, could still choose whether to go to class during the week, attend extra Saturday classes, or join the limited support provided by the school, in order to gain valuable functioning – learning. While the quality of education provided at this school is not excellent (by the educators’ own admission, refer Table 3.4), this does not necessarily lead to the absence of learning opportunities at the school. Indeed, learning does take place, as is shown by the academic results highlighted above. For the education and skill capability, which in this study, and relevant to this section, refers to the quality of education provided by the school, one could conclude that this capability does exist to a certain extent – there is relative quality in the education these learners receive under the circumstances. As one teacher states: *“Teachers try their best in spite of limited resources”* and confirmed by the learners in the focus group discussions.



4.2.2 A lack of knowledge and information

A lack of knowledge and information is the second inhibiting factor identified in the literature (refer Section 2.6.2). It relates to knowledge concerning proper and adequate career guidance, the correctly identified high school subject choices for specific university study options, as well as knowledge concerning available higher education funding opportunities (Bailey et al., 2008; Johnson, 2007). It also refers to factors such as a university’s admissions and application procedures and due dates, information on the university’s degree programmes, and rules and subject choices. Furlong and Cartmel (2009: 30) state: “An important but frequently overlooked aspect affecting access to higher education is knowledge. Here those from families or from schools who have had extensive contact with universities have a distinct advantage and are able to draw on information about opportunities that other groups lack”. Therefore, this factor relates to learners who are not properly informed about all the

above factors and as a consequence, it prevents them from accessing higher education studies successfully.

This factor was probed in the educators' questionnaire. Two questions were posed, namely:

1. *Do learners at this school receive adequate career guidance?* and
2. *Does the school organise career expos for the learners?*

Two educators selected the “yes” and “very well” options for the first question, while the third educator selected the “yes somewhat” option. The first two educators provided life orientation periods and career exhibitions organised by the school as support for their responses (refer Table 3.6). The one, educator who selected the “yes somewhat” option, appears to have misunderstood the question because she referred to psycho-social support, judging from her supporting statement which cited one social worker in the whole circuit. This makes her response difficult to interpret with respect to this theme.

Two educators selected the “yes annually or more” option as an answer to the second question, while the third educator selected the “sometimes” option. In support of their responses, all the educators indicated that learners are sometimes taken to career exhibitions organised by higher education institutions (refer Table 3.6).

In the learners' questionnaire, the following were asked:

1. *List the university/college funding opportunities you know of, e.g., Bank loans, bursaries, other types of financial support.*
2. *What subject choices are required for your preferred study field? (If you don't know, you can simply write, “I don't know”)*
3. *What are the minimum admissions points required for your preferred field? (If you don't know, you can simply write, “I don't know”).*

In response to the first question, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was listed 16 times, NGO/Corporate Scholarships were listed fourteen times, private sector

funding (loans and bursaries) was listed 8 eight times, and higher education institutions were listed five times (refer Table 3.7).

Eleven (38%) learners listed accurate subject choices and fourteen (48%) listed inaccurate subject choices. Four (14%) learners selected the “I don’t know” option as responses to the subject choice question.

Twenty three (79%) learners’ responses were inappropriate; five (17%) learners selected the “I don’t know” option and one (3%) learner wrote, “I don’t remember” as responses to the minimum admission points required question (refer Table 3.7). Effectively 100% of the learners did not have the right answer to this question.

Discussion of the responses of both educators and learners

The sub-themes that emerged from analysing the data pertaining to theme two (a lack of knowledge and information) are career guidance and funding opportunities. The career guidance sub-theme is further unpacked into guidance, as it relates to subject choice requirement in various higher education study fields, and the admissions requirements into the various study fields at university level. The educators believe that the school provides adequate career guidance through the life orientation subject, and taking learners to career exhibitions organised by higher education institutions and various corporates and NGOs. One educator wrote: *“In the life orientation period learners are given guidance in choosing careers even before they even get to grade 10 so as to choose subjects relevant to intended career”*.

The responses of learners to the questions probing their knowledge and information in so far as subject choice and admission requirements into various higher education study fields, as well as funding opportunities are concerned, is in direct contrast to what educators believe is

adequate career guidance provided by the school. To begin with, not a single learner, not even those in Grade 12, knew the admission requirements for their preferred study fields. Thus, they could not indicate whether or not their current academic averages met the minimum requirements, and if not, how much extra work is needed to meet those requirements. Furthermore, eighteen (62%) of the participants did not know which subject choices were required for their preferred study fields. In some instances, they indicated that they preferred to study Engineering after completing Grade 12, but their subject choice did not include Physical Science, which is one of the prerequisite subjects for entry into engineering programmes at UCT (UCT Engineering Calendar, 2014).

In addition, what makes the lack of knowledge and information regarding subject choice even more acute is the fact that 86% of the participants indicated that they wished to access higher education study fields that require Mathematics at no less than a 50% pass and in some instances, coupled by Physical Science, also at no less than 50% (UCT Health Science and Engineering Calendars, 2014; UWC EMS Undergraduate Calendar, 2014). As stated, the research participants' June results indicated that they obtained a mean average of 46% for Mathematics and 42% for Physical Science, while the overall class average was 29% for Mathematics and 35% for Physical Science. Clearly, not knowing what the requirement is for admission into the fields that they want to study at university is a barrier that will prevent them from being admitted because they will not meet the admission requirement (a pass of at least 50%).

The matter concerning knowledge and information with regards to the funding opportunities is another indication of inadequate career guidance, contrary to what the educators thought.

The fact that thirteen (45%) of the participants did not know about the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is of great concern. This is the largest single financial assistance scheme provided by government for all financially needy students enrolled in higher education and it is something that learners should know, or be informed about, at high school level.

It is evident from this discussion that knowledge and information is indeed an inhibiting factor. Evidently, with so much that is unknown to the learners, the current arrangement with regards to the provision of knowledge and information to learners at the school is insufficient. It could be interpreted that the Life Orientation subject that the educators cited as the avenue for career guidance information does little to provide sufficient knowledge and information to the learners. In addition, the career exhibitions organised by the higher education institutions to which the school sends learners with the hope that they will gain the desired career guidance information and knowledge are also not sufficient, given the little that the research participants seemed to know in this instance.

Applying the theoretical framework, the following question needs to be asked: *What possible range of choices and opportunities (capabilities) could these learners choose from in order to acquire the desired knowledge and information (functionings)?* The responses of the educators showed that the learners had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and information from the Life Orientation subject and from attending career exhibitions at universities, while the responses of the learners reflected the opposite – little to no knowledge and information at all. Thus, from the learners' responses, it appeared that the acquisition of adequate knowledge and information or functioning (in the capabilities approach language) was almost non-existent. Based on these responses, an inference could be drawn that the research participants did not have an adequate range of choices and opportunities to choose

from in order to advance their functionings which would have led to the improvement of their quality of life, in this instance through accessing higher education (refer Section 2.7). Therefore, the education and skill capability, as it relates to the education that would impart career guidance knowledge and relevant information about university studies, was too limited – so much so that the learners lacked the basic knowledge and information, which severely could impact their chances of improving the quality of their lives.

4.2.3 A lack of financial means

The next inhibiting factor identified by the literature is a lack of financial means (refer Section 2.7). According to the literature reviewed in this study, parents of the learners from low socio-economic background are not able to pay their children's fees required to access higher education. As stated in Section 3.5.1, Khayelitsha is classified as a low socio-economic community (Information & Knowledge Management, 2005). Census 2011 found that almost 50% of the Khayelitsha population earns between zero and R1600 per month and has a 38% unemployment rate (Strategic Development Information and Government Information Services Department, 2013: 4).

The learners' demographic information (refer Table 3.2) corroborated the information provided by the census regarding their social security grant status, and their parents/guardians' employment and income status. Sixteen learners (55%) received social security grants in the form of child support. This is indicative of their parents' low income levels because that is a means test for a child support grant qualification (www.dsd.gov.za, 30/10/2014). In addition to the child support grants they received, twenty one (70%) participants reported that there was at least one member in their households who received

social security grants. Ten participants (30%) reported that their parents/guardians were unemployed. While the majority (twelve learners; 63%) of the participants whose parents/guardians were employed did not know their income, the average income reported by the seven participants (37%) who knew their parents/guardians' income, was R1957 per month. All of this places the study participants within the poverty bracket, which is where Khayelitsha as a whole is placed and one of the key reasons why the school was declared a no-fee school (African National Congress, 2014). What this means is that learners from the community attending this school would not be able to pay the high costs associated with higher education, a point that is in line with the view of the Southern African Catholics Bishops Conference (2012: 3) that pointed out that another “major barrier to education is the high cost of tertiary studies”. These higher education institutions costs begin with the application fees, which could be between R100 – R200 per application (University of the Western Cape, Online Application Process, 2014). Thus, these learners are not only inhibited from accessing higher education but finances inhibit them from merely applying to be considered for access to higher education!

It is, therefore, evident that the economic resource and employment, and working conditions capabilities, as applied in this study, are minimal. The participants' households have very limited choices and opportunities (employment and income) to choose from, which restrict the learners' chances of accessing higher education. In addition, their post-high school educational aspirations are hindered by their parents' low income levels, combined with the fact that almost 50% of the participants did not know about NSFAS, which is there to assist learners from low socio-economic backgrounds with access to higher education (refer theoretical framework, Section 2.7).

4.2.4 Social and Cultural factors

The last inhibiting factor identified in the literature review chapter is the impact social and cultural factors have on the learners' choices of whether or not to continue with higher education after completing Grade 12. These factors speak to the learners' social and cultural capital, and how strong or weak the motivation is within the family and the neighborhood for the learner to pursue or even aspire to access higher education. As mentioned, one of the respondents in Denhere's (2013: 45) study said: "You see, I have got a car already. Immediately after completing grade 12 I went to look for work. Now I make a lot of money transporting people's produce to the city. I always see someone who are learned but are still struggling in life". These are some of the perceptions that are held in the low socio-economic communities that could easily demotivate learners from aspiring to access higher education. Culturally, the literature points to the disconnect between the traditional middle class higher education participants and the non-traditional working class participants, with the latter having doubts about their "fit" in the university environment (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009: 31).

