

The influence of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals  
and aspirations of Grade 11 learners in the Western Cape

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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Magister Artium in Child and Family Studies**

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## ABSTRACT

In South Africa when learners are in Grade 11 near the end of their school life, the new, but also difficult, transition into adult life now begins. This critical period of development brings forth an array of new challenges: exercising free will, being independent, an increased focus of self, and the decision on what path is to be taken after school. With these challenges comes the act of motivation to acquire the particular goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners. The question posed was therefore what exactly motivates the South African Grade 11 learner, and why are they motivated to set and aspire to certain goals? The study investigated the basic psychological needs of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools in the Western Cape, along with its relation to the identification of the goals and aspirations of these learners. The study was quantitative in nature. Grade 11 learners currently enrolled for the 2012 academic year, attending secondary schools in the Metro North Western Cape Education District, were invited to participate in the study. This study investigated the influence of basic psychological needs on goals and aspiration pursuits. The sample consisted of 264 Grade 11 learners and data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire compiled through the combination of two scales: The Aspiration Index, and the Basic Measure of Psychological Needs Scale. The data was analyzed through regression analysis. The results of the study suggest that the satisfaction of needs was found to be a significant predictor of both intrinsic as well as extrinsic goal pursuits. The findings further provide an understanding of how basic psychological needs influence the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 Learners. Recommendations are provided for further research in the field of adolescent basic psychological needs and its influences on the identification of goals and aspirations.

## **KEYWORDS**

Self-Determination Theory

Psychological needs

Relatedness

Autonomy

Competence

Goals

Aspirations

Motivation

Adolescence

Identification



## DECLARATION

I declare that the current study *the influence of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners in secondary schools in the Western Cape* has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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**Lauren Joy Schilder**

**November 2012**



## DEDICATION

To my family and friends, for your constant support, belief and encouragement

“Far away beyond there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty believe in them and try to follow where they may lead”

(Louisa May Alcott)



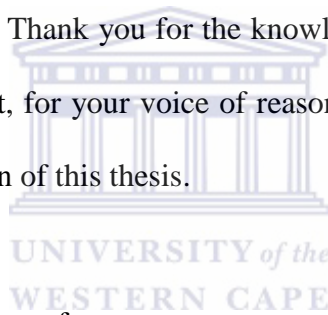
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“The journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step”

(Lao-Tzu)

As someone said to me not too long ago, “a degree is tough, an honour’s is tougher and a master’s degree is tougherer”- How true this statement is. This research journey would not have been made possible without the presence of the constants in my life, and the ones I have met along this journey.

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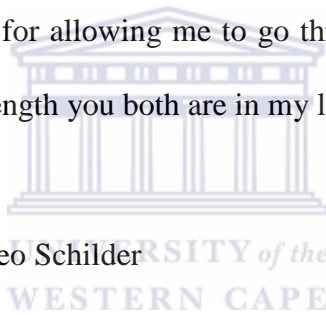
My Sisters: Wendy, Natasha and Jean.

“...Your friend is your need answered...and in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures. For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed” (Kahlil Gibran).

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# CHAPTER 1

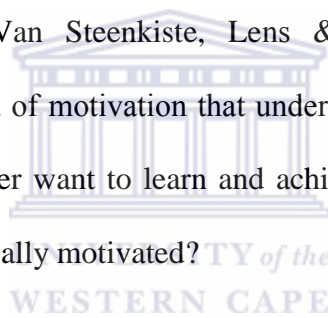
## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Rationale

Life goals and aspirations have directed behaviour across extended periods of our lives (Niemic, Ryan & Deci, 2009). Grade 11 learners at secondary schools are in one such period. It is at this stage that Grade 11 learners in their last years of secondary schooling face an array of critical development challenges such as deciding a career path or opting for tertiary education. Often these decisions are based on previous goals to aspire to a better life, to be a better person, to be of benefit to their communities, to have wealth or to become famous. Grade 11 learners could be motivated by their circumstances such as poverty or abusive home environments, by the state and attitudes of their school and teachers, by their own perceptions of what life might be like after matric and also by the media and popular culture, to aspire towards an array of goals. Thus, learners could be motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically to aspire to certain goals.

Sheldon and Kasser (1998) found in a longitudinal study that an individual's wellbeing, that is his /her state of contentedness with the self, was enhanced by the attainment of intrinsic goals, such as better inter-personal relationships, and self-acceptance. Extrinsic goals such as the accumulation of wealth, social recognition and image provided little benefit. International literature has looked at the construction of goal contents in undergraduates at universities across 15 cultures (Grouzet, et. al, 2005). The results yielded what importance undergraduate students placed on differing goals they were aspiring to. Two dimensions of aspirations were then found to be important , namely that of (1) intrinsic versus extrinsic aspirations

and (2) self-transcendent aspirations, that is being more spiritually inclined and enlightened versus hedonism, that is aspiring to more pleasure-seeking behaviour. A study by Schmuck, Kasser and Ryan (2000) explored the intrinsic and extrinsic goal structure and their relationship to the wellbeing of German and American college students. The findings in this study depicted that the goal contents of the two cultures were similar; both German and American college students who placed greater importance on intrinsic goals were seen to have higher rates of wellbeing, while the reverse was found in students who aspired toward extrinsic goals. Literature also suggests that traditionally Self Determination Theory (SDT) researchers have been concerned with studying the quality and content of learners' motivation. According to Van Steenkiste, Lens & Deci (2006) 'quality of motivation' refers to the kind of motivation that underpins the learners' behaviour, that is, what makes the learner want to learn and achieve more, and is the learner being intrinsically or extrinsically motivated?



Along with goals and aspirations, which extend across various periods of our lives, SDT posits that as humans we have three basic psychological needs that we constantly strive to meet. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), human beings are thus inherently motivated and strive towards being psychologically well. Thus one's level of motivation and structuring of goals and aspirations is attained due to three basic psychological needs; they are 1) the need for autonomy, 2) the need for relatedness and 3) the need for competence. Self-Determination Theory therefore posits that individuals are motivated to satisfy these needs and in so doing become self-determined in their behaviour or intrinsically motivated toward completing a task.

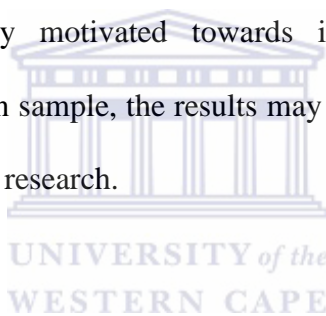
Studies concerning the goals and aspirations of young people have yielded much researched evidence as to the content of their goals and aspirations (Grouzet, Ahuvia, Kim, Ryan, Schmuck, Kasser, Dols, Lau, Saunders & Sheldon, 2005; Schmuck, Kasser & Ryan, 2000). Thus aspirations toward intrinsic goals are satisfying for the self (Ryan & Deci, 2000), while extrinsic goals focus outward, centering on external manifestations (Williams, Cox, Hedberg, & Deci, 2000). This research has been conducted internationally, but has not previously been determined or examined in South Africa. Thus, this research study was identified as pertinent and was motivated by a dearth of literature in South Africa. The purpose of the present study was therefore to determine and investigate the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners, since these learners are preparing for their futures.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) may be defined as an “empirically based theory of human motivation, development and wellness” (Deci & Ryan, 2008:182). Central to Self-Determination Theory is the concept of basic psychological needs that are assumed to be innate and universal. Individuals are therefore said to be inherently motivated and aspire toward being psychologically well (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These aspirations are attained due to three basic psychological needs, namely the need for autonomy, the need for relatedness and the need for competence. The need for autonomy refers to the individual’s ability to exercise free choice, and the capacity to make one’s own decisions and act upon them. Competency involves knowing that one possesses a skill that can be used effectively. Thus an individual has the ability to exercise mastery over one’s environment. Finally, relatedness reflects feelings of



having close and meaningful interpersonal relationships, in other words having a sense of belonging (Deci & Ryan, 2000). If all these needs are met, according to SDT, one may be said to be self-determined, which results in and promotes healthy development (Soenens, 2006). However, it is assumed that when these basic psychological needs are neglected or unsatisfied, an individual may experience difficulty in engaging in autonomously regulated behaviour, such as setting a goal to finish school (Strassberg, Gilbert & Russel, 2010). It is hypothesized that the individual's wellbeing will thus suffer (Deci & Ryan, 2003; Deci & Ryan 2008; Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2009). Thus, based on previous literature, it is assumed that when the three basic psychological needs of learners are satisfied and met, learners would be more intrinsically motivated towards identifying future goals and aspirations. In a South African sample, the results may not necessarily be the same as to that established in previous research.



### **1.3 Problem statement**

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage for young people (Thom, Louw, van Ede & Ferns, 1998; Bray, Gooskens, Khan, Moses & Seekings, 2010). Particularly when youth are in Grade 11, they are suddenly faced with a myriad of decisions that will affect their future. This is the typical Grade 11 learner experience since they are closer to completing their schooling career. Critical at this stage is the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, namely the need for competence, relatedness and autonomy, as they are 'actively developing' towards creating a more coherent or whole sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2004:3). " A primary goal of adolescents is to figure out who one is and where one fits into society" (Erickson, 1959, as cited in Milyavskaya, Gingras, Mageau, Koestner, Gagon, Fang & Boiche, 2009: 1032).

According to Deci & Ryan (2004) in the process of actively developing, there is a tendency for “knowledge and personality to become synthesized and organized”, thus resulting in an assimilation of knowledge and experience within the self, furthermore leading to a unified sense of self and ultimately psychological wellbeing (Roman, 2008). The satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs according to SDT plays a major role in motivating the individual towards being self-determined and psychologically well (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2003; Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008). Therefore the pursuit of certain goals has both positive and negative implications for the learner and society at large. Much of the literature pertaining to basic psychological needs and their influence on the identification of goals and aspirations has been done in Western Countries (Grouzet et al., 2005). Currently there is a dearth of literature and research in South Africa concerning basic psychological needs and their influence on goal and aspiration identification of learners, and specifically those in secondary schools. There is no clear distinction as to what their basic psychological needs are, nor their goals and aspirations about the future. The current study contributes to new knowledge in South Africa regarding the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations among adolescents, specifically Grade 11 learners at secondary schools.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

In view of the literature and theoretical underpinnings of basic psychological needs, goals and aspirations the following research questions were devised:

1. What are the basic psychological needs of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools?
2. What are the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools?