To probe this factor, two questions were asked in the educators' questionnaire, three in the learners' questionnaire, and five during the learners' focus group interviews. The questions are listed first, followed by the discussion of the responses.

In the educators' questionnaire, the following questions were asked:

1. *In your view, are learners at this school aspiring to go to university/college after grade 12?*
2. *In your view, is it worthwhile for learners from this school to go to university/college after grade 12?*

The first question in the educators' questionnaire was asked to determine the educators' opinion of their learners' aspirations, since the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 claimed that due to poor social and cultural capital, learners from low socio-economic backgrounds have

low aspirations. The three educators were of the opinion that the learners aspired to further their studies in higher education (Section 3.5.4.2). In support of their responses, the educators referred to the role played by motivational sessions, valedictory ceremonies and encouragement from the educators as key catalysts in inspiring learners.

The second question posed to the educators sought to understand the educators' belief in education and empowerment. All three educators confirmed that it was worthwhile for the learners to pursue higher education. In support of their responses, they highlighted issues relating to national imperatives, such as the country's economic development, and that it was an opportunity for learners to improve their socio-economic conditions by increasing their employment competitive advantage. One educator commented:

- Most learners show interest in education and want to improve their living conditions as some or most of them come from struggling families.

Another placed the value and worth of accessing higher education in gaining knowledge and skills. She wrote:

- It is worthwhile for learners from this school to go to university/college so that they can achieve more knowledge and skills.

In the learners' questionnaire, the following questions were asked:

1. *What are your plans after completing Grade 12?*
2. *What would you like to study at University/College?*
3. *Why do you want to study in this field?*

Corroborating the responses from the educators, twenty-eight learners (97%) selected the option: "I plan to go to university/college after Grade 12" and one selected the "I don't know" option as answers to the first question. This does indeed confirm the views held by the educators on the learners' aspirations. The latter two questions were designed to probe the participants' knowledge of the various study fields offered at higher education institutions – the expectation was that they, as prospective students, should have the knowledge as proof

that they know what is required of them by the higher education institutions. Table 3.7 provides a detailed account of their responses which proved that they had thought about the reasons why they wanted to apply for their preferred study fields.

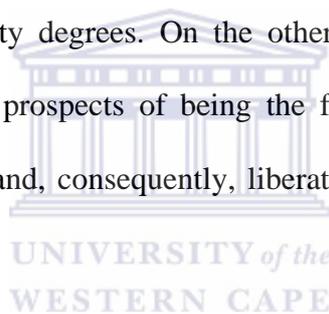
Finally, the learners' responses in the questionnaire were triangulated with the five questions asked in the focus group interview sessions. These questions were:

1. *Is there value in pursuing higher education studies?*
2. *Do you receive support for your education from your family?*
3. *Do you receive support for your education from your community?*
4. *Do you receive support for your education from your peers?*
5. *What are your distractions?*

Twenty eight learners (97%) answered “yes, there was value in pursuing higher education studies”, while one (3%) said that it all depended on what career path one wishes to take. The arguments in support of the affirmative view ranged from improved competitive advantage in the job market; empowerment of one's mind and increased knowledge; and improved family situation to the contribution towards the betterment of SA economy. This discussion touched on exactly the same points raised by the educators in their support of the view that it is a worthwhile exercise for these learners to aspire to go to university/college. There was only one learner who indicated that, if one wishes to become a cleaner, there may not be value for that individual to pursue further studies.

Having sufficiently probed whether or not there was aspiration on the part of the learners to want to access higher education in the focus group interview sessions, the discussion turned towards probing whether or not the learners' social environment provided them with the support systems that would allow them to realise their aspirations. The responses were grouped into positive and negative responses. The first question was: *Do you receive support for your education from your family?*

The responses reveal that there are both positive and negative views on the question of family support for the learners (refer Table 3.9). The positive responses touch on financial support, as well as motivation and encouragement from parents. In addition, the learners indicated that their parents look up to them for their escape from poverty through pursuing higher education studies. However, it is important to note that this very point also features in the negative responses where parents, because they see learners as their exit from poverty, dissuade learners from pursuing higher education in favour of searching for jobs. Another interesting response to this discussion point was that both educated and uneducated families served as motivation for learners to pursue higher education. Learners from educated families argued that they did not want to be the first ones to break the family education cycle of parents and elder siblings obtaining university degrees. On the other hand, learners from uneducated families were motivated by the prospects of being the first from their families to obtain higher education qualifications, and, consequently, liberate their families from the cycle of poverty.



Besides the pressure from parents on learners to find a job quickly and bring in money, the negative responses pointed to the lack of knowledge on the side of the parents, in so far as financial support is concerned. It confirmed the fact that the working conditions of some parents made it difficult for them to attend to their children's school work and other school activities. One learner said:

- Some parents go to work very early in the morning and come back very late tired. They don't even know what grade their children are in.

The learners' views in the discussion also alluded to the fact that some parents are not convinced of the value of pursuing higher education. In the neighbourhood, they see other children who had gone to university, but coming back with no degrees, after they had

“wasted” lots of money and time that could have been spent earning an income. Also, some parents noticed that returning students who completed a degree struggle to find employment. The learners argued that these observations, experiences and a lack of knowledge and information on the part of their parents led parents to either minimally support or not support them at all to realise their higher education aspirations.

Responses to the second question, *Do you receive support for your education from your community?* revealed more negative comments than positive ones in answer to this discussion point. Apart from the comment about neighbours celebrating the only child in the community progressing well in education, the negative comments revealed that instead of the community celebrating, this success opened such an individual up to witchcraft. One learner commented:

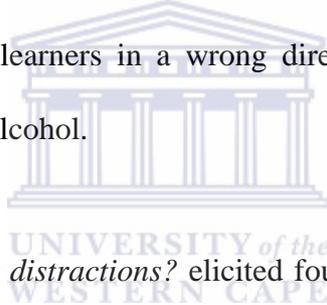
- Some neighbours will bewitch you out of jealousy because their own children weren't doing that well at school.

This comment is a serious one. Ashforth (2005:13) for example, writing of witchcraft in Soweto, a township of similar socio-economic status as Khayelitsha, states: “Everyday life in Soweto – as in most of Africa...the sense that life is continually exposed to people deploying evil forces to harm and kill is palpable, the fear of occult assault is real...” Witchcraft is an issue for many black communities and it could potentially harm children and families.

Crime and living conditions came up strongly in the discussions. Learners highlighted that because of crime, they were unable to stay at school or in the community libraries until late. They were also unable to focus on their homework at home because of the many taverns in their surroundings. The absence of role models was another talking point. Learners mentioned that the people who were seen to be successful in their communities were drug dealers and gangsters who were making money easier and quicker than the struggling people who woke up early to go to work every day or stayed home, as they were unemployed. The

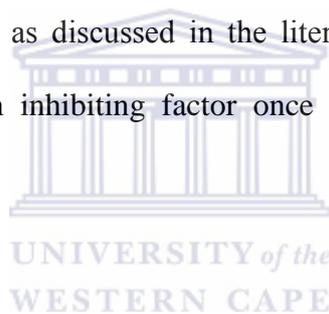
general discussion of the question of community support appeared to be that the make-up and the behaviour of the community was generally not supportive to the learners' higher education aspirations.

The third question aimed at probing support which the learners received from their peers to pursue higher education studies. There was only one positive and one negative response to this question (refer Table 3.11). The discussion on this question showed that it all depended on the company one kept. If you kept good company with those who hold the same aspirations, then it was seen as a positive support system, providing a source of strength and further motivation. The opposite, bad company, was seen as non-supportive and a sign of weakness that could lead some learners in a wrong direction, such as joining a gang or becoming involved in drugs and alcohol.



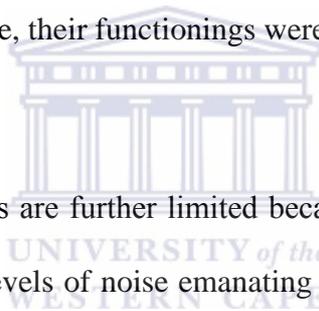
The last question: *What are your distractions?* elicited four responses (refer Table 3.12). In these responses, dating and social media were new themes that emerged. Some female learners, in particular, argued that boyfriends did not want to allow them the space to focus on their studies and this would add to the distractions. Social media, while generally seen as a source of distraction, was viewed by some learners as a positive when used appropriately. It could actually assist with the learning activity as learners would use it to communicate with each other about school and study matters. They all agreed that the problem arises when they end up abusing social media and completely losing focus of what is important. When that happens, it becomes a negative distraction.

While the data supports the fact that there are social factors that could inhibit learners from accessing higher education, interestingly enough, the overwhelming responses of the learners in this study (97%) indicate that these social and cultural factors did not deter them from wanting to access higher education. However, the fact that the majority of the research participants were achieving good to excellent academic results may have influenced their responses in this manner. It would be interesting to see how poorly performing learners in the school would respond to the higher education ambition and aspiration. Also, the learners responses did not speak to the matter of cultural disconnect between themselves and the higher education institutions in the form of entrenched Western cultures found in higher education institutions as an inhibiting factor (refer Section 2.6.4). It seemed that from the learners' standpoint, this matter, as discussed in the literature, is not yet known to them. Perhaps it will only become an inhibiting factor once the learners have entered higher education.



The three capabilities that speak to this theme are *employment and working conditions*, *housing*, and *family and social integration* (refer Section 2.7). Firstly, the employment and working conditions capability of the learners' parents impact the learners' functionings negatively, in that the learners' abilities to seek and receive meaningful support from their families is curtailed because the choices and opportunities they have in the form of availability of their parents to offer this support is greatly reduced. The working conditions of the learners' parents are strenuous to a point that some of them do not even know what grade their children are in, as one of the learners pointed out in the interview discussions. This is an indication of how low the level of support for their children is as a result of the parents' working conditions.

Secondly, the family and social integration capability in so far as it relates to the social capital of learners is equally low. Since the learners' families are trapped in poverty and 13 (48%) of the learners reported that no one in their households had a university/college education, it meant that they had no one in their families to assist them with questions relating to higher education or academic support at school, for that matter. Furthermore, this capability, when used to assess and evaluate community support for the learners' higher educational aspirations, reveals far more negatives than positives (only one positive compared to five negatives). The capability revealed that the learners cannot freely be and do in a way that will aid their higher education aspirations positively. They cannot, for instance, freely choose to go to the library or stay at school until late because of the high levels of crime in the community. Therefore, their functionings were very restricted.



Thirdly, the learners' functionings are further limited because, even at their homes, they are unable to study due to the high levels of noise emanating from the surrounding taverns. The general behaviour in the community further reduces the capabilities of the learners – this includes the lack of positive role models, the high levels of university dropouts, and perceived practices of witchcraft due to jealousy. Lastly, the housing capability does not appear to be strong, as well. Generally, the 2011 Census reported that 55% of the Khayelitsha population lived in informal dwellings (refer Section 3.5.1) and this just added to the learners' inability to study at home, as they reported in this study. Therefore, this last inhibiting factor (social and cultural factor) also, according to the theoretical framework, limits the learners' capabilities and functionings.

4.3. WHICH OF THESE FACTORS WERE INHIBITING LEARNERS' ACCESS THE MOST AND WHY WAS THAT SO?

The preceding section discussed and interpreted the four inhibiting factors based on the responses and answers given by the research participants in the data collection instruments. In this section, I discuss and interpret the learners' responses in the focus group interviews that sought to probe their views on the question: *Choosing between poor schooling, lack of knowledge and information, lack of finance and social and cultural factors, which of these factors inhibit learners' chances of accessing higher education the most?* Based on the learners' responses to this question, an interpretation is made with regard to the last part of the question, *why was that so?*

Table 3.13 shows that the learners did not regard *poor schooling* and *a lack of financial means* as major factors that inhibit them from accessing higher education. While it is true that without the qualifying academic results one cannot access higher education, as this is the key to such access, it is equally true that one can still achieve excellent academic results from within one's underprivileged teaching and learning environment (McGhie, 2012). Learners believe that their academic results at the school are good and they have been improving for the past three years, despite the limited teaching and learning resources. The academic results of the participating learners also bear testimony to this argument (refer Table 3.3).

The learners, therefore, did not view poor schooling as the most inhibiting factor, as there were a number of immediately available mitigating activities, such as extra classes and tutorial programmes, that the learners and the school engages in to counter this factor, as was reported by the learners in the focus group interview discussion. The data in this study reveal an unimpressive economic situation for the families of the learners - low salaries, high unemployment, and a heavy reliance on social security grants (refer Table 3.2). However, the

learners were of the opinion that the availability of bursaries and scholarships, including government funding opportunities, such as the National Students Financial Aid Scheme and funding, specifically, earmarked for scarce skills study programmes, make their inability to pay for their own fees a non-factor.

Thus, the learners' responses indicated that they regard a lack of knowledge and information, together with the social and cultural factors, as the most inhibiting factors that could prevent them from accessing higher education. However, it should be noted that the learners could not distinguish which one of the two factors has the most inhibiting impact on them and that is why an evaluation of these factors is presented below.

An evaluation of the two inhibiting factors

The learners' responses to questions probing their levels of knowledge and information around career guidance and funding opportunities reveal a shocking image. The fact that all the learners did not know the admissions requirements and eighteen (62%) did not know the subject choice requirement for their preferred study options could be a serious barrier to accessing higher education because the learners were not informed and did not know that they were underperforming in terms of university's entrance requirements. More alarming was the fact that the learners, who were achieving good to excellent academic results and had a better chance of being admitted to a university' degree programme, did not have the correct subject choices simply because they did not know what these were and, therefore, would not be able to continue with higher education, even if they wanted to.

Linked to this is the fact that thirteen learners (45%) did not know about NSFAS as a possible financial provider. This lack of information could easily lead to despondency. Without this crucial knowledge of the basic financial assistance that places its emphasis for selection on financial needy students, some learners might actually lose hope in chasing their aspirations because of the lingering subconscious question, as one learner puts it in the focus group discussions:

- Why bother, I know I'm not an A student and private bursaries only go for top students and my family won't afford the university fees.

Thus, the argument is that learners, despite their poor schooling, lack of financial means and limited social capital, especially those with ambition to continue to higher education, would have a better chance of entering tertiary level studies, if they know exactly what is required of them in terms of subject choices, minimum admission requirements, and adequate information about available funding opportunities. A last concerning aspect that makes this factor potent is the fact that the educators believed that the learners received adequate career guidance; meanwhile the learners knew very little to nothing about career guidance information. This factor, therefore, is regarded, in this study, as the factor that could potentially have the most inhibiting impact on learners' access to higher education.

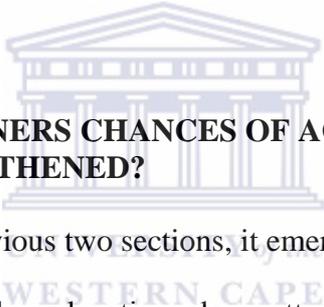
The social and cultural factors are indeed, as the learners put it, one of the most inhibiting factors alongside knowledge and information. It could be argued that the top performing learners, who are inspired and motivated to access higher education, are exposed to a dangerous and structurally weak social fabric that does not support them in their journey towards higher education. The fact that learners could only think of one positive thing to say about the support they receive from their community is in itself testimony to this claim. The learners are constrained within their social spaces to exercise their personal agency in order to

overcome the effects of poor schooling and poor housing. This agency refers to them staying at school until late, attending extra classes and tutorials, as well as completing their homework or doing so in their community libraries. It would be in the learners' best interest that they are allowed to apply their personal agency in order to mitigate the limited teaching and learning resources, as well as uncondusive learning spaces at home.

On the contrary, learners were unable to exercise their personal agency for fear of their lives – due to crime in their community that dictates that one should be inside one's home before the sun sets. Furthermore, the social fabric of these learners presents them with more negative than positive motivation – high numbers of university dropouts, low number of positive role models, low levels of meaningful family support for higher education, and the pressure from family member to find work and contribute to the household after Grade 12. All these factors can easily make any person despondent and demoralised. Nonetheless, with the requisite knowledge and information with regard to career guidance and sufficient information on available funding opportunities, all these other factors could be overcome by the learners. That is why this factor is placed as the second most inhibiting factor and not equal to the lack of knowledge and information.

Based on the above evaluation of the four inhibiting factors, the argument in this study is that a lack of knowledge and information is the factor that has potentially the most inhabiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds who wish to access higher education. Further evidence for this stance is found when one applies the list of capabilities to this inhibiting factor. A lack of knowledge and information, potentially, could prevent the learners from realising their aspirations and dreams of going to university, and thereby

restricting the learners' education and skill capability. Not knowing that they could receive financial assistance from the government could limit their functioning further and could result in the learners not wanting to work hard to achieve academically. If this happens, the learners' economic resources, employment and working conditions would not improve but could worsen even further - in the event that the learner only completes Grade 12 and cannot find work to help contribute to the household - which in turn, could become a burden on the part of the family and negatively impact on their housing conditions. Thus, this inhibiting factor has the potential to influence most of the capabilities listed in the theoretical framework in a negative way which, in the end, would be detrimental to the learners' overall well-being and prosperity.



4.4 HOW COULD THE LEARNERS CHANCES OF ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION BE STRENGTHENED?

From the data analysed in the previous two sections, it emerged that, in order to strengthen learners' chances of accessing higher education, closer attention, as suggested by the learners and the educators, would need to be paid to the following factors:

- Academic support – to all learners and subject choices
- Adequate financial support
- Adequate career guidance
- Sufficient information to learners, parents and community at large
- Motivational activities and positive role models

4.4.1 Provision of academic support – to all learners and subject choices

In the focus group interviews, learners argued quite strongly against directing academic support towards the few top learners and Mathematics and Science subject choices. This strategy may be the result of limited resources and ensuring that the few students who are already showing signs of success are supported to achieve the best that they can under the

circumstances. As there is a strong outcry about this, something needs to be done to expand support to all learners. This might increase the pool of successful learners wishing to access higher education, and, consequently, affording more learners with capabilities and functionings.

4.4.2 Provision of adequate financial support

The national government must remove the financial barrier right at the beginning of the journey into higher education access. If the state declares an individual as incapable of paying R500 school fees per year and finds it necessary to provide meals for them at school, no one could expect families living in low socio-economic circumstances to pay application, registration and tuition fees, in addition to all the other financial costs involved in university studies. Such an expectation would defy the odds and would not acknowledge the apartheid legacy that is still so prevalent in the black communities in South Africa (refer Chapter 2). Prospective students' financial needs should be provided for within the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

4.4.3 Provision of adequate career guidance

High School X appeared to be heavily reliant on higher education institutions for the provision of career guidance, as well as on the Life Orientation subject. It is clear from the data collected that learners have little and/or inaccurate advice with regards to their subject choices and preferred study fields. Evidently, the current provision of career guidance is inadequate. To remedy the situation, the school should employ a dedicated and well-trained career advisor to work with the learners throughout the year across all the grades on nothing else but career guidance. The higher education institutions can assist in this regard by making

their resources and expertise available to the schools beyond one day visits. This can be done in a manner that forms meaningful and prolonged partnerships with the learners throughout the year, but prioritising Grades 11 and 12 learners.

4.4.4 Provision of sufficient information to learners, parents and community at large

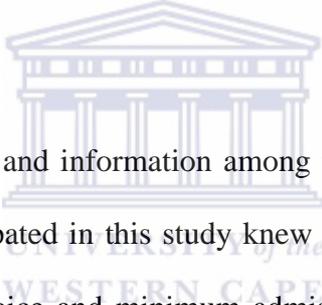
Information with regard to the admissions requirements of different study programmes and institutions was limited and, for some, non-existing, according to the data. There was also inadequate knowledge about the availability of government funding among the learners and their parents. Again the appointment of a dedicated career advisor and meaningful partnerships between the school and higher education institutions could go a long way in resolving this challenge. Also, the people who administer the NSFAS programme should do more in creating awareness about financial aid among the learners from as early as Grade six because this knowledge would give hope to some of the learners who could become despondent about their chances of accessing higher education.