3. Is there a relationship between basic psychological needs and goal and aspiration identification in Grade 11 learners at secondary schools?

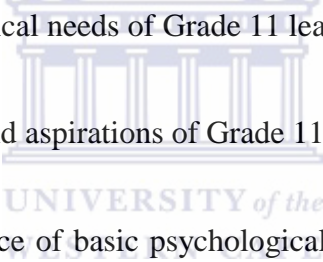
## **1.5 Aims and objectives**

### **1.5.1 Aim of the study**

The study aim was to examine the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools.

### **1.5.2. Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were to:

- 
- Identify the psychological needs of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools
  - Determine the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools
  - Investigate the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools.

### **1.5.3 Hypotheses**

- Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between basic psychological needs and goal pursuits.
- Hypothesis 2: Both the satisfaction and the frustration of basic psychological needs are significant contributors to the variation in the pursuit of intrinsic and extrinsic goals of the learners.

## **1.6 Research methodology**

A quantitative methodological approach with a cross-sectional correlational design was used to present the relationship between basic psychological needs and their influence on the identification of goals and aspirations in Grade 11 learners at secondary schools. This approach produced a statistical outcome in order to prove or disprove hypotheses for the resultant relationship between the variables of the study (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006).

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The study aimed to provide understanding and insight into basic psychological needs and their role in motivating an individual towards being self-determined and psychologically well. The relationship between basic psychological needs and the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners was examined in this study, focusing on the effects basic psychological needs have on the Grade 11 learner's identification of his/her goals and aspirations. Findings in this study therefore have important implications for parents/guardians and the environment they provide for the conducive gratification of their child's basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence, which in turn has an impact on their wellbeing, goal setting and decision making processes. The results provide critical insight into the current Life Orientation curricula offered to Grade 10-12 learners, surrounding goal setting and decision-making processes. Educators will thus begin to understand what motivates learners and why they aspire to specific goal sets. Health care practitioners working with youth in the form of educational psychologists, school counsellors and registered counsellors would also benefit, as more knowledge may be acquired pertaining to the content of Grade 11 learners' basic psychological needs and

their goals and aspirations, informing a more holistic approach to career counsel. For current Grade 11 learners this study will inform the “what and why” of their goal pursuits, enlightening them on how unfavorable decisions can have a ripple effect on their wellbeing and quality of life. Lastly, for the broader society this study proposes to deduce the motivation of the South African learner, as to encourage communities to provide an environment which is favourable to meeting the basic psychological needs of its Grade 11 learners, thus enabling them to actively engage in pro-social behaviour so as to maintain an environment which meets their needs.

## **1.8 Definition of terms**

### Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory may be defined as a theory of personality, which postulates that all human beings possess an innate tendency to develop a more coherent and integrated sense of self (Vansteenkiste, 2005).

### Basic psychological needs

Central to Self-Determination Theory is the concept of basic psychological needs that are assumed to be innate and universal. These needs - the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness - must be continuously satisfied for people to develop and function in healthy or optimal ways (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### Relatedness

Relatedness refers to an individual’s ability to formulate close and meaningful interpersonal relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### Competence

Competence refers to an individual's skill to do something effectively as well as his/her sense of mastery over his environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### Autonomy

Autonomy refers to an individual's ability to exercise free choice and the capacity to make one's own decisions and act upon them (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It is important to note that one's sense of being an autonomous agent differs from being independent, which is the circumstance of relying on others for help or support (Chirkov, Ryan, Youngmee, & Kaplan 2003).

### Adolescence

The stage of adolescence is a transitional phase of not only physical development, but also mental, emotional and social development. This stage of development takes place between the phases of puberty and adulthood. According to Louw Van Ede and Louw (2005), an adolescent is a person between the ages of 13 and 19 years of age.

### Goals

A goal may be defined as an aim that one is committed to achieve and obtain. According to SDT, goals may be described as being intrinsic in nature, that is they are geared toward personal growth, self-acceptance and pro-social behaviour such as community and social development. Alternatively, according to SDT, goals may be extrinsic in nature; these goals are set toward wealth, fame and the attainment of social recognition and/or praise (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

## **1.9 Summary of the thesis**

The current CHAPTER 1 introduces the concepts of Basic Psychological needs, Goals and Aspirations. It also contains the background and rationale, problem statement, and the aims and objectives, which guide the study as well as the study's significance. Furthermore the methodological framework describes the approach the researcher used.

CHAPTER 2 presents the conceptual framework for the study. This chapter focuses its discussion on the relationship between basic psychological needs and their influence on the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners within the context of Self-Determination Theory.

CHAPTER 3 describes the research design and methodology. This chapter presents information regarding the sampling procedure, participants, instruments, data collection and analysis procedures as well the ethical considerations undertaken.

CHAPTER 4 presents the detailed analysis of findings as well as a presentation of the findings using tables. Descriptive quantitative results are analyzed by way of the Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS) and are presented. The statistical presentation reflects the descriptive correlations and inferential data.

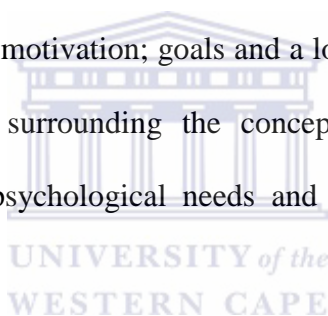
CHAPTER 5 provides a concluding discussion of the main findings. This chapter discusses the results of the study in greater detail, comparing it with the previous studies and later provides an overall understanding of the influence of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations. Study results are interpreted in this chapter, as well as the limitations of the study, with recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theory, concepts and literature relating to basic psychological needs, goals and aspirations and Self-Determination Theory. The chapter first describes the general developmental stage in which learners in the Grade 11 find themselves, namely adolescence; secondly the theoretical framework employed to provide the basis for the associations between basic psychological needs; thirdly the basic psychological needs in the context of adolescence are discussed. This is followed by the concept of motivation; goals and a look at the international as well as South African literature surrounding the concepts are explored. Finally the associations between basic psychological needs and their influence on goals and aspirations are discussed.



#### 2.2 Adolescence as a developmental stage

Adolescence is characterized by change and one could argue that at no other time in development are so many factors in flux (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). Changes are marked not only by the physical maturation of adolescents, but also within their psychological processes, emotional and intellectual capacities. Fundamental psychosocial tasks are central to this period of development. Some of these tasks include the formation of a healthy positive self-identity; that is the ever increasing questions surrounding ‘who they are, where they belong and what they want to become’, being self-determined, navigating relational tasks, forming meaningful interpersonal relationships, as well as competency based tasks, meeting the demands



of school life, choosing and developing career interests, as well as new skill sets (Thom *et al.*, 1998; Bray *et al.*, 2010; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002).

The process of internalizing these tasks, shifting from compliance to more self – regulated and autonomous behaviour, and integrating social values and standards, is central to navigating one’s way through the period of adolescence (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). These tasks are evident in adolescent youth nearing the end of their school career, such as learners in Grade 11. As this cohort of school seniors are nearing the end of their school career, the importance of identity and self, the ability to make informed choices, identify aspirations and goal setting becomes an important task for the future. However learners and particularly adolescent learners nearing the end of their schooling phase, differ considerably in their engagement and enthusiasm for schoolwork and learning and, thus, the degree to which they go on to demonstrate life–long interest and perseverance in both academic achievement and their personal lives (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon & Deci 2004). Van Steenkiste, Lens & Deci (2006) postulate that there are a number of internal processes that affect the adolescent’s level of motivation. Furthermore “some adolescents are able and successfully negotiate the tasks of adolescence, while others find themselves blocked or frustrated in their development” (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002:194).

This study focused specifically on adolescents currently in Grade 11 who are nearing the end of their school career. The new, but also difficult, transition into being a well-adjusted adult now begins. This critical adolescent period of development is likely to bring forth an array of new challenges, exercising free will, being independent, an increased focus on self, and the decision of what path is to be taken after school. With these challenges comes the act of motivation to acquire goals and aspirations for the future. In particular attention was given to define and explore the psychological needs

of adolescents, necessary for their optimal development. The framework of Self-Determination Theory was used to examine the factors which foster or undermine adolescent wellbeing and self-motivation.

### **2.3 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) may be defined as an “empirically based theory of human motivation, development and wellness” (Deci & Ryan, 2008:182). SDT assumes that human beings are active and growth orientated agents (Ryan & Deci, 2000; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). In a classical view, SDT is an organismic theory, in which human beings are seen to have an innate tendency towards self-enhancement (Rigby, Deci, Patrick & Ryan, 1992). Central to SDT is the premise of basic psychological needs, which are assumed to be innate and universal; this aids in the understanding of human motivation and development. SDT is therefore one of the most commonly used theoretical frameworks in the study of human motivation (Ntoumanis & Standage, 2009). These aspirations are attained due to the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs, namely the needs for autonomy, the need for relatedness, and the need for competency. The need for autonomy refers to an individual’s ability to exercise free choice, and the capacity to make one’s own decisions and act upon them (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Relatedness reflects feelings of having close and meaningful interpersonal relationships, in other words having a sense of belonging, thus feeling connected (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Finally competency involves knowing that one possesses a skill that can be used effectively, thus an individual is able to exercise mastery in one’s environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

According to Roman (2008) an individual can develop to their fullest potential, only when their needs are satisfied and fulfilled. SDT therefore posits that all human

beings strive to feel independent, connected and capable in order to obtain psychological health and function optimally (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2008; Edward, Deci & Ryan, 2008). If all these needs are met, according to SDT, one may be said to be self-determined and self-regulated, which results in and promotes healthy development (Soenens, 2006). Le Febvre (2003) concurs that having a sense of autonomy actively maintains the behaviour needed to achieve a goal without external instruction or motivation. The satisfaction of one or two of these needs is not enough for psychological health and wellbeing; all three needs must be fulfilled and thus satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs according to SDT plays a major role in motivating the individual towards being self-determined and psychologically well (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2003; Niemiec et al., 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008).