4.4.5 Enhance the provision of motivational activities and positive role models

With the notable absence of positive role models within the learners' communities, it becomes crucial for the school to enhance its offerings of motivational activities and tap into its pool of successful former learners to provide positive role models on a regular basis during the course of the school year. Motivational activities and positive role models would stimulate the learners and encourage them to perform well academically in order to access university studies.

4.5 SYNTHESIS OF ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data in the preceding sections, according to the three sub-questions and themes, demonstrated that the four inhibiting factors identified in the literature were not unfamiliar to the study participants. The first observation is that poor schooling as an inhibiting factor related to limited teaching and learning resources, as reported by both the educators and learners. This factor had a negative impact on the academic results of the learners. It was noted, however, that educators attempted to close this limited teaching and learning gap by providing extra classes, motivation and encouragement to the learners. But the concern raised by the learners was that the extra support is mainly given to the few top performers, and learners who had Mathematics and Science as learning areas.



Secondly, the lack of knowledge and information among the learners revealed an appalling picture. The learners who participated in this study knew very little to nothing about career guidance, such as the subject choice and minimum admissions requirements for university admission. In addition, nearly 50% of the learners did not know about the government's financial aid scheme. A further concerning fact was that the educators who participated in the study were of the opinion that the school provided adequate career guidance.

Thirdly, the lack of financial means was clearly visible in the data provided by the learners about their family income. The parents and families of the participants were found to be in low paying jobs with a high reliance on social security grants. Also, about a third of the participants reported their parents to be unemployed. This situation implied that they would be unable to afford the high costs of attending higher education institutions.

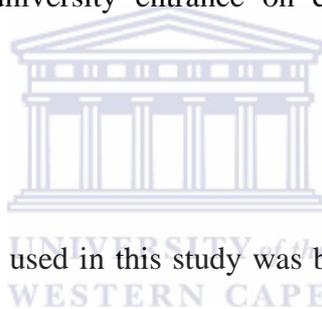
Fourthly, the social and cultural factors as inhibiting factor revealed that, while the learners aspired to access higher education post-Grade 12, the family and community support were not necessarily a positive one. There were a number of entrenched structural social dynamics that could make it difficult for learners to pursue their ambitions – these included low levels of education in the family, poor living conditions, crime in the community, expectations from the parents for learners to make money quickly, the high levels of peers in the community who had dropped out from higher education institutions, perceived high unemployment rates of graduates in the community, and an absence of positive role models. Learners also cited witchcraft practices in the community as a result of jealousy, the use of social media, and friends, and dating as factors that could prevent them from accessing university studies successfully.

It should be noted that the study did not produce data in support of the cultural factors identified in the literature, such as the cultural disconnect between learners from the low socioeconomic backgrounds and the institutional culture in higher education institutions. A possible reason for this could be the fact that the learners were not at university yet to experience it as an inhibiting factor.

Fifthly, learners believed that poor schooling and a lack of financial means were not major factors in inhibiting access to higher education for them. They fundamentally based this on the fact that their school still produced good results, despite the overall poor schooling at their school. The basis for their elimination of the lack of financial means was the availability of funding opportunities. The lack of knowledge and information and social factors were believed by the learners to be the most inhibiting factors hindering their chances to access

higher education successfully. The argument in this study is that the most inhibiting factor was the lack of knowledge and information.

Observation number six relates to the fact that the educators and the learners made five suggestions on how the inhibiting factors could be overcome. These were – the provision of: academic support to all learners and subject choices; adequate financial support; adequate career guidance; sufficient information to learners, parents and community at large; and motivational activities and positive role models. The research participants felt that if these suggestions were in place, more learners would improve their academic results and, thus, would be able to qualify for university entrance on completion of Grade 12 with an endorsement.



Lastly, the theoretical framework used in this study was based on the capabilities approach. The list of capabilities that was applied for the evaluation and assessment of the learners and their households' quality of life were *education and skill, economic resources, employment and working conditions, housing and family, and social integration*. Overall, these capabilities were found to be lacking in the lives of the learners who participated in this study. The capabilities showed that the learners had limited choices and opportunities to choose from in order to be and do (functionings) in such a way that their quality of life could have been improved. The data collected in this study provided evidence for the argument that the four inhibiting factors, as identified by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, potentially, could prevent learners who come from low socio-economic backgrounds from accessing higher education studies successfully.

I now move on to Chapter 5, the final chapter of this study in which I draw the study to a close by presenting the findings, proposing recommendations, noting the limitations, and identifying possibilities for future research. I conclude with a personal reflection on what the study meant to me.

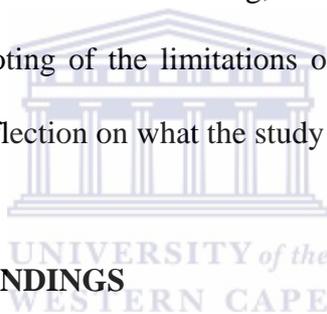


CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

I begin this final chapter with a summary of the findings as identified in the synthesis presented in the previous chapter. Thereafter, I relate the findings to the literature and the theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter Two, in order to determine whether the study has achieved its aim and objective. Based on the findings, recommendations are proposed for the parents and the community, the school and educators, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and higher education institutions. I conclude the chapter with the noting of the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and a personal reflection on what the study has meant to me.



5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The synthesis in Section 4.5 identified the following findings:

Finding One

Poor schooling as an inhibiting factor related to limited teaching and learning resources as reported by both the educators and learners. This factor had a negative impact on the academic results of the learners.

Finding Two

The learners reported, under the poor schooling factor, that extra support classes were reserved only for the few top performing learners and learners who had Mathematics and Science as learning areas. Thus, extra support was not given to all the learners.

Finding Three

The learners who participated in this study did not have adequate knowledge and information about university studies. They knew very little to nothing about career guidance, such as subject choice and minimum admission requirements of higher education institutions. They, therefore, did not know that they were underperforming and would not qualify to study at a university.

Finding Four

Almost fifty percent of the learners did not know about the government's financial aid scheme for students from low socio-economic backgrounds which again reflected that they had a lack of knowledge and information to make informed decisions about higher education studies.

Finding Five

This finding relates to a lack of financial means. Fifty-five percent of the learners' parents and families were found to be in low-paying jobs, with a high reliance on social security grants. About a third of the participants reported their parents to be unemployed. This situation implied that parents could not afford the high costs of educating their children at higher education institutions.

Finding Six

The social and cultural factors as inhibiting factor revealed that, while the learners aspired to access higher education post Grade 12, there were a number of entrenched structural social dynamics that made it difficult for learners to pursue their ambitions. These were:

- low levels of education in the family;
- poor living conditions;
- crime in the community;
- expectations from the parents for learners to make money quickly;
- the high levels of peers in the community who had dropped out from higher education;
- perceived high unemployment rates of graduates in the community;
- an absence of positive role models;
- witchcraft practices in the community as a result of jealousy;
- the use of social media and influence of friends; and
- dating.

Finding Seven

The data collected from the twenty-nine learners reflected sub-themes that were not discussed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. These are under the social and cultural factors, namely:

- the high levels of peers in the community who had dropped out from higher education;
- perceived high unemployment rates of graduates in the community;
- an absence of positive role models;
- witchcraft practices in the community as a result of jealousy;
- the use of social media and influence of friends; and
- dating.

These are new factors that were reported by the learners in their specific everyday real life context.

Finding Eight

The lack of knowledge and information was identified as having the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic background. This was followed by the social and cultural factors, then poor schooling, and, lastly, a lack of financial means.

Finding Nine

The educators and the learners made five suggestions on how the inhibiting factors could be overcome. These were the provision of:

- academic support to all learners and learning areas;

- adequate financial support;
- adequate career guidance;
- sufficient information to learners, parents and community at large; and
- motivational activities and positive role models.

5.3 INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS PER SUB-QUESTION

The above findings are now interpreted in relation to the literature and the theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter Two, to ascertain if the study has attained its aim and objective.

5.3.1 Sub-question 1: What were the pre-university factors that inhibit learners' access to higher education?

Findings number one to six provide answers to this sub-question. These findings show that poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of financial means, and social and cultural factors, potentially, could be inhibiting factors that impact the lives of the learners who participated in this study. The poor schooling factor manifests itself through the academic results that do not meet the minimum entrance requirements of higher education institutions, thereby preventing learners from accessing higher education.

The lack of knowledge and information deprived learners of the necessary information that could have assisted with motivating them to achieve greater academic results had they known about the availability of government funding opportunities. Furthermore, the little to no knowledge pertaining to subject choice and minimum admission requirements handicapped the learners' chances of accessing higher education, as they did not know what was required of them, nor whether they were on the right track, when in fact they were going off track.

The lack of financial means factor, which concerns the parents' income, high unemployment, and heavy reliance on social security grants, effectively meant that parents of learners would

never be able to afford the high costs required by higher education institutions, a situation exacerbated by the need to pay for pre-registration costs, such application and entrance examinations fees.

The sociocultural factor highlighted the family and community's general lack of support for the educational endeavour. The social dynamics influencing these learners were such that the culture of learning was negatively affected to a point where the learners' academic results may not necessarily reflect their intellectual capacity, but their compromised effort that social conditions imposed on them.

Lastly, the learners reported new factors that were not part of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 but part of the social and cultural factors that could potentially become major stumbling blocks in the learners' path to higher education studies. These factors, thus, represent new knowledge and are the contribution that this study makes to the current body of knowledge.

The findings revealed that the five capabilities employed in this study were found lacking in the learners' real life context. To recap, these capabilities were: *education and skill, economic resources, employment and working conditions, housing and family, and social integration.*

The findings demonstrated that learners were operating within a limited range of choices to choose from for the improvement of their quality of life, a situation that negatively impacted on their functionings. Based on these findings, an inference drawn was that the research participants did not have an adequate range of choices and opportunities to choose from, in order to advance their functionings and, thus, their quality of life - in this instance, through accessing higher education successfully (refer Section 2.7).

5.3.2 Sub-question 2: Which of these factors were inhibiting learners' access the most and why was that so?

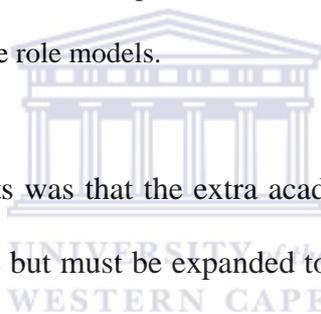
Finding number eight provides answers to this question. Learners reported on two factors that were inhibiting their access to higher education the most. These were *a lack of knowledge and information* and the *social and cultural factors*. The learners felt that the other two inhibiting factors - *poor schooling* and *a lack of financial means* - were not major inhibiting factors, as they could be mitigated by extra effort and support and, in some instances, be present only because of a lack of knowledge and information, and sociocultural factors. In other words, had sufficient and adequate knowledge and information been available, the impact of the lack of financial means and, to an extent poor schooling, would have been reduced. This, therefore, presented the lack of information and knowledge and socio-cultural factors as the underlying factors that gave rise to the other factors. Thus, dealing with these factors first could resolve the other two, as well. However, as learners could not decide which of the two factors had the most inhibiting effect on them, an evaluation of the two factors were done in order to determine which one of the two, potentially, could inhibit them most. Based on the evaluation, the lack of information and knowledge as an inhibiting factor was identified as the factor that had the biggest possibility of preventing the learners from accessing university studies.

A lack of knowledge and information negatively impacted on the capabilities employed in this study. The analysis in Section 4.3 revealed how this inhibiting factor had the potential to prevent the learners from realising their aspirations and dreams of going to university, thereby restricting the learners' education and skill capability. Not knowing that they could receive financial assistance from the government may confine their functioning further and could result in the learners not wanting to work hard to achieve academically. If that happened – and in the event that the learner only completes Grade 12 and cannot find work to

help contribute to the household - the learners' economic resources, employment and working conditions would not improve but could worsen through placing a further strain on the family, their income and housing conditions .

5.3.3 Sub-question 3: How could the learners' chances of accessing higher education be strengthened?

Finding number nine provides answers to this sub-question. The learners and the educators made suggestions on how the inhibiting factors could be overcome and prevented. These were: the provision of academic support to all learners and learning areas; the provision of adequate financial support; the provision of adequate career guidance; the provision of sufficient information about university studies to learners, parents and the community at large; and the provision of motivational activities and positive role models.



The view of the study participants was that the extra academic support, aimed at improving academic results, should continue but must be expanded to reach all learners and not only be confined to the top performing learners, and Mathematics and Physical Science learning areas. Secondly, the financial support for successful learners must cover all their financial needs right from the beginning of the application process, thus, supporting the learners' higher education ambitions and maximising their choices. Thirdly, career guidance provision and information in general needs to be expanded to a point where a dedicated resource is created that could provide the learners and the school with the required knowledge and information about university studies. Finally, the participants recommended that the schools should continue to provide the learners with positive role models and motivation. This will help fill the void created by the poor socio-cultural conditions within which the learners find themselves. If these factors are in place, the education and skill, economic resources, employment and working conditions, housing and family, and social integration capabilities

would be greatly improved for these learners. Having all these factors in place could lead to the overall improvement of the quality of lives for all the learners in the school.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

5.4.1 For the parents and the community

5.4.1.1 Parental involvement in school activities

It is recommended that the parents and the community at large should make an attempt to become more involved in the lives of the learners by availing themselves for school meetings and information sessions organised at the school. In this way, they would empower themselves with information and knowledge as it pertains to the academic progress of the learners. They would then have a better understanding of what the learners' experience and aspirations are and, thus, be adequately equipped to support the learners in a positive manner.

5.4.1.2 Visible parental interest in learners' schooling and academic progress

It is recommended that the parents attempt to have regular conversations with their children regarding their school activities, academic progress and happenings in their daily lives, even if it is at a very basic level, such as asking how the school day was. In addition, the parents should take note of what grades their children are in and encourage learners to do the best that they could. Parental motivation and support is an important enabling factor for any learner and becoming involved in their children's learning will encourage the learners to perform better.

5.4.1.3 Community to assist in the fight against crime and other negative factors

The socio-cultural factors were identified as one of the most inhibiting factor by the research participants. It appears that reduced levels of crimes would help improve learners' movements to and from learning centres, such as the school and community libraries. It is recommended, therefore, that the community becomes actively involved in crime prevention activities in order to create a safer environment for the learners. The community also should become more involved in the school and its activities, and should become knowledgeable about the importance of supporting the learners to continue with further studies after Grade 12. If the community is more involved and understands the issues better, the impact of the negative factors that the learners reported on could be reduced and/or prevented.

5.4.2 For the school and educators

5.4.2.1 Expanded academic support

Given that the school is already providing extra support to some learners, it is recommended that the school consider expanding its extra academic support to all the learners and all learning areas. However, it is noted that the grade averages (specifically Grades 10 and 12) for Mathematics and Physical Science were very low, so focus on these need to be maintained but not at the exclusion of the others learning areas. Providing support to all the learners would increase their chances of performing better academically and, ultimately, improve their chances of gaining access to university studies.

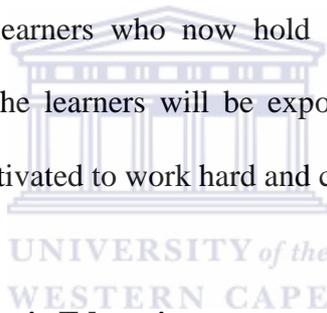
5.4.2.2 Dedicated career guidance advisor

It was obvious from the lack of knowledge and information on the learners' part that relying on the Life Orientation learning area and the career exhibitions for career information and guidance was inadequate. It is recommended, therefore, that the school should invest in

appointing a dedicated career guidance advisor to work closely with all the learners from as early as Grade 9 when learners have to make decisions regarding subject choices in Grade 10. Career information should be expanded to the parents of the learners as well, highlighting the value of education beyond Grade 12.

5.4.2.3 Provision of role models and motivation

It was evident from the learners' responses that the motivation that the school provides does indeed inspire them to want to access higher education. The recommendation is that the school continue with their efforts, but make it a regular event during the course of the school year. In addition to bringing in previous learners to present motivational talks, the school should invite well-educated ex-learners who now hold important positions in the South African economy. In this way, the learners will be exposed to positive role models on a regular basis and will become motivated to work hard and continue with university studies.



5.4.3 For the Department of Basic Education

5.4.3.1 Provision of funding for the appointment of a dedicated career advisor

It is recommended that the Department of Basic Education provide extra funding to the school for the appointment of a career advisor. One of the reasons why there is such a big gap between poor schools and affluent schools is because those schools can afford to appoint dedicated career guidance practitioners. The findings in this study are testimony to how this information gap impacted on the learners' chances to access higher education studies successfully. The provision of dedicated career advisors to poor schools is an urgent need that should be addressed by the department.

5.4.3.2 Provision of more resources to schools

There is a need for more resources in poorer schools. Thus, it is recommended that the Department of Basic Education request additional funds from the National Education Department in order to provide all schools with functional libraries, laboratories and more computers. These resources will improve the learners' schooling experience and enhance the learners' chances of performing better academically.

5.4.4 For the Department of Higher Education and Training

5.4.4.1 Exempt learners coming from no-fee schools from paying university fees

Providing for higher education is an expensive undertaking for any family. It is recommended, therefore, that the Department of Higher Education and Training consider developing a policy that exempts learners from no-fee schools from paying tertiary-level application, entrance examination and registration fees. These fees serve as a barrier to accessing higher education for those learners from poor backgrounds by limiting their options.

5.4.4.2 Expansion of the National Students Financial Aid Scheme

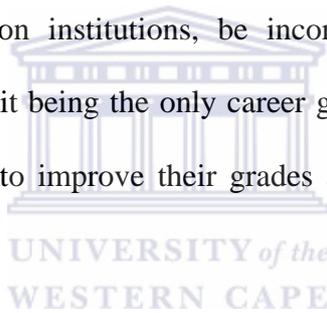
The provision of loans to learners from low socio-economic background is a good initiative, but it is recommended that the Department of Higher Education ensures that there are sufficient funds in the scheme to meet the demand. The funds that are made available for the scheme should reflect the vision of expanding and diversifying access to higher education. No economically qualifying learner who meets the minimum requirements for admission to higher education should be prevented from such access on the basis of insufficient funds to support them. In addition, the National Students Financial Aid office should provide

information sessions on a regular basis to poor schools in order to inform the learners of the funding opportunities available to them for university studies.

5.4.5 For the higher education institutions

5.4.5.1 Formation of long-term partnerships

Higher education institutions can become more involved in schools, especially poorer schools. Hence, it is recommended that higher education institutions form long-term partnerships with the community schools, with the view to making their resources and expertise available in respect of academic support to assist such schools from low socio-economic communities. It is further recommended that the one-day career exhibitions, provided by the higher education institutions, be incorporated into a long-term career guidance strategy, as opposed to it being the only career guidance strategy relied on. In this way, learners will be motivated to improve their grades and become more knowledgeable about university studies.



5.4.5.2 Provision of bursaries and loans

The loans that the department provides to learners are not enough. Based on this, it is recommended that higher education institutions provide more bursaries, scholarships and loans to learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. These funding mechanisms should be advertised to learners during the course of their Grade 12 year because they could serve as a motivating factor for learners to work harder, improve their performance and increase their chances of accessing higher education studies, which is what this study promotes.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

At a broader level, this study was concerned with the correlation between a lack of education and poverty. The underlying question of the investigation was on how best access to higher education could be improved to alleviate poverty levels. The study has indeed met this objective in that I was able to establish which of the inhibiting factors had the most impact on the learners' chances and what could be done to improve learners' access to higher education. The use of a qualitative approach ensured an in-depth understanding of the learners' and educators' perceptions, thoughts and suggestions.