As a theory of human motivation, SDT posits that in order for needs to be fulfilled and thus satisfied, the environment needs to be conducive to need support and provide opportunities for need fulfillment (Ryan & Deci, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). When the environment is not seen to support or provide opportunities for need fulfillment we say the environment is therefore frustrating and impedes need satisfaction (Chirkov, Ryan, Youngmee, & Kaplan, 2003). Furthermore Chirkov, et al., (2003) state that an individual's psychological wellbeing is thus enhanced when the environment is supportive, that is, their needs are satisfied and individual growth takes place, but will result in need frustration when the environment is hindering, and thus controlling, that is needs are not satisfied and no development can take place. Deci and Ryan (2000) add that when the environment is controlling and impedes need satisfaction, psychological processes are thus affected. If such processes include "often defensive or self-protective behaviour, the

tendency is to therefore withdraw from others, focus rather on oneself, and in extreme cases participate in psychological withdrawal, or anti social behaviour” (Deci & Ryan, 2000: 229), to counteract unfulfilled needs. Deci and Ryan (2000) state that it is either the presence versus the absence of an environment which is conducive to basic need satisfaction, which is a significant predictor of whether or not people will possess mental health. The relationship between the three basic needs and the opportunities which afford them is thus dynamic, as they come to define the course of self-motivation and growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002).

#### **2.4 Basic psychological needs of adolescence**

Developmentally, learners in Grade 11 find themselves in the period of adolescence. As highlighted above, adolescence is a period of immense transition mentally, physically and emotionally (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002; Thom et al., 1998; Bray et al., 2010). It could be assumed that one of the major tasks, and thus a need, in adolescence is to navigate one’s place in the world. According to La Guardia and Ryan (2002), adolescents are thrust into a period of self-discovery; “who am I, and what do I want to become during the period of adolescence?” They are seen to explore an array of interests, values, lifestyles, peer groups, as well as different roles, developing an array of ‘role related selves’ across the different social contexts in which they find themselves. According to La Guardia and Ryan (2002) from the perspective of SDT these roles and/or identities the adolescents adopt and their manner of selection can be understood in terms of the adolescent’s basic psychological needs. La Guardia and Ryan (2002) suggest that individuals generally adopt and/or assume roles, practices and beliefs to feel connected to their peer groups, therefore promoting relatedness among significant others. The adoption of identities is

also seen to foster the needs of competency and autonomy (La Guardia & Ryan 2002). La Guardia and Ryan (2002) explain that the roles and/or identities which stimulate one's intellectual functioning and acquisition for knowledge push one to learn new skills and, despite challenges, promote feelings of effectiveness and competence. Similarly identities that allow individuals to showcase their inherent interests and abilities allow for self-determined behaviour to take place, thereby encouraging autonomy (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). These researchers state that it would be optimal if the three basic psychological needs would be fulfilled within or by a given identity.

Adolescents find themselves in a variety of environments, like home, family and school (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). According to Milyavskaya et al., (2009) SDT highlights the importance of a social context which supports autonomy, competence and relatedness as this leads to optimal wellbeing and outcomes for adolescents. But La Guardia and Ryan (2002) contend that there are many ways in which need satisfaction is frustrated and that needs are pitted against each other, making the choice of identity difficult. For example, if adolescents are too pressured and/or controlled toward adopting a certain identity, this is according to La Guardia and Ryan (2002) a restriction on their autonomy. Furthermore La Guardia and Ryan (2002) state that there are many instances in which adolescents feel pressure to conform; instances include when parents state that certain career paths should and must be followed, the adoption of belief systems and certain lifestyles. They go on to say that these pressures lead less to internalized identities, as the adolescent is unable to explore his/her choices. Tremendous pressures such as this, one could assume, may also lead the adolescent to feel guilty; if they do not adopt the given identity, they risk losing significant people in their lives. La Guardia and Ryan (2002) state that when

there is great pressure and expectation placed upon adolescents from teachers, parents or peers to adopt a certain path, the needs of autonomy and relatedness are in contention with each other. They state the “threats to relatedness further undermine establishment of a secure base from which to explore and extend the self” (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002: 208). The need for competence within adolescents can also be undermined and compromised according to La Guardia and Ryan (2002). This occurs when adolescents are undermined and discouraged; therefore they may feel less likely to adopt identities in which they cannot feel competent (La Guardia, 2002). Milyavskaya et al., (2009) agrees with La Guardia (2002), by stating the feedback and support adolescents receive is a key determinant of whether this life stage will be successfully overcome. The school plays a central role in which they will engage in tasks of development and identity (La Guardia & Ryan, 2000; Rigby et al., 1992).

As stated above, how well adolescents engage in and master their tasks of development varies. Another important task of adolescent needs is the process of individuation (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). Unlike other developmental theories, SDT views the process of individuation in adolescents as being characterized by the internalization of values, identity development and extra-familial relationships (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002) rather than the distinct separation or moving away from the family. Individuation is therefore seen as the process of resolving conflicts and/or tasks, particularly within the development stage of adolescence (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002: 197).

Self-Determination Theory posits that this variance is accounted for by the extent to which their basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence can be fulfilled and/or frustrated (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2008). La Guardia and Ryan (2002)

therefore suggest that when the adolescents' social context is supportive of needs, adolescents will experience greater wellbeing, and more likely to internalize societal values, school related goals and healthy interpersonal relationships.

## **2.5 Motivation**

SDT is a theory of human motivation; thus it is our basic needs that propel our motivation to achieve them (Deci & Ryan 2008; Ingrid, Majda & Dubravka, 2009). According to Baumeister and Leary (1995) as cited in Sheldon and Gunz (2009) needs possess a motivational force, that produces behavioural effects, directs cognitive (thought) processes and can affect a variety of behaviours. SDT distinguishes between two types of motivations and suggests that motivation is not a unitary phenomenon. It is not merely about how much motivation a person has, but what type of motivation. The first distinction is between 'intrinsic motivation', which refers to the innate or inherent tendency to take interest in and challenge one's own capacity; the second is extrinsic motivation, which refers to an external or outward motivating factor instrumental in attaining an outcome (Ryan & Deci , 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2003; Niemiec *et al.*, 2009; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002).

Furthermore La Guardia and Ryan (2002) posit that although the diminishment of intrinsic motivation during adolescence is important, most of what adolescents aspire to be is, in fact, extrinsically motivated. Pertinent to adolescents and specifically Grade 11 learners are the processes of goal setting and how future aspirations will be achieved once they have completed secondary education. Therefore it could be said that adolescents engage in activities that may not be inherently interesting to them, but rather they are necessary and socially prescribed behaviours, instrumentally important in their schooling career; for example 'I have to do well in school', 'I have

to excel in mathematics and make my parents proud'. This may be said to be a central task in adolescence; that is the internalization of prescribed social values into the self (La Guardia & Ryan 2002).

These Grade 11 learners do not only contend with the external prescribed academic pressures to perform well, but also find themselves in a country, such as South Africa, which is culturally and socio-economically diverse (Hall & Lake, 2010). According to Hall and Lake, (2010) in 2008 it was estimated that 71 % of South African children lived in formal housing while 2.3 million children lived in backyard dwellings and shacks in informal settlements, with nearly 30 % living in over-crowded households. It could therefore be assumed that these findings include adolescents and subsequently learners. These learners seek a better standard of living, wealth and/or fame in order to improve their circumstances. With reference to this study, one could state that that educational activities/ school may not be designed to be intrinsically interesting / appealing to our adolescent Grade 11 learners; as discussed earlier in the chapter, these learners are considered to be more extrinsically motivated.

The question then becomes how we foster extrinsically motivated behaviour that is self-determined and self-regulated. SDT proposes the development of internalization and integration of values and behavioural regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Internalization is “the process of taking in a value or regulation, and integration is the process by which individuals more fully transform the regulation into their own so that it will emanate from their sense of self” (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 60). Extrinsic motivation may therefore be differentiated in its conceptualization as something more than just ‘non self-determined’ behaviour. La Guardia and Ryan (2000); Ingrid et al., (2009), as well as Rigby et al, (1992) posit that extrinsic motivation exists on a



continuum of relative autonomic behaviour as well. Therefore one's motivation for certain behaviour can range from "amotivation or unwillingness, to passive compliance, to active personal commitment" (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 60).

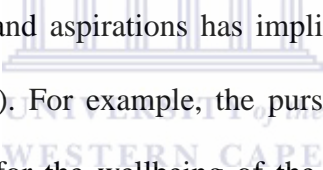
According to SDT, this type of motivation operates on a continuum. Ryan & Deci (2000) identify the various subtypes of motivation as follows;

- Amotivation: Refers to the lack of intention or volition to act.
  - Extrinsic motivation is seen to comprise of four types of motivation; ranging from the least autonomous to the most autonomous, they are;
    1. External Regulation: Refers to a non-self-determined behavior; here an individual participates in the said behaviour, due to external control and/or demand so as to avoid a negative outcome.
    2. Introjected Regulation: Refers to behavior that is not self-determined; here the individual participates in said behaviour due to feeling of pressure in order to avoid feelings of guilt and/or anxiety.
    3. Identification: Refers to a more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. Here the individual identifies with the importance of the behaviour.
    4. Integration: Refers to the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. Here the individual has integrated fully the certain activity and/or regulation with the individual's own needs and/or value system.
- Ryan and Deci (2000: 62) state "the more one internalizes the reasons for an action and assimilates it into the self the more one's extrinsically motivated actions become self-determined and thus intrinsic.

- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Refers to self-determined, self-regulated and autonomous motivation. The individual engages in behaviour because he/she finds inherent satisfaction and enjoyment.

These researchers state that specific contextual factors might influence the internalization and regulatory behavior, and that under certain circumstances extrinsic rewards may enhance intrinsic motivation. This suggests that people can be self-determined even if and when extrinsically motivated (Rigby et al., 1992). Furthermore extrinsically motivated behaviours are thus considered to be self-determined when they possess an internal locus of causality, originating from the self (La Guardia & Ryan and Rigby et al., 1992).

## **2.6 Goals and Aspirations**



The pursuit of certain goals and aspirations has implications for the individual and society (Niemic et al., 2009). For example, the pursuit of wealth and fame could have long term implications for the wellbeing of the individual as well as societal interrelationships (Vansteenkiste, Soenens & Duriez, 2008). Research in the field of goals and aspirations has provided sufficient evidence as to the content of the goals and aspirations of young people (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996). When one is thus intrinsically motivated, one engages in the activity for inherent satisfaction; the experience is thus self-determined and organized. Intrinsic motivation is thus characterized by experiencing autonomy and competence (La Guardia & Ryan 2002). Studies have also shown that, whereas self-reported attainment of intrinsic aspirations was positively associated with wellbeing, the attainment of extrinsic aspirations was not (Ryan, Chirkov, Little, Sheldon, Timoshina, & Deci, 1999).