The limitations of the study included the relatively small sample which could mean that the findings cannot be generalised. Furthermore, due to time and space constraints, I only focussed on the current learners, while I believe that the inclusion of former learners who did not study beyond Grade 12 would have added more insights to this investigation. Also, the fact that the sample was mainly made up of good performing learners meant that the diversity of perceptions was compromised. Despite these limitations, the study achieved its aim and objective, and contributed to the body of knowledge with regard to why so many of the black youth are not at higher education and training institutions.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study attempted to make a modest contribution to the body of knowledge on access to higher education for Black learners. Further research could be conducted on how best the key role players, namely the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and the higher education institutions, could work together to ensure that more resources, information, funding and support are provided to poor schools and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. At a macro level, it would be quite valuable to conduct a

comparative study looking at how Latin American countries deal with the information and knowledge factor in their low socio-economic communities compared to South Africa, given that their higher education participation rates are much higher than ours, while we are of similar socio-economic standing. For a long time, the research emphasis has been on improving poor schooling. Time has now come to focus on bridging the knowledge and information gap, which might assist with improving poor schooling, as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.7 FINAL REFLECTION

Overall, the research participants experienced the research process as positive and enriching. The learners enjoyed the discussions during the focus group interactions, as they could share and listen to each other and, in so doing, get to know each other and make friends. They expressed hope that the study will result in positive spin offs for their school. The findings of the study will be beneficial to the school and the educators, as well as the learners and their families. It will also be valuable for both the Department of Education, and higher education institutions.

Access to higher education is a critical poverty alleviation strategy. To improve the black learners' higher education participation rates, it is important to know what the inhibitors are in order to develop strategies and guidelines that could address these holistically, both in short- and long-term interventions that thrive on partnerships from all the role players. If this could happen, more black learners and their families would live a life of enhanced capabilities and functionings.

Finally, this experience has further deepened my insights into the issues of access to higher education. Already, my professional work in student recruitment for the University of Cape Town has benefited immensely from the insights achieved through this study. I am deeply humbled by the interactions I have had with all the study participants - learners and educators alike. Through this process, I have learnt so much about how to best conduct qualitative research.



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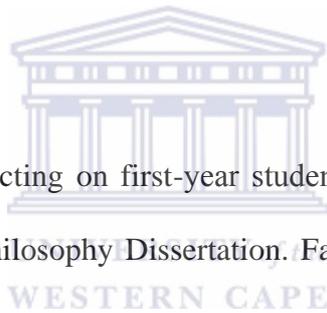
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ADDENDUM 1
ETHICAL CLEARANCE
(ATTACHED ON HARD COPY)



ADDENDUM 2 – INFO SHEET FOR LEARNERS & EDUCATORS

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (UWC)
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT STUDIES
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS – LEARNERS, AUGUST 2013

Dear participant

My name is Khwezi Bonani, student number 3005047. I am a registered Masters' student at UWC.

The title of my thesis is:

An investigation into pre-university factors that could inhibit access to higher education for learners from low socio-economic backgrounds: The case of High School X in Khayelitsha, Cape Town

Please take time to read through this information sheet carefully in order for you to be knowledgeable about what is required of you as a research participant in this study.

As a participant who gave consent of your participation in this study, you will be required to:

1. Participate in a short focus group interview (20 minutes) in which you will reflect on the value of education, support, motivation and guidance for studying as well as your general educational aspirations.
2. Complete a questionnaire after the focus group interview (20 minutes) in which you will be asked different questions with the aim of reflecting on your own experiences and views as a learner in so far as factors inhibiting access are concerned.

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and your responses will be treated as confidential. It will assist me to achieve the objective of the study which is to identify the factors that inhibit learners from low socio-economic backgrounds to accessing higher education and find solutions or ways in which they could be overcome and/ or prevented in order for more learners to access higher education successfully.

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact me on 0832589339 or via e-mail at

Khwezi.bonani@uct.ac.za. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Venicia McGhie at vmcghie@uwc.ac.za or the Coordinator of the ISD post-graduate students, Dr Karriem at akarriem@uwc.ac.za

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (UWC)
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT STUDIES
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS – EDUCATORS,

APRIL 2014

Dear participant

My name is Khwezi Bonani, student number 3005047. I am a registered Masters' student at UWC.

The title of my thesis is:

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ADDENDUM 3 – LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS CONSENT FORMS

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE*
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT STUDIES
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT, LEARNERS: CONSENT FORM

Title of research study:

An investigation into pre-university factors that could inhibit access to higher education for learners from low socio-economic backgrounds: The case of High School X in Khayelitsha, Cape Town

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Khwezi Bonani (student number (3005047) a registered student in the Institute for Social Development, Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape (UWC).

This research study is partially conducted towards the completion of the researcher's Master's Degree mini- thesis at UWC.

You are selected as a possible participant in this study because you are enrolled in grade 10 - 12 phase at High School X.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. The objective is to identify these factors and find solutions or ways in which they could be overcome and/ or prevented in order for more learners to access higher education successfully.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- a. Complete a questionnaire (20 minutes) in which you will be asked different questions with the aim of reflecting on your own experiences and views as a learner in so far as factors inhibiting access are concerned.

- b. Participate in a short focus group interview (20 minutes) after you have completed a questionnaire in which you will reflect on the value of education, support, motivation and guidance for studying as well as your general educational aspirations.

The sessions will take place at High School X after school hours. Refreshments will be arranged to cater for the extra time you will be spending at school for the purposes of participating in this study.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No potential risks and discomforts are envisaged at this stage. However, if something might come up, it will be dealt with in a sensible, sensitive and confidential manner.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Potential benefits could be that the learners will feel valued from the interaction between them and the researcher, and the fact that they could share their experiences as learners. This could result in the learners acquiring a higher degree of self-esteem, self-confidence and awareness in their own inhibitions, particularly from the focus group sessions.

Furthermore, the school itself would benefit directly from the results and recommendations that will be made in that these recommendations could be implemented in the coming years and hopefully, would assist more learners to access higher education. This possible result could encourage an in-depth knowledge of what learners require as support and guidance in order for them to access higher education. Other schools from low socio-economic backgrounds could also benefit in this way from this study.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No payments to the participants will be made.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of referring to learners as learner 1, 2, 3, etc, and by means of themes and categories that will be identified and used in the analysis and

discussions of the findings and the outcomes, in the research report, the thesis, and in conference papers and articles that would be submitted for possible publication in academic journals.

The researcher further pledge that any information given by participants will be handled in the strictest confidence, and that the information students give will not be used to reflect negatively on them in any way. The information will be stored in files that will be locked in a filing cabinet of the researcher at home.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so such as a result of you not participating over the course of the research period.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Khwezi Bonani at 0832589339 (cell); 0216869849 (fax); Khwezi.bonani@uct.ac.za (email).

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact my supervisor, Dr. Venicia McGhie at vfmcghie@uwc.ac.za or the coordinator of the ISD post-graduate students, Dr Abulrazak Karriem at akarriem@uwc.ac.za

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT OR LEGAL
REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described and explained to *me, the participant* by Mr Khwezi Bonani in *IsiXhosa* and *I am the participant* in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to *my* satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____
[*name of the participant*]. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and *no translator was used*.

Signature of Researcher

Date

* This form was adopted from the University of Stellenbosch (2009).

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE*
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT STUDIES
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT, EDUCATORS: CONSENT FORM

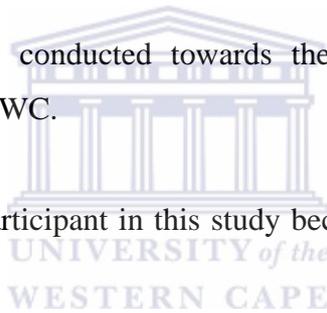
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This research study is partially conducted towards the completion of the researcher's Master's Degree mini- thesis at UWC.

You are selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an educator at High School X.



1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate which pre-university factors have the most inhibiting impact on learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. The objective is to identify these factors and find solutions or ways in which they could be overcome and/ or prevented in order for more learners to access higher education successfully.

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If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Complete a questionnaire (20 minutes) in which you will be asked different questions with the aim of reflecting on your own experiences and views as an educator in so far as factors inhibiting access are concerned.

The sessions will take place at your school in your free time.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No potential risks and discomforts are envisaged at this stage. However, if something might come up, it will be dealt with in a sensible, sensitive and confidential manner.

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The school could benefit directly from the results and recommendations that will be made in that these recommendations could be implemented in the coming years and hopefully, would assist more learners to access higher education. This possible result could encourage an in-depth knowledge of what learners require as support and guidance in order for them to access higher education. Other schools from low socio-economic backgrounds could also benefit in this way from this study.

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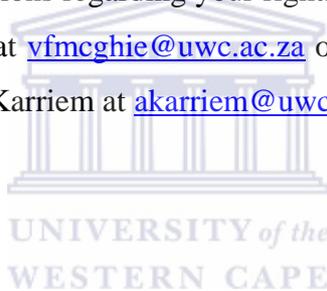
withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so such as a result of you not participating over the course of the research period.

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Name of Participant

Signature of Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____
[*name of the participant*]. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any
questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and *no translator was used*.

Signature of Researcher



Date

* This form was adopted from the University of Stellenbosch (2009).

ADDENDUM 4

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

1. What is your gender?

Male	Female
-------------	---------------

2. What is your age? Please tick next to your age

14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20+	

3. What grade are you in?

10	
11	
12	

4. Do you receive a child support grant?

Yes	no
------------	-----------

5. Is there anyone from your family (other than yourself) that receives child support grant?

Yes	no
------------	-----------

6. Is there anyone from your family that receives old age pension from government, if so who?

Father	
Mother	
Guardian	

--	--

7. Are your parent(s) / guardian(s) employed or unemployed?

Yes	no
------------	-----------

8. If employed, what is the income per month:

If unemployed, how is provision made for living and other expenses:



ADDENDUM 5a
ACADEMIC REPORT: JUNE 2014 - GRADE 10 LEARNER
(ATTACHED AS HARD COPY)



ADDENDUM 5b
ACADEMIC REPORT: JUNE 2014 - GRADE 11 LEARNER
(ATTACHED AS HARD COPY)



ADDENDUM 5c
ACADEMIC REPORT: JUNE 2014 – GRADE 12 LEARNER
(ATTACHED AS HARD COPY)



ADDENDUM 6

SELF-REFLECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

FACTORS INHIBITING LEARNERS TO ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Did you pass your 2013 December examinations?