Parents are seen to influence their children either indirectly or overtly by encouraging their children to pursue a particular life path (goals and aspirations) by the parenting practices they use (Kasser, Ryan, Zax, & Sameroff, 1995; Malmberg, Ehrman, & Lithén, 2005; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles & Sameroff, 2001; Williams et al., 2000). Much of the research on the ‘how’ of goal pursuits has been done internationally; many studies have been conducted cross-culturally (Grouzet, et. al., 2005), but have not previously been determined or examined in South Africa. Although a particular South African study conducted by Robbins, Wallis and Dunston (2003: 613), suggests that students perceived family and “community orientation” to offer salient support in aspiring towards career decision-making, this study used a qualitative methodological approach which determined the nature of support rather than the content of the goals and aspirations of students. Clearly, the pursuit of specific goals and aspirations could have both negative and positive implications for the future wellbeing and functioning of individuals. The question remains as to the salient role of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations of South African learners.

Thus the study of motivational or goal patterns within the academic sphere has centered itself primarily within Self-Determination Theory. Studies have looked at both intrinsic versus extrinsic driving forces, which have been shown to regulate learners’ study behaviour and thus their goal acquisition (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci 2006).

### **2.6.1 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals**

Furthermore, Sheldon and Kasser (1998) found in a longitudinal study that wellbeing was enhanced by the attainment of intrinsic goals, whereas success at extrinsic goals

provided little benefit. Research therefore suggests that one's basic psychological needs require satisfaction in order for the learner to achieve their fullest potential (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2003; 2008; Niemiec et al., 2009).

However, despite the overwhelming literature available in both Eastern and Western cultures that denotes the importance of intrinsic goal pursuits during adolescence, there exists according to La Guardia and Ryan (2002) a decline in intrinsic motivation during adolescence. Some learners are thus motivated to aspire and attain their goals, but others may not necessarily be as motivated. A longitudinal study conducted over 3 years (as of 2007 to 2010), by Strassberg et al., (2010) looked at the dropout rates among adolescents between Grades 10 and 12 in South Africa. They found that the highest rates of school dropouts occurred between Grades 10 and Grade 12. The study suggested the main reasons for high dropout rates were poverty, teenage pregnancy, and a feeling of alienation and disengagement among adolescents at school (Blaine, 2010). However the study was not conclusive as to why learners within these particular Grades lack the aspiration to complete their secondary education.

### **2.6.2 Goal and Aspirations in Africa and South Africa**

The literature surrounding the goals and aspirations on African and more specifically South African youth remains scarce. Much of the focus on South African youth has centered on resiliency in adolescent youth, such as a study conducted by Dass-Brailsford (2005) who looked at academic achievement among black disadvantaged youth in South Africa. Another study by Stead, Els and Fouad (2004) looked at the perceived career barriers among South African youth.

A few studies in Africa have looked at academic aspirations. Cherian (2001) examined the relationship between parental aspirations and academic achievement of

Xhosa children; the results indicated that there was a relationship between parental aspirations and the academic achievement of their children. Similarly, as mentioned above, a study by Robbins et al., (2003) examined the academic achievement and career aspirations of Zulu students who completed their schooling.

Although research has looked at the aspirations and academic achievement in both African and South African countries, there remains a dearth in the research surrounding the basic psychological needs of African and more specifically South African adolescents. It therefore becomes of paramount importance to explore and consider the influence of their needs and the implications on the goals and aspirations of South African adolescent youth. Basic psychological needs are seen as an essential component in the development of human beings in their propulsion towards self enhancement, as whole and unified individuals; therefore to consider how basic psychological needs have played a role in the identification of goals and aspirations would be important to research.

## **2.7 Basic psychological needs and goals and aspirations**

Needs are seen to provide the basic motivation for behaviour, that is to sleep, eat, find a new job, drive to work, study and so forth. One may ask how we achieve them. As discussed above, Kasser and Ryan (2001) identified that we set goals in order to achieve or bring forth need satisfaction. We distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic goal pursuits. Intrinsic goal pursuits emphasize self-determined behaviour and centre on personal growth, self-acceptance and community. Extrinsic goal pursuits involve wealth, fame and image (Kasser & Ryan 1993; 1996). Intrinsic goal pursuits are satisfying to the 'self', promoting psychological wellbeing and optimal development, whereas aspirations towards extrinsic goals are negatively associated

with mental health, and thus psychological wellbeing (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996, Williams et al., 2000).

Niemiec, Ryan and Deci (2009) mention that life goals and aspirations direct behaviour across various periods in our lives. Intrinsic aspirations are therefore positively associated with psychological wellbeing and the opposite was found for extrinsic aspirations (Ryan et al., 1999). Wellbeing which may be defined as effective performance, creative problem solving and deep conceptual learning, was further said to be enhanced by intrinsic goal attainment as one is said to be autonomous and competent (Sheldon & Kasser, 1998).

Ryan and Deci (1985) state that the environment in which one finds oneself must also provide the opportunities for basic need satisfaction to take place. Moreover Chirkov et al., (2003) state that wellbeing is enhanced when the environment is supportive, but will frustrate needs when the environment is controlling and/or restricted, when hindering need satisfaction. The pursuit of certain goals is therefore said to have implications for the individual and/or society. For example the pursuit of wealth and fame could have long term implications for the wellbeing of the individual as well as societal interrelationships; people are said to then be more superficial, apathetic and aloof. Thus when basic psychological needs are neglected or unsatisfied, an individual may experience difficulty in engaging in autonomously regulated behaviour, such as setting a goal to finish school (Blaine 2010). It is hypothesized that the individual's wellbeing will thus suffer (Deci & Ryan, 2003; 2008; Niemiec et al., 2008). Thus, based on previous literature, one could assume that if the basic psychological needs of learners are satisfied, learners would be more intrinsically motivated towards identifying future goals and aspirations. In a South African sample, the results may

not necessarily be the same as those established in previous research. What follows is a review of the influence of needs on the processes of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to set goals and the impact on their wellbeing.

However, much of this research is based on international Western research which favours the pursuit of intrinsic goals, over that of extrinsic goal pursuits, as the latter is said to lower psychological wellbeing (Ryan et al., 1999; Kasser & Ryan, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2000). The generalizability of this effect as yet should be tested in other cultures (Ingrid et al., 2009). People's life aspirations reflect the culture and economic conditions in which they find themselves (Ingrid et al, 2009). Furthermore Ingrid et al., (2009) state that extrinsic aspirations are not necessarily detrimental, but may well contribute to the psychological wellbeing of individuals, especially in less rich non-Western countries.

South Africa may be said to be an economically difficult country to grow up in. South African learners could therefore be naturally inclined to pursue more extrinsic goals, as this would bring success, financial security and/or resources where none existed before, thereby promoting psychological wellbeing. No research exists within the South African context on basic psychological needs, goals and aspirations and the influence of basic psychological needs on the goal contents of adolescents in South Africa.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter the critical tasks within the stages of adolescent development are considered. The support and satisfaction of psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness were looked at as essential requirements for optimal development. Using the framework of Self-Determination Theory, we explored how

environments play a key role in need fulfillment and/or need frustration, and how this may impact goal pursuits, and thus optimal functioning and health. The issue of motivation and the extrinsic versus intrinsic dichotomy was also explored. The role of basic psychological needs and their influence on the goals and aspirations of adolescents was also reviewed. Much research is needed to be done in the reference to the latter. The next chapter will detail the methodological framework adhered to in this study.





## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter outlines the research principles used for this study. A quantitative methodological approach was applied in order to examine the relationship between basic psychological needs and their influence on the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools. This chapter presents information regarding the pilot study, sampling procedure, participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures as well the ethical considerations undertaken. The objectives of the study are outlined as follows:

#### **3.2 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the psychological needs of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools
- Determine the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools
- Investigate the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary school

#### **3.3 Research methodology and design**

A research design is a structured framework or blueprint of how the researcher intends to solve the research problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The current study employed a quantitative methodological approach with a cross-sectional correlational design. Cross-sectional designs are used to study phenomena at a given point in time

(Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Furthermore Peck, Olsen and Devore (2001) posit that the correlational cross-sectional design studies variables of interest in a sample of subjects which are examined once and the relationships between them are determined. This study therefore examined the relationship between the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools at a given point in time.

### **3.4 Study population and sampling**

#### **3.4.1 Study population**

The population refers to that group of people about whom researchers want to draw conclusions (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). The population in this study included learners in Grade 11 at selected public schools in the Western Cape Province. There are 356 government/public schools, which are stratified according to the eight Western Cape Education Districts. The public schools within each district, were then stratified according to the socio-economic status of the school, based on school fees. This study focused on three schools within the North District of the Western Cape Education Department. As this was conveniently accessible for the researcher. Participation in the study was also dependent on permission gained from the Western Cape Education Department and principals at the schools.

#### **3.4.2 Sampling**

Sampling may be defined as selecting the elements to be observed (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). A list of schools in the Northern District was used as a sampling frame for this study. Three public schools were randomly selected from the Northern District Education Department. All Grade 11 learners who provided informed consent

were eligible to participate in the study. The final sample thus consisted of male and female Grade 11 learners (N= 264) with a mean age of ( $M=17$  years;  $SD=.87$ ). The main study had more females (149 [56.4%]) than males (115 [56.4%]) in the study. Participants were mainly English-speaking (133 [50.4 %]); those who were Afrikaans-speaking participants were (63[23.9%]) and the remaining students indicated that was their home languages were IsiXhosa (58[22.0%]) and other (10[3.8%]). Although results indicated that the majority of the participants were Coloured (156 [59.1%]), other racial categories represented included Black (74 [28%]), Whites (27 [10.2%]) and Indian/ Asian (7 [2.7%]).

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

This study employed the Balanced Measure of Psychological Needs (Sheldon & Hilpert, 2012) and the Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) (See Appendix B). The questionnaires were self-reported; they included questions about biographical details including age, race and gender to collect the data. Participants were asked to complete the following questionnaires:

#### **3.5.1 Balanced Measure of Psychological Needs (BMPN)**

Central to Self-Determination Theory is the concept of basic psychological needs that are assumed to be innate and universal. According to the theory, these needs - the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness must be continually satisfied for people to develop and function in healthy or optimal ways (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The Balanced Measure of Psychology Needs Scale is an 18-item questionnaire used by Sheldon and Gunz (2009) as well as Sheldon and Hilpert (2012). The scale contains 6 items each for the needs of autonomy, competency and relatedness, respectively

within each need there are 3 items which measure positive effect and 3 items which measure negative effect. Participants were asked to rate how they had felt in the last week, using 1 = not at all to 4 = very true scale... Example of an item:

Relatedness –Positively worded relatedness item: *I felt close and connected with other people who are important to me*

Relatedness- Negatively worded item: *I felt unappreciated by one or more important people.*

The Cronbach alpha of this instrument reveals that for the six 3-item BMPN subscales, coefficients of 0.71 and 0.85 for positively worded relatedness were found, 0.71 and 0.70 for positively and negatively worded competence and 0.69 and 0.72 for positively and negatively worded autonomy (Sheldon & Hilpert, 2012).

### 3.5.2 Aspiration Index

The Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) was developed to assess people's aspirations. There are 7 categories of aspirations with five specific items within each category. The seven categories include: the extrinsic aspirations of wealth, fame, and image; the intrinsic aspirations of meaningful relationships, personal growth, and community contributions; and the aspiration of good health which turned out not to be clearly either extrinsic or intrinsic. Participants rate: (1) the importance to themselves of each aspiration, (2) their beliefs about the likelihood of attaining each, and (3) the degree to which they have already attained each. Participants are asked to respond on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 3= achieved. Examples of items include: *Life-goal: To be a very wealthy person.*

1. *How important is this to you?*

2. *How likely is it that this will happen in your future?*

3. *How much have you already attained this goal?*

The Cronbach alpha of this instrument ranges from 0.72 to 0.80 (Kasser & Ryan, 1993).

### **3.6 Pilot study and results**

#### **3.6.1 Pilot study**

The purposes of the pilot study are to test the reliability of the instrument, assess the language and to explore the feasibility of the data collection process. In research the pilot study is used to identify any difficulties which may arise during the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). Additionally, the test-retest method allowed for the application of a second round of completing the questionnaires to a second group of the same sample. Thus, the test-retest reliability measured the internal consistency of the questionnaires indicating if the questionnaires were reliable (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2008).

Once the Higher Degrees Committee approved for the proposed research to take place, a pilot study of 15% of the final sample was conducted. Permission had also been granted by the Western Cape Education Department. Principals and teachers were then approached for permission to conduct the study with the Grade 11 learners at participating schools. Each learner was issued with an information sheet and assent form, (Appendix A and C). Participants completed an assent form on the day of the study (Appendix C). Once consent had been granted the principals and teachers of the participating schools were contacted for appropriate times and venues to be arranged. The administration of the questionnaires were done with minimal disruption to the

school time table. The Grade 11 learners were asked to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-administered allowing the researcher time to assist those learners who needed extra clarification of instructions. Completion of the questionnaire lasted approximately 45minutes.

### 3.6.2 Pilot study results

The data from the pilot were coded, entered, cleaned and analysed with the Statistical Package in the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20, which was used to describe the characteristics of the pilot sample. The results of the reliability of the two scales are depicted in the (Tables 3.1) and (Table 3.2), which indicate the reliability statistics of the pilot study.

**Table 3.1: Aspiration Index**

	Extrinsic Alpha	Intrinsic Alpha
Important	0.84	0.73
Likely	0.84	0.80
Attained	0.85	0.86

**Table 3.2: Basic psychological needs scale**

	Cronbach alpha
Autonomy	0.42
Competency	0.32
Relatedness	0.59

The results show that the Cronbach alphas for the Intrinsic and Extrinsic goals of the Aspiration index were adequate. The Cronbach alphas for the Basic Psychological Needs Scale were low, and therefore changes to the instrument were made.

### **3.6.3 Changes to the instruments**

The changes made to the instruments were as a result of the reliability co-efficient within the Aspiration Index being too low and the items within the Basic Psychological Needs scale being too lengthy. Changes to the two respective instruments thus consisted of the following;

(a) The Aspiration Index was edited by removing the third level question pertaining to each goal that is “*how much have you already attained this goal?*” as these goals were unlikely to have been attained by these Grade 11 learners. Another modification resulting from the pilot was related to the scale used, which was changed so that it is easier for the participants to understand, as they were not very clear with the points of the Likert scale. The Aspiration Index Likert scale originally consisted of 3 points *1=Not at all* was changed to *Not important*, *2=moderately* was changed to *somewhat important*, *3=Achieved* was removed and changed to *Important*, and a fourth Likert was added *4= Very important*. This was adopted as it was much easier for the majority of the students who participated to complete and understand the 4-point Likert scale, than the 3-point Likert scale.

(b) Because of the low alphas obtained during the pilot study, the instrument used The 21 items of Basic Psychological Needs scale (Deci & Ryan, 2000), was replaced with the 18 itemed questionnaire of Ken Sheldon’s Balanced Measure of Psychological Needs (BMPN) Sheldon and Gunz (2009). The BMPN scale contains 6 items each for autonomy, competency and relatedness, 3 positively worded and 3 negatively worded.

### **3.6.4 Application of the instrument**

The study focused on Grade 11 learners between the ages of 16 and 18 years at Secondary Schools in the Western Cape. Permission to conduct the study was granted by The University of the Western Cape's Higher Degrees Committee for ethical approval. The Western Cape Education Department, as well as by the principals of the participating schools. Lists of Grade 11 classes per school were then obtained by the principals. This procedure was also conducted during the pilot study. However the pilot study revealed that it was much easier to liaise with the Life Orientation teacher at the various participating schools, as a gate keeper. Much difficulty was met with at certain schools, allocating a time which was most convenient for them, but when one arrived this was not the case and learners at times were not present and/or available for the study. This meant that the Life Orientation teacher had to be briefed on the application of the instruments. The pilot study therefore revealed that the Life Orientation teacher administering the questionnaire during the Grade 11 Life Orientation periods would be the best person to collect the data at the various schools. Once questionnaires were completed, the Life Orientation teacher would inform the researcher and collection of the completed questionnaires would be done.

### **3.7 Data collection**

The process of the data collection procedure for the main study followed the same design of the data collection in the pilot study. The questionnaires were then administered at each school in a classroom during a period arranged by the principal of the school. The period was 45 minutes long and at times staff members of the respective school were present. The questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete and the completed questionnaires were then sealed and locked in the project



manager's office until they were to be coded and analyzed with SPSS Version 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

### **3.8 Data analysis**

The raw data was entered by means of the Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS) and then coded and cleaned, checking for errors while data was being entered. The statistical analysis included both the computation of descriptive and inferential statistics (regression analysis). According to Pretorius (2007), regression “is concerned with predicting one variable on the basis of our knowledge of another variable” (p.93). Therefore to test Hypothese a linear regression was used. A Pearson Product moment correlation analysis was done to test whether there is a significant relationship between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and intrinsic goal pursuits.

To assist with the analysis of the data, subscales for basic psychological needs, namely those of relatedness, competence and autonomy were created. The three basic psychological needs are further categorized into need satisfaction and need frustration. Both need satisfaction and need frustration are formed using three positively worded and three negatively worded items respectively. Satisfaction of needs is comprised of the odd items and Frustration of needs is comprised of the even items. Need satisfaction scores and Need Frustration scores are computed for each need (6 subscales scores in all) as indicated in Table 3.3 (See Appendix D). As for the various life goals of wealth, fame, image, personal growth, relationship, community and physical health form the life goals and aspirations that adolescents aspire to. The category of Extrinsic Goals was formed using the life goals of wealth, fame and image. The Intrinsic Goals were formed using the remaining life goals of personal

growth, community and relationship. The life goal of physical health was not used in forming the category for intrinsic goals as it can be seen as being both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature.

### **3.9 Ethical Statement**

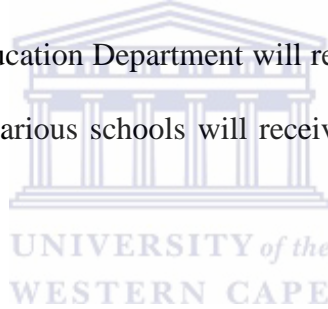
Complex ethical issues surround any field of research and more so when the chosen sample consists of either children or adolescents. Schenk & Williamson (2005) state that extra provision must be made when youth are involved in a study, as they are more vulnerable than adults.

The following ethical considerations were taken into account. The University of the Western Cape Higher Degrees Senate Committee as well as the Western Cape Education Department granted ethical approval. Permission was also sought from principals and teachers to conduct the study at the school. Participating schools, principals, teachers, Grade 11 learners and their parents were fully informed about the nature of the research, its area of inquiry, the aims and objectives of the study, as well as the intended procedure (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Learners assent forms (Appendix C) were issued to the learners. An Information sheet (Appendix A) provided clarity and details regarding the aims and objectives of the current study. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also addressed, ensuring the participants' right to anonymity, and voluntary participation was respected. Thereafter a convenient date and time was set with the participating schools, so as to not interfere or disrupt the school time table. It became evident during the pilot study that parents were unresponsive to the invitation for their children to participate in the study; therefore parental consent became a problem. The Dean of the Law faculty at the University of The Western Cape, who is a sought-after

practitioner in the area of Children's Rights and on the University's Ethical Committee was then approached, and after consultation a solution was found. The research study was found to have no impending threat, a revised ethical statement was then presented to the Ethics Committee, which now allowed for the adolescents' to consent and/or withdraw from the study at any time. Parental consent of the Grade 11 learners was then waived, and learners were now able to provide their own assent for their participation in the study, which was considered valid. This revised ethical statement was accepted and implemented in the data collection procedure.

Feedback of the results will be provided to the various stakeholders (that is the participating school principals, teachers and participants) upon the completion of the thesis. The Western Cape Education Department will receive a copy of the completed thesis; the principals at the various schools will receive a summarized report of the findings.



### **3.10 Conclusion**

The research design employed within this study is that of a cross-sectional design, used to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. This chapter also detailed information regarding the sample, the research instruments, the data collection process and the data analysis of the study. Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the processes of data collection and data analysis, so as to ensure the principles of confidentiality and anonymity with regards to participant identity.

The next chapter presents the results of the data analysis.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis conducted for this study. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS). This chapter presents the results as (1) descriptive information regarding Grade 11 learners enrolled at 3 secondary schools in the North education district, basic psychological needs and the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners (2) the relationships between the variables, and (3) the influence of basic psychological needs on the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners. Table 4.1 below provides for the abbreviations of variable codes used in the analysis of the data.