Yes	No
------------	-----------

2. What was your average percentage in your 2013 December examinations?

Below 20%	
20 – 35%	
36 – 40%	
41 – 50%	
51 – 60%	
61 – 75%	
76 – 100%	

3. What are your plans after completing Grade 12?

Go to University/College	
Look for work	
I don't know	

4. List the University/College funding opportunities you know of, e.g bank loans, bursaries, other types of financial support

.....

.....

5. If you selected University/College above:

a. What would you like to study?.....

.....

b. Why do you want to study it:

.....

.....

c. What subject choices are required for your preferred study field? (if you do not know you can simply write, 'I don't know')

.....

.....

d. What are the minimum points required for your preferred study field? (if you do not know you can simply write, 'I don't know')

.....

.....

6. If you did not select University/College:

a. Which statement best describes your reason/s?

I can't afford the University/College fees	
I'm not smart enough for University/College studies	
I need to urgently bring money home to support my family	
Other, please specify:	

7. What is the highest level of education obtained by any of your immediate family members?

University/College	
Matric	
Grade 10 - 11	
Grade 7 -9	
Grade 4 – 6	
Grade R – 3	
I don't know	

ADDENDUM 7

Factors inhibiting learners to accessing higher education: Questionnaire for educators

1. Does the school have Guidance teachers or counsellors?

Yes	No
-----	----

2. If yes, do learners at this school receive adequate career guidance?

No	
Somewhat	
Yes, very well	

Please comment on your answer:

.....

.....

.....

.....



3. Does the school organise career expos for the learners?

Yes, annually or more	
Sometimes	
Never	

Please comment on your answer:

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. In your view, are learners at this school aspiring to go to university/college after Grade 12?

Yes	No
-----	----

5.1 Please comment on your answer:

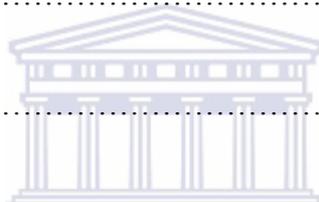
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.....
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.....

5. In your view, is it worthwhile for learners from this school to go to university/college after Grade 12?

Yes	No
-----	----

Please comment on your answer:

.....
.....
.....



6. Do you think that are factors that could play a role in a learner's decision to continue to higher education after Grade 12, Or not to continue?

Yes	No
-----	----

Please comment on your answer:

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Overall, how would you rate the academic performance of the school's Grade 12 learners?

poor	
just fine	
good	

excellent	
-----------	--

8. How would you rate the quality of education learners receive from this school?

poor	
just fine	
good	
excellent	

2.1 Please comment on your answer:

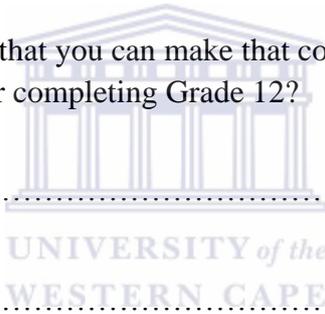
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9. Are there any suggestions that you can make that could motivate learners to continue with higher education after completing Grade 12?



.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

ADDENDUM 8

FOCUS GROUP: INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS

Value of higher education

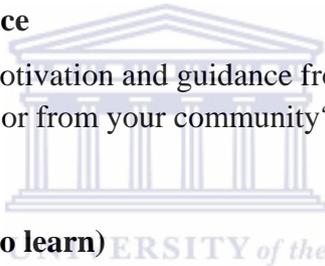
1. How do you value higher education – do you think of furthering your education after you have passed Grade 12?

Yes	no

2. Please explain your answer given under point 1.
3. Do you think that furthering your education will help to improve the quality of your life?

Support, motivation and guidance

4. Do you receive support, motivation and guidance from your family; your teachers at school; from your friends, or from your community? Please explain your answer.



Personal drive (having the will to learn)

5. Do you want to learn (continue with higher education)?
6. Why? Or Why not? Please explain your answer.
7. If you do not want to continue with higher education, what else would you rather want to do and why?
8. Is there someone that you can talk to about these issues? If not, would you want to have someone to talk to? Why or why not? Please explain your answer.

Inhibiting factor with the most impact

9. Choosing between poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of financial means, and social and cultural factors, which of these factors inhibit learners chances of accessing higher education the most?

.....

.....

.....

ADDENDUM 9

DATA SETS: OPEN CODING PROCESS

STAGE 1: INITIATION (GENERAL READING AND NOTING OF RESPONSES)

Data set no. 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 1: Does the school have guidance teachers or counsellors?

- Yes: 3 responses

Question 2: If yes, do learners at this school receive adequate career guidance?

- Yes, very well: 2 responses
 - During life orientation periods – 2 respondents
 - Career exhibitions
- Somewhat: 1 response
 - Welfare committee for needy learners
 - 1 social worker per district

Question 3: Does the school organise career expos for the learners?

- Yes annually or more: 2 respondents
 - Learners attend career exhibitions organised by higher education institutions
- Sometimes: 1 respondent
 - Learners are sometimes taken to career exhibitions organised by higher education institutions

Question 4: In your view, are learners at this school aspiring to go to university/college after grade 12?

- Yes: 3 responses
 - Role modelling
 - Valedictory ceremony - motivation
 - Encouragement from teachers
 - Interest in career information and guidance

Questions 5: In your view, is it worthwhile for learners from this school to go to university/college after grade 12?

- Yes: 3 responses
 - To gain more knowledge and skill for the benefit of country's socio-economic development
 - To improve their living conditions
 - To improve their competitive advantage in job search

Questions 6: Do you think that there are factors that could play a role in a learner's decision to continue to higher education after grade 12?

- **Yes: 3 responses**
 - Poverty
 - Peer pressure
 - Proper career guidance
 - Financial advice for parents re registration fees
 - Poor academic performance

Questions 7: Overall, how would you rate the academic performance of the school's grade 12?

- Good: 3 responses

Questions 8: How would you rate the quality of education learners receive from this school?

- Good: 3 responses
 - Teachers try their best in spite of limited resources
 - Too many demands from the department prevents the school from obtaining excellent quality of education
 - All educators are qualified to teach their specialisation subjects
 - Effective use of time
 - Learners and educators performance is adequately monitored
 - Output = majority of learners admitted in higher education

WESTERN CAPE

Question 9: Are there any suggestions that you can make that could motivate learners to continue with higher educations after grade 12?

- Motivational from different angles
- Efficient financial support
- Career information material from higher education institutions must be made available in schools
- Host career exhibitions at schools
- The admissions point system in higher education institutions must be consistent

Data set No 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

Question 3: What are your plans after completing grade 12?

- Go to University: 29 responses
- I don't know: 1 response

Question 4: List the university/college funding opportunities you know of, eg. Bank loans, bursaries, other types of financial support?

- NSFAS: 16 listings
- NGO/Corporate Scholarships: 14 listings
- Private Sector Funding (Loans and Bursaries): 8 listings
- Higher Education Institutions: 5 listings
- Did not answer the question: 1 respondent

Question 5a: What would you like to study at University/College?

- Field of Commerce: 8 respondents
- Field of Health Sciences: 6 respondents
- Field of Engineering: 6 respondents
- Field of Science: 5 respondents
- Field of Arts and Social Sciences: 4 respondents

Question 5b: Why do you want to study in this field?

- Passion: 11 respondents
- Community & People Development: 5 respondents
- Interest in the study field: 4 respondents
- Interest in the profession: 4 respondents
- Better job/career opportunities: 2 respondents
- It's my strength: 2 respondents

Question 5c: What subject choices are required for your preferred study field? (if you don't know, you can simply write, "I don't know")

- Not sure : 1 respondents
- Listing of multiple subjects without focusing on the required subject choice: 6 respondents
- Listing of accurate subject choices: 11 respondents
- Inaccurate subject choices: 8 respondents
- I don't know: 3 respondents

Question 5d: What are the minimum admissions points required for your preferred field? (If you don't know you can simply write, "I don't know").

- I don't know: 5
- Guessing but inaccurate: 2
- I don't remember: 1
- Decisive but inaccurate: 1

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 1: Is there value in pursuing higher education studies?

- 28 discussants agreed there was value in pursuing higher education studies
- 1 discussant disagreed stating that it depends.

Arguments in support of discussion point No 1:

- Positive
 - Improves competitive advantage in the job market
 - Expands one's career opportunities
 - Empowers one's mind and increases knowledge
 - Improves family situation
 - Contributes to the betterment of SA economy
- Negative
 - It depends on one's career ambitions – some careers do not require a higher education qualification.

Discussion point No 2: Do you receive support for your education from your family?

- **Positive responses**
 - Parents provides financial support
 - Parents provides motivation and encouragement
 - Parents look up to learners for an escape from poverty
 - Educated family serves as motivation – learners do not want to be a black sheep
 - Uneducated family serves as motivation – learners want to be the first in the family
- **Negative responses**
 - Parents put pressure on learners to complete studying quickly to go make money – short courses
 - Parents are overworked – don't have time to look at learners books and attend to school activities
 - Parents discouraged by university dropouts in the neighborhood
 - Parents discouraged by unemployed graduates in the neighborhood
 - Household chores taking study time – cooking, cleaning, babysitting
 - Lack of knowledge about available financial support

Discussion point No 3: Do you receive support for your education from your community?

- **Positive responses**
 - Community takes pride in the only child from the neighborhood doing well at school
- **Negative responses**
 - Witchcraft from community members because of jealousy
 - Living conditions – shacks, surrounded by taverns
 - Crime – gangsters
 - Lack of positive role modelling – more dropouts, unemployed, drug and alcohol abusers

- Dropouts discouragement

Discussion point No 4: Do you receive support for your education from your peers?

- **Positive responses**
 - Keeping good company seen as source of strength
- **Negative responses**
 - Bad company seen as source of weakness

Discussion point No 5: What are your distractions?

- Dating
- Social media
- Bad company
- Living conditions and environment

Discussion point No 6: Choosing between poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of financial means, and social and cultural factors, which of these factors inhibit learners chances of accessing higher education the most?

- Poor schooling not a major factor at the school - learners still passing
- Finances are also not a major barrier – funding opportunities available
- Sociocultural factors are a major inhibiting factor inhibiting learners’ chances of accessing higher education – social capital weak
- Lack of knowledge and information factor inhibits learners’ chances of accessing higher education the most - this deprives learners of requisite information and knowledge and manifests itself through the other factors.