**Table 4.1: Variable Codes**

<i>Abbreviation:</i>	<i>Variable:</i>
<b>WEALTH</b>	Wealth - Extrinsic Goal
<b>WEALTHImp</b>	Wealth Importance
<b>WEALTHLikeli</b>	Wealth Likelihood
<b>FAME</b>	Fame - Extrinsic Goal
<b>FAMEImp</b>	Fame Importance
<b>FAMELikeli</b>	Fame Likelihood
<b>IMAGE</b>	Image - Extrinsic Goal
<b>IMAGEImp</b>	Image Importance
<b>IMAGELikeli</b>	Image Likelihood
<b>PG</b>	Personal Growth - Intrinsic Goal

<b>PGImp</b>	Personal Growth Importance
<b>PGLikeli</b>	Personal Growth Likelihood
<b>REL</b>	Relationship - Intrinsic Goal
<b>RELImp</b>	Relationship Importance
<b>RELLikeli</b>	Relationship Likelihood
<b>COMTY</b>	Community - Intrinsic Goal
<b>COMTYImp</b>	Community Importance
<b>COMTYLikeli</b>	Community Likelihood
<b>HEALTH</b>	Health - Intrinsic Goal
<b>HEALTHImp</b>	Health Importance
<b>HEALTHLikeli</b>	Health Likelihood
<b>INTGOALS</b>	Intrinsic Goal Index
<b>EXTGOALS</b>	Extrinsic Goal Index



#### **4.2 An overview of the analyses**

The hypotheses for this study were formulated on the basis of the aims and objectives of the study.

- Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between basic psychological needs and goal pursuits.
- Hypothesis 2: Both the satisfaction and the frustration of basic psychological needs are significant contributors to the variation in the pursuit of intrinsic and extrinsic goals of the learners.

### 4.3 Internal Consistency of the Instrument

This study used two instruments to measure the variables under study. These were the Basic Measure of Psychological Needs (BMPN) (Sheldon & Gunz, 2009; Sheldon & Hilpert, 2012) and the Goals and Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). The BMPN measures the satisfaction and frustration of the adolescents' basic psychological needs while the Goal and Aspiration index measures the identification of both intrinsic and extrinsic goals these adolescents are aspiring to. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instruments (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 illustrate the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the Grade 11 learners' satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs along with their extrinsic and intrinsic goal pursuits.

**Table 4.2: Internal consistencies of the measures  
Basic Measure of Psychological Needs (BMPN) Scale**

<b>Items</b>	<b><i>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></i></b>
<b>Relatedness</b>	
Relatedness Satisfaction	0.68
Relatedness Frustration	0.59
<b>Competency</b>	
Competency Satisfaction	0.63
Competency Frustration	0.60
<b>Autonomy</b>	
Autonomy Satisfaction	0.56
Autonomy Frustration	0.55
<b>Need Satisfaction</b>	0.71
<b>Need Frustration</b>	0.53

**Table 4.3: Internal consistencies of the measures  
Aspiration Index**

Item	Alpha
Extrinsic Goals	0.62
Intrinsic Goals	0.73

Cronbach Alpha coefficients above 0.75 are deemed to be acceptable, while 0.60 is considered to be moderately acceptable (Anastasi, 1982).

The Basic Measure of Psychological Needs (Sheldon & Gunz 2009; Sheldon & Hilpert, 2012) was used to measure the satisfaction and frustration of needs. It is an 18-item instrument scored on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from 1=not at all true to 4= very true. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the six 3-item BMPN subscales found coefficients of 0.68 and 0.59 for relatedness need satisfaction and frustration, 0.63 and 0.60 for competency need satisfaction and frustration and 0.56 and 0.55 for autonomy need satisfaction and frustration. The reliability analysis for the construct of need satisfaction was 0.71, need frustration was 0.53. The Cronbach alpha obtained for need frustration is relatively low 0.53, although according to Schmitt (1996), low levels of criterion reliability are not seen to weaken validity coefficients, and therefore measures with low levels of alpha may still be useful.

The Aspiration Index (Ryan & Kasser, 1996) was used to measure the intrinsic and extrinsic goal perspectives of adolescents. The Aspiration Index consists of 7 categories of Aspirations with 5 specific items in each category, which are scored on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from 1=not very important/ likely to 4= very important/ likely. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the Aspiration Index were 0.62 for extrinsic goals, and 0.73 for intrinsic goals.

#### 4.4 Description of the study sample

Table 4.4 presents the demographic characteristics of Grade 11 learners currently enrolled in three public schools in the Western Cape Education Departments, North District. These characteristics include age, gender, ethnicity, parental marital status, and so on.

The demographic results in (Table 4.4) indicates that there were more females (n= 149 [56.4%]) than males (n=115 [43.6%]) who participated in the study. The results indicate that the majority of the participants' parents were married (n=154 [58.3%]), and the least number indicates that their parents were living together but were not married (n=12 [4.5%]). In terms of ethnicity the majority of the participants in the Western Cape Education Department's North School District identified themselves as Coloured (n=156 [59.1%]), followed by Black African (n=74 [28.0%]), White (n=27 [10.2%]), and the least being Indian/Asian (other) comprising (n=7 [2.7%]) of the population. The living arrangements of participants' home environment, indicated that most participants lived with both parents (n=152 [57.6%]), only (n=80 [30.3%]) lived with only their mothers, while (n=14 [5.3%]) lived only with their fathers. Some participants also indicated that they lived with guardians and/or other care-givers (n=18 [6.8%]). The majority of the participants indicated English to be their home language (n=133 [50.4 %]), followed by that of Afrikaans (n=63 [23.9%]), with less than half speaking IsiXhosa (n=58 [22.0%]), and a few (n=10 [3.8%]) indicating other languages as their home language.



**Table 4.4: Demographic descriptions of the participants**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Total Sample n=264</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	115 (43.6%)
Female	149 (56.4%)
<b>Parental Marital Status</b>	
Married	154 (58.3%)
Live together but not married	12 (4.5%)
Single and not live together because they never been married	36 (13.6%)
Single because he/she is widowed	24 (9.1%)
Single because he/she is divorced	35 (13.3%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Coloured	156 (59.1%)
Black African	74 (28.0%)
White	27 (10.2%)
Other	7 (2.7%)
<b>Living arrangements</b>	
Both Parents	152 (57.6%)
Only mother	80 (30.3%)
Only father	14 (5.3%)
Guardian/caregiver	18 (6.8%)
<b>Home Language</b>	
English	133 (50.4 %)
Afrikaans	63 (23.9%)
IsiXhosa	58 (22.0%)
Other	10 (3.8%)

#### **4.5 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables**

This section looks at Means (*M*) and Standard Deviations (*SD*) for the basic psychological needs of the participants as well as for those of the goals and

aspirations of the learners. The mean scores and standard deviations are represented in the Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 to Table 4.28.

#### 4.5.1 Basic Psychological Needs

Table 4.5 represents the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) for need satisfaction and need frustration found within the 3 subscales of basic psychological needs, as well as the total sample's need satisfaction and need frustration

**Table 4.5: Basic Psychological Needs**

<b>Items</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b><i>Mean</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>
<b>Relatedness</b>			
Relatedness Satisfaction	263	2.95	0.70
Relatedness Frustration	263	2.29	0.80
<b>Competency</b>			
Competency Satisfaction	263	2.63	0.70
Competency Frustration	263	2.52	0.83
<b>Autonomy</b>			
Autonomy Satisfaction	263	2.84	0.72
Autonomy Frustration	262	2.42	0.78
<b>Need Satisfaction</b>	263	2.81	0.51
<b>Need Frustration</b>	262	2.41	0.64

The results in Table 4.5 indicate that the participants' needs were generally satisfied ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ). Table 4.5 indicates learners' need for relatedness satisfaction to be highest ( $M=2.95$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ), followed by autonomy satisfaction ( $M=2.84$ ,  $SD=0.72$ ), and then competency satisfaction ( $M=2.63$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ). Learners expressed their highest need frustration to be that of competency frustration ( $M= 2.52$ ,  $SD= 0.83$ ).

## 4.5.2 Goals and aspirations of learners


The overview of the goals and aspirations of the participants is provided in this section. This section provides the results of the scores and standard deviation of the seven goal perspectives that is wealth, fame, image, personal growth, relationships, community and health. The results of the importance of each goal perspective, the likelihood of it happening and the total goal are shown in the tables which follow.

### 4.5.2.1 Extrinsic Life Goals

Extrinsic life goals are centred on those of wealth, fame and image. The overall mean scores and standard deviations are presented for the category of extrinsic life goals, but first a breakdown of the different items comprising the life goals is depicted.

#### WEALTH

**Table 4.6: Wealth Importance**



Items	Total Sample		
	N	Mean	SD
<i>Wealth Importance</i>			
To be a very wealthy person	264	2.98	0.86
To have many expensive possessions	264	2.23	1.00
To be financially successful	264	3.51	0.65
To be rich	264	2.55	1.06
To have enough money to buy everything I want	264	3.09	0.92

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not important to 4= Very Important

Table 4.6 indicates that *to be financially successful* ( $M=3.51$ ,  $SD= 0.65$ ) was a very important life goal. Participants also indicated that the life goal *to have enough money to buy everything I want* ( $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=0.92$ ) was also deemed important. The least important life goal in the wealth category was identified as *to have many expensive possessions* ( $M=2.23$ ,  $SD=1.00$ ).

**Table 4.7: Wealth Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Wealth Likelihood</i>			
To be a very wealthy person	264	2.98	.74
To have many expensive possessions	264	2.70	.80
To be financially successful	264	3.28	.68
To be rich	264	2.72	.88
To have enough money to buy everything I want	264	3.02	.83

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

Table 4.7 shows that the majority of participants indicated that the attainment of *to be financially successful* ( $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=.68$ ) would in all likelihood be attained. This was followed by the life goal *to have enough money to buy the things I want* ( $M=3.02$ ,  $SD=.83$ ). The least likely of aspirations to be attained were identified as *to be rich* ( $M=2.72$ ,  $SD=.88$ ) and *to have many expensive possessions* ( $M=2.70$ ,  $SD=.80$ ).

**Table 4.8: Wealth Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Wealth	262	2.91	0.56
Wealth Importance	262	2.87	0.65
Wealth Likelihood	263	2.94	0.59

The results in Table 4.8 indicate that wealth likelihood scored higher ( $M=2.94$ ,  $SD=.0.59$ ) than wealth importance ( $M=2.87$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) for the total sample of participants.