Discussion point No 7: Do you receive support for your education from the school?

- **Positive responses**
 - Saturday schools
 - University visits for career days
 - Motivation from teachers and excellence acknowledgement awards
 - Motivational talks from guest speakers organised by the school
- **Negative responses**
 - Limited learning facilities and resources
 - Support limited to top performing learners and Math and Physics subject choices

ADDENDUM 10

STAGE 2: DATA REDUCTION AND CROSS CHECKING (CLASSIFICATION OF UNITS OF MEANING INTO CATEGORIES AND THEMES)

CATEGORY 1: PRE-UNIVERSITY FACTORS THAT INHIBIT LEARNERS' ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Theme 1: Poor schooling

Data set no. 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Questions 6: Do you think that there are factors that could play a role in a learner's decision to continue to higher education after grade 12?

- **Yes: 3 responses**
- **Comments:**
 - Poverty
 - Peer pressure
 - Proper career guidance
 - Financial advice for parents re registration fees
 - Poor academic performance

Questions 8: How would you rate the quality of education learners receive from this school?

- Good: 3 responses
- Comments:
 - Teachers try their best in spite of limited resources
 - Too many demands from the department prevents the school from obtaining excellent quality of education
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Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 7: Do you receive support for your education from the school?

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- **Negative responses**
 - Limited learning facilities and resources
 - Support limited to top performing learners and Math and Physics subject choices

Theme 2: Lack of knowledge and information

Data set no. 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 2: If yes, do learners at this school receive adequate career guidance?

- Yes, very well: 2 responses
- Comments:
 - During life orientation periods – 2 respondents
 - Career exhibitions
- Somewhat: 1 response
- Comments:
 - Welfare committee for needy learners
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Question 3: Does the school organise career expos for the learners?

- Yes annually or more: 2 respondents
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- Sometimes: 1 respondent
- Comments:
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Question 5c: What subject choices are required for your preferred study field? (if you don't know, you can simply write, "I don't know")

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- Inaccurate subject choices: 8 respondents
- I don't know: 3 respondents

Question 5d: What are the minimum admissions points required for your preferred field? (If you don't know you can simply write, "I don't know").

- I don't know: 5
- Guessing but inaccurate: 2
- I don't remember: 1
- Decisive but inaccurate: 21

Theme 3: A lack of financial means

Demographic Information – table 3.2 on chapter 3.

- 16 learners received social security grants
- 7 learners reported parent as unemployed
- Known monthly income was under R5000

Theme 4: Social and cultural factors

Data set no. 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 4: In your view, are learners at this school aspiring to go to university/college after grade 12?

- Yes: 3 responses
- Comments:
 - Role modelling
 - Valedictory ceremony - motivation
 - Encouragement from teachers
 - Interest in career information and guidance

Questions 5: In your view, is it worthwhile for learners from this school to go to university/college after grade 12?

- Yes: 3 responses
- Comments:
 - To gain more knowledge and skill for the benefit of country's socio-economic development
 - To improve their living conditions
 - To improve their competitive advantage in job search

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire

Question 5a: What would you like to study at University/College?

- Field of Commerce: 8 respondents
- Field of Health Sciences: 6 respondents
- Field of Engineering: 6 respondents
- Field of Science: 5 respondents
- Field of Arts and Social Sciences: 4 respondents

Question 5b: Why do you want to study in this field?

- Passion: 11 respondents
- Community & People Development: 5 respondents
- Interest in the study field: 4 respondents
- Interest in the profession: 4 respondents
- Better job/career opportunities: 2 respondents
- It's my strength: 2 respondents

Data set No 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

Question 3: What are your plans after completing grade 12?

- Go to University/college: 28 responses
- I don't know: 1 response

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 1: Is there value in pursuing higher education studies?

- 28 discussants agreed there was value in pursuing higher education studies
- 1 discussant disagreed stating that it depends.

Arguments in support of discussion point No 1:

- Positive
 - Improves competitive advantage in the job market
 - Expands one's career opportunities
 - Empowers one's mind and increases knowledge
 - Improves family situation
 - Contributes to the betterment of SA economy
- Negative
 - It depends on one's career ambitions – some careers do not require a higher education qualification.

Discussion point No 2: Do you receive support for your education from your family?

- **Positive responses**
 - Parents provides financial support
 - Parents provides motivation and encouragement
 - Parents look up to learners for an escape from poverty

- Educated family serves as motivation – learners do not want to be a black sheep
- Uneducated family serves as motivation – learners want to be the first in the family
- **Negative responses**
 - Parents put pressure on learners to complete studying quickly to go make money – short courses
 - Parents are overworked – don't have time to look at learners books and attend to school activities
 - Parents discouraged by university dropouts in the neighborhood
 - Parents discouraged by unemployed graduates in the neighborhood
 - Household chores taking study time – cooking, cleaning, babysitting
 - Lack of knowledge about available financial support

Discussion point No 3: Do you receive support for your education from your community?

- **Positive responses**
 - Community takes pride in the only child from the neighborhood doing well at school
- **Negative responses**
 - Witchcraft from community members because of jealousy
 - Living conditions – shacks, surrounded by taverns
 - Crime – gangsters
 - Lack of positive role modelling – more dropouts, unemployed, drug and alcohol abusers
 - Dropouts discouragement

Discussion point No4: Do you receive support for your education from your peers?

- **Positive responses**
 - Keeping good company seen as source of strength
- **Negative responses**
 - Bad company seen as source of weakness

Data set no. 3: Learners Focus Group

Discussion point No 5: What are your distractions?

- Dating
- Social media
- Bad company
- Living conditions and environment
-

CATEGORY 2: FACTORS INHIBITING LEARNERS' ACCESS THE MOST AND WHY WAS THAT SO?

Data set no. 3: Learners Focus Group

Discussion point No 6: Choosing between poor schooling, a lack of knowledge and information, a lack of financial means, and social and cultural factors, which of these factors inhibit learners chances of accessing higher education the most?

- Poor schooling not a major factor at the school - learners still passing
- Finances are also not a major barrier – funding opportunities available
- Sociocultural factors are a major inhibiting factor inhibiting learners' chances of accessing higher education – social capital weak
- Lack of knowledge and information factor inhibits learners' chances of accessing higher education the most - this deprives learners of requisite information and knowledge and manifests itself through the other factors.

CATEGORY 3: HOW TO STRENGTHEN LEARNERS CHANCES OF ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION

Data set no. 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 9: Are there any suggestions that you can make that could motivate learners to continue with higher educations after grade 12?

- Motivational from different angles
- Efficient financial support
- Career information material from higher education institutions must be made available in schools
- Host career exhibitions at schools
- The admissions point system in higher education institutions must be consistent

ADDENDUM 11

STAGE 3: SYNTHESIS AND REDUCTION (GROUPINGS OF CATEGORIES AND THEMES INTO SUB-THEMES)

CATEGORY 1: PRE-UNIVERSITY FACTORS THAT INHIBIT LEARNERS' ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Theme 1: Poor schooling

Sub-theme 1: academic performance

Sub-theme 2: limited resources

Sub-theme 3: concentration of support to top performers

Sub-theme 4: concentration of support to Maths and Science

Theme 2: A lack of information and knowledge

Sub-theme 1: limited career guidance

Sub-theme 2: limited knowledge of funding opportunities

Sub-theme 3: Subject choice requirements, 11 accurate, 14 inaccurate, 4 did not know

Sub-theme 3: average mark requirement, none knew the answer

Theme 3: A lack of financial means

Sub-theme 1: Poverty

Sub-theme 2: unemployment of parents

Sub-theme 3: Low paying jobs

Sub-theme 4: Reliance on social grants?

Look at what they stated in the demographical information about their family's incomes

Theme 4: Social and cultural factors

Sub-theme 1: Witch craft

Sub-theme 2: Peer pressure

Sub-theme 3: Parents expectations

Sub-theme 4: Dropout rate/unemployment

Sub-theme 5: Support received (lack of support received)

Sub-theme 6: Living conditions and environment they live in

Sub-theme 7: Distractions

Sub-theme 8: Job requirements (no need for higher education qualification)

CATEGORY 2: FACTORS INHIBITING LEARNERS' ACCESS THE MOST AND WHY WAS THAT SO?

Theme 1: Poor schooling

Sub-theme 1: good academic performance

Sub-theme 2: not a major factor

Theme 2: A lack of information and knowledge

Sub-theme 1: limited career guidance

Sub-theme 2: limited knowledge of funding opportunities

Sub-theme 3: Subject choice requirements, 11 accurate, 14 inaccurate, 4 did not know

Sub-theme 3: average mark requirement, none knew the answer

Sub-theme 4: most impact

Theme 3: A lack of financial means

Sub-theme 1: Poverty

Sub-theme 2: unemployment of parents

Sub-theme 3: Low paying jobs

Sub-theme 4: Reliance on social grants?

Sub-theme 5: Sub-theme 6: not a major factor because of funding opportunities

Theme 4: Social and cultural factors

Sub-theme 1: Witch craft

Sub-theme 2: Peer pressure

Sub-theme 3: Parents expectations

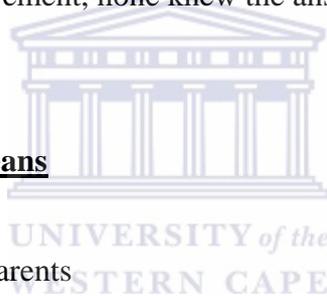
Sub-theme 4: Dropout rate/unemployment

Sub-theme 5: Support received (lack of support received)

Sub-theme 6: Living conditions and environment they live in

Sub-theme 7: Distractions

Sub-theme 8: Job requirements (no need for higher education qualification)



CATEGORY 3: HOW TO STRENGTHEN LEARNERS CHANCES OF ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION

Sub-theme 1: Provide motivation and have role models

Sub-theme 2: Provide academic support

Sub-theme 3: Provide financial support

Sub-theme 4: Employ career guidance teachers and arrange career exhibitions at schools

Sub-theme 5: Focus on all learners and all fields/subject areas

Sub-theme 6: Provide information to learners/parents/community members