**FAME****Table 4.9: Fame Importance**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Fame Importance</i>			
To have my name known by many people	264	2.62	1.01
To be admired by many people	264	2.94	0.98
To be famous	264	2.00	1.12
To have my name appear frequently in the media	264	2.00	1.09
To be admired by lots of different people	264	2.69	1.02

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not important to 4= Very Important

Table 4.9 indicates the results for the total sample in relation to the extrinsic goal of fame. The majority of participants indicated the most important aspiration was *to be admired by many people* ( $M = 2.94, SD = 0.98$ ). The least important aspiration as identified by participants within the extrinsic goal of fame, was *to have my name appear in the media* ( $M = 2.00, SD = 1.09$ ).

**Table 4.10: Fame Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Fame Likelihood</i>			
To have my name known by many people	264	2.79	0.81
To be admired by many people	264	2.92	0.83
To be famous	264	2.14	1.07
To have my name appear frequently in the media	264	2.12	1.02
To be admired by lots of people	264	2.76	0.90

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

The likelihood of attaining fame is depicted in Table 4.10. Most of the participants identified *to be admired by many people* ( $M = 2.92, SD = 0.83$ ) as being most likely to be attained. The aspiration indicated to be the least likely to be attained among the majority of participants was *to have my name appear frequently in the media* ( $M = 2.12, SD = 1.02$ ).

**Table 4.11: Fame Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Fame	263	2.50	0.72
Fame Importance	263	2.45	0.82
Fame Likelihood	263	2.54	0.69

Table 4.11 indicates that fame likelihood was regarded higher ( $M = 2.54, SD = 0.69$ ) than fame importance ( $M = 2.45, SD = 0.82$ ).

## IMAGE

**Table 4.12: Image Importance**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
To successfully hide the signs of aging	264	1.91	1.02
To have people comment often how attractive I look	264	2.16	1.04
To keep up with fashion in hair and clothing	264	2.55	1.09
To achieve the 'look' I've been after	264	2.65	1.04
To have an image others find appealing	264	2.72	1.05

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not Important to 4= Very Important

Table 4.12 indicates that the majority of participants rated the aspiration *to have an image that others find appealing* as most important ( $M = 2.72, SD = 1.05$ ). The aspiration deemed the least important within the category of image as indicated by participants was *to successfully hide the signs of aging* ( $M = 1.91, SD = 1.02$ ).

**Table 4.13: Image Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Image Likelihood</i>			
To successfully hide the signs of aging	264	2.13	1.02
To have people comment often how attractive I look	264	2.60	.93
To keep up with fashion in hair and clothing	264	2.81	.93
To achieve the look I've been after	264	2.76	.92
To have an image others find appealing	264	2.70	.82

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

The results in Table 4.13 indicate that the participants rated the attainment of *to keep up with fashion in hair and clothing* as the most likely to be attained ( $M = 2.81, SD = 0.93$ ). The aspirations *to achieve the look I have been after* ( $M = 2.76, SD = 0.92$ ) and *to have an image others find appealing* ( $M = 2.7, SD = 0.87$ ) were also rated highly among participants as likely aspirations to be attained.



**Table 4.14: Image Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Image	262	2.50	0.65
Image Importance	262	2.40	0.75
Image Likelihood	273	2.60	0.63

The overall life goal of image likelihood, as depicted in Table 4.14 was rated higher ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) than image importance ( $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ )

#### 4.5.2 Intrinsic Life Goals

Intrinsic life goals are centred on those of personal growth, relationships, and community. The overall mean scores and standard deviations are presented for the category of intrinsic life goals, but first a breakdown of the different items comprising the life goals is depicted.

## PERSONAL GROWTH

**Table 4.15: Personal Growth Importance**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Personal Growth Importance</i>			
To grow and learn new things	264	3.77	0.46
At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete	264	3.66	0.55
To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life	264	3.76	0.49
To know and accept who I am	264	3.86	0.37
To gain insight into why I do the things I do	264	3.30	0.70

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not important to 4= Very important

Table 4.15 depicts the results for the intrinsic goal of personal growth. The aspiration which the majority of participants deemed important was *to know and accept who I really am* ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ), followed by *to grow and learn new things* ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ), and *to choose what I do instead of being pushed along by life* ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ). Participants rated the least important aspiration as *to gain insight into why I do the things I do* ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ).

**Table 4.16: Personal Growth Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Personal Growth likelihood</i>			
To grow and learn new things	264	3.53	0.59
At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete	264	3.29	0.73
To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life	264	3.43	0.75
To know and accept who I am	264	3.64	0.61
To gain insight into why I do the things I do	264	3.05	0.78

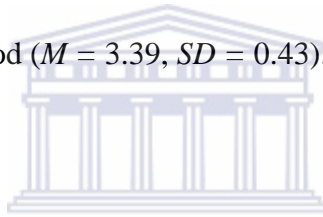
Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

Table 4.16 indicates the responses among participants based on the likelihood of the attaining the aspirations within the life goal of personal growth. The majority of participants indicated that the aspiration *to know and accept who I am* most likely to be attained ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). The least likely aspiration to be attained was indicated to be *to gain insight into why I do the things I do* ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ).

**Table 4.17: Personal Growth Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personal Growth	263	3.53	0.32
Personal Growth Importance	263	3.67	0.30
Personal Growth Likelihood	263	3.39	0.43

The overall results for the intrinsic life goal of personal growth, as indicated in Table 4.17 shows that personal growth importance is rated higher ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ), than personal growth likelihood ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ).



## RELATIONSHIPS

**Table 4.18: Relationship Importance**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Relationship Importance</i>			
To have good friends that I can count on	264	3.72	0.58
To share my life with someone I love	264	3.72	0.62
To have committed , intimate relationships	264	3.26	0.89
To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love	264	3.72	0.58
To have deep enduring friendships	264	3.28	0.82

*Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not important to 4= Very important*

Table 4.18 indicates the responses obtained by the participants for the intrinsic goal of relationships. The majority of participants indicated the aspiration *to have good friends that I can count on* ( $M = 3.72, SD = 0.58$ ), followed by the aspiration *to share my life with someone I love* ( $M = 3.72, SD = 0.62$ ), and the aspiration *to feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love* ( $M = 3.72, SD = 0.58$ ) were seen to be rated as the most important aspirations.

**Table 4.19: Relationship Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Relationship Likelihood</i>			
To have good friends that I can count on	264	3.32	0.78
To share my life with someone I love	264	3.55	0.74
To have committed , intimate relationships	264	3.25	0.83
To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love	264	3.58	0.64
To have deep enduring relationships	264	3.12	0.79

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

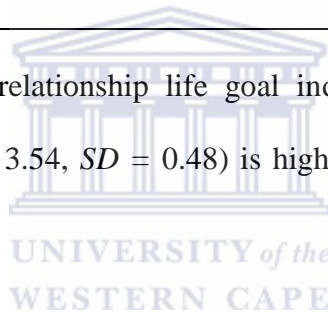
Table 4.19 depicts the results obtained for the likelihood in attaining the aspirations which form part of the relationship life goal. The majority of participants indicate the aspiration *to feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love* ( $M = 3.58, SD = 0.64$ ), followed by the aspiration *to share my life with someone I love* ( $M = 3.55, SD = 0.74$ ), as having the most likelihood of attainment. The aspiration

deemed the least likely to be obtained, was the aspiration *to have deep enduring relationships* ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ).

**Table 4.20: Relationship Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Relationship	263	3.45	0.45
Relationship Importance	263	3.54	0.48
Relationship Likelihood	263	3.36	0.51

The results for the overall relationship life goal indicate that the importance of relationship attainment ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) is higher than relationship likelihood ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ).



## COMMUNITY

**Table 4.21: Community Importance**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Community Importance</i>			
To work for the betterment of society	264	3.14	0.83
To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return	264	3.50	0.64
To work to make the world a better place	264	3.37	0.74
To help others improve their lives	264	3.46	0.66
To help people in need	264	3.58	0.64

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not important to 4= Very important

The intrinsic goal of community is depicted in Table 4.21. The aspiration rated the most important was *to help people in need* ( $M = 3.58, SD = 0.64$ ). The least important aspiration among participants was indicated to be the aspiration *to work for the betterment of society* ( $M = 3.14, SD = 0.83$ ).

**Table 4.22: Community Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Community Likelihood</i>			
To work for the betterment of society	264	2.86	0.83
To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return	264	3.38	0.69
To work to make the world a better place	264	3.10	0.83
To help others improve their lives	264	3.24	0.76
To help people in need	264	3.38	0.74

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

Table 4.22 indicates the results among participants for the likelihood of attaining the aspirations that comprise the category of community. The aspiration deemed most likely to be attained among participants is the aspiration *to help people in need* ( $M = 3.38, SD = 0.74$ ), followed by the aspiration *to assist people who need it, asking nothing in return* ( $M = 3.38, SD = 0.69$ ).

**Table 4.23: Community Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Community	263	3.30	0.51
Community Importance	263	3.41	0.53
Community Likelihood	263	3.19	0.56

Table 4.23 indicates that overall the goal for community importance is higher ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ), than community likelihood ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ).

## HEALTH

**Table 4.24: Health Importance**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Health Importance</i>			
To be physically healthy	264	3.69	0.55
To feel good about my level of physical fitness	264	3.37	0.71
To keep myself healthy and well	264	3.69	0.52
To be relatively free from sickness	264	3.58	0.65
To have a physically healthy lifestyle	264	3.61	0.60

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not important to 4= Very important



Table 4.24 depicts the results among the participants for the life goal importance of health. Most of the participants rated the aspiration *to be physically healthy* ( $M = 3.69$ ;  $SD = 0.55$ ), and the aspiration *to keep myself healthy and well* ( $M = 3.69$ ;  $SD = 0.52$ ) as being most important.

**Table 4.25 Health Likelihood**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Health Likelihood</i>			
To be physically healthy	264	3.39	0.66
To feel good about my level of physical fitness	264	3.16	0.78
To keep myself healthy and well	264	3.51	0.66
To be relatively free from sickness	264	3.09	0.86
To have a physically healthy lifestyle	264	3.33	0.76

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1=Not likely to 4= Very likely

Table 4.25 indicates the likelihood for health attainment among the participants. The majority of participants identified the aspiration *to be physically healthy* ( $M = 3.39$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ) as most likely to be attained. The aspiration with the least likelihood of being attained was identified by participants as *to be relatively free from sickness* ( $M = 3.09$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ).

**Table 4.26: Health Life Goal**

Items	Total Sample		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Health	263	3.44	0.41
Health Importance	263	3.59	0.39
Health Likelihood	263	3.30	0.53

Table 4.26 shows the overall responses for the life goal of health. Table 4.26 indicates that health importance is higher ( $M = 3.59$ ;  $SD = 0.39$ ) than that of health likelihood ( $M = 3.30$ ;  $SD = 0.53$ ).

**Table 4.27: Means and Standard Deviations of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals**

Goals and Aspirations	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Intrinsic Goals	264	3.43	0.32
Extrinsic Goals	264	2.63	0.56
Wealth	264	2.95	0.56
Fame	264	2.50	0.72
Image	264	2.50	0.65
Personal growth	264	3.53	0.32
Relationships	264	3.45	0.45
Community	264	3.30	0.51
Health	264	3.45	0.41

Table 4.27 indicates that the participants' capacity for personal growth ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.32$ ), followed by that of relationships ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) and community orientation were amongst the highest. The participants also indicated that wealth and was also quite important to them as indicated by the results ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). The participants attached lower values to fame ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) and image ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ). Finally, the results in table 4.26 also indicate the overall score of participants has shown that they are more intrinsically motivated ( $M = 3.43$ ;  $SD$

=0.32) as compared to being extrinsically motivated ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). The results indicate that overall participants are more inclined towards personal growth, relationships and community goals rather than wealth, fame and image goals.

#### 4.6 Relationships between the variables of the study

This section provides the inferential statistics relating to the association between the basic psychological needs and the goals of the participants, the significance and the prediction of intrinsic and extrinsic goals by the satisfaction and/or frustration of needs. The correlations and regression analysis results of the study are also presented. For the purpose of this study, this section will only present on parenting styles.

##### 4.6.1 Basic Psychological Needs and Goals and Aspirations

This section shows the correlations between the basic psychological needs and goals and aspirations of the participants using *Pearson's Correlation*. The results in this section are specific to objective 3; “Do basic psychological needs influence the identification of goals and aspirations of the Grade 11 learners?”

**Table 4.28: Correlations between basic psychological needs and goals and aspirations**

Correlations			
	INTGOALS	EXTGOALS	SATIS
EXTGOALS	.32**		
SATIS	.47**	.32**	
FRUST	.12	.10	-.11

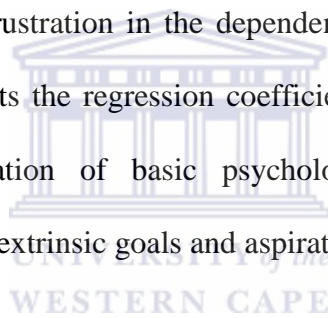
\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.28 suggests that there is a significant positive relationship between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and intrinsic goal pursuits ( $r = .47$ ;  $p <$

0.01). This indicates that a significant relationship exists between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and intrinsic goal pursuits. Hypothesis 1 is not rejected. Other relationships that were found, indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and extrinsic goal pursuits ( $r=.32, p < 0.01$ ). No other relationships were found; therefore the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the frustration of basic psychological needs and the pursuit of extrinsic goals was rejected.

#### **4.7 Predicting goals and aspirations**

A linear regression was used to test the prediction of the independent variables of need satisfaction and need frustration in the dependent variables of goal pursuits. This section therefore presents the regression coefficients, which indicate how the satisfaction and the frustration of basic psychological needs predicted the identification of intrinsic and extrinsic goals and aspirations of the participants.



**Table 4.29: Need Satisfaction and Need Frustration predictions in the variation of intrinsic and extrinsic goals**

	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>
<b>INTRINSIC GOALS</b>							
Constant			2.59				
Need Satisfaction	74.98	.000	.30	.04	.47	8.60	.000
Constant			3.32				
Need Frustration	2.03	.16	.04	.03	.08	1.42	.16
<b>EXTRINSIC GOALS</b>							
Constant			1.63				
Need Satisfaction	30.08	.000	.36	.07	.32	8.73	.000
Constant			2.42				
Need Frustration	2.79	.10	.09	.05	.10	1.64	.10
$\Delta R^2 = 0.22, p < .001$ [ <i>Need Satisfaction- Intrinsic goal pursuits</i> ] $\Delta R^2 = 0.10, p < .001$ [ <i>Need Satisfaction- Extrinsic goal pursuits</i> ]							

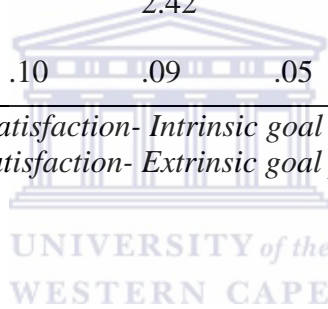


Table 4.29 indicates that intrinsic need satisfaction predicts 22% ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.22$ ) of the variance in intrinsic goal pursuits. The Satisfaction of basic psychological needs accounts for a statistically significant proportion of variance in intrinsic goal pursuits, and the Satisfaction of basic psychological needs is a significant predictor of intrinsic goal pursuits ( $F=74.98$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore the results indicate that need satisfaction predicts 10% ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.10$ ) of the variance in extrinsic goal pursuits. These results show that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs does indicate a statistically significant proportion of variance in extrinsic goal pursuits and that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs is a significant predictor of extrinsic goal pursuits ( $F= 30.08$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). No other predictions were found between the variables.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study examined the influence of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations. This chapter provides a discussion of the results in relation to the aims and objectives of the study, as well as the conceptual framework as discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter provides more insight into the impact of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations of the Grade 11 learners who participated in the study. The conclusion of this chapter focuses on the limitations of the study as well as the recommendations for further research.

#### 5.2 The Basic Psychological Needs of Adolescents (Grade 11 learners)

Developmentally learners in Grade 11 find themselves within the period of adolescence. As discussed in chapter 2, adolescence is a period of transition, characterized by tremendous pressure, and change, mentally, physically and emotionally (Bray et al., 2010; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002; and Thom et al., 1998). Vansteenkiste et al.(2006) postulate that there are a number of internal processes that affect the adolescents' level of motivation and therefore what they aspire to. Furthermore "some adolescents are able to and successfully negotiate the tasks of adolescence, while others find themselves blocked or frustrated in their development" (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002: 194). Within the framework of SDT, the natural trajectory towards self-enhancement and self-motivation is based upon the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2003; Kasser & Ryan, 2006; 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004, 2005a, 2006). These are the need for relatedness,

autonomy and competence, and they are said to be innate and universal, directing human motivation and development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore the aspirations which any human being, and thus adolescent, aspires to, is said to be attained due to the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs. If all these needs are met, according to SDT, one is said to be self-determined and self-regulated, which results in and promotes healthy development (Soenens, 2006). *To determine the basic psychological needs of Grade 11 learners* as posited within the framework of SDT was one of the objectives of the study. The results as obtained within the study suggest that the majority of the participants' needs were generally more satisfied than frustrated. More specifically the results suggested that relatedness satisfaction rated highest among participants, followed by autonomy satisfaction and competency satisfaction. La Guardia and Ryan (2002), state that when relatedness need satisfaction is thwarted and/or frustrated within adolescents this could lead to an insecure base, from which not to explore and foster interpersonal relationships, beyond the self. It is therefore pleasing to see that the results report relatedness need satisfaction to be so highly rated among the participants, as it could be a possible indication that the majority of these adolescents possess secure attachments to the significant people in their lives, fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness. These findings are therefore consistent with previous literature which suggests that adolescents will generally adopt and/or assume roles and practices to feel more connected to their peer groups fostering relatedness among significant others (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002).

Much of the research that has been conducted within the context of SDT and basic psychological needs, has been done within many Western countries (Grouzet et al., 2005), and thus international literature supports the above findings and the notion that

when all three needs are met, the individual is said to be psychologically well (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2003; 2008; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Therefore one can assume, because these Grade 11 learners' needs are satisfied, that they are psychologically well, and will therefore develop to their fullest potential. One could also assume that the environments and social contexts in which these adolescents find themselves, be it home, school, with friends and/or family, are all supportive of need satisfaction.

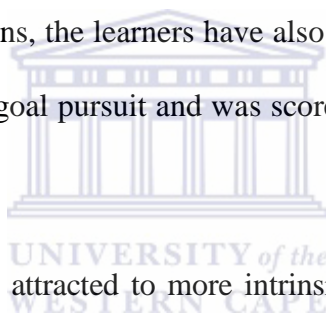
In SDT the view of adolescent development according to Milyavskaya et al., (2009) highlights the importance of a social context, which supports autonomy, competency and relatedness need satisfaction, as this leads to optimal wellbeing and outcomes for adolescents.

### **5.3 Setting goals for the future**

Life goals and aspirations have directed behaviour across extended periods of our lives (Niemic, Ryan & Deci, 2009). Grade 11 learners at secondary schools are in one such period. It is at this stage that Grade 11 learners in their last years of secondary schooling, face an array of critical development challenges such as deciding on a career path or opting for tertiary education. Thus within the framework of SDT the pursuit of certain goals and aspirations has implications for the wellbeing of the individual and society (Niemic et al., 2009). Furthermore Ingrid et al., (2002) posit that goals are the internal representations of desired outcomes. Self-Determination Theory also states that one's goals and aspirations are directly linked to whether or not an individual's needs have been satisfied and/or frustrated (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002).



Self-determination theory further posits that one's goals can be classified or distinguished into intrinsic goals, which are self-determined and self-regulated, and extrinsic goals, which are said to be non-self-determined, but instead exist as a result of external reward (Deci & Ryan, 2000). *To determine the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners* as framed within Self-Determination Theory was one of the objectives of the study. The objective to determine the nature of goals and aspirations of the learners has been achieved. The results suggest that the learners pursued goals that were collectively more intrinsic in nature. Intrinsic goals comprise of personal growth, relationships, and community. The learners emphasized the importance of personal growth, followed by that of relationships and community. Besides the overall goal toward intrinsic aspirations, the learners have also emphasized the importance of wealth, which is an extrinsic goal pursuit and was scored as the most important of all extrinsic goals pursued.



The findings that learners are attracted to more intrinsic goal pursuits, could suggest that , as learners are in the period of adolescence, they would have a natural inclination toward fostering personal growth, finding answers to the question ‘who am I?’, becomes increasingly important. Similarly, developing peer group as well as other interpersonal relationships outside the home, allows for the adolescent to feel that they belong. Lastly a sense of community orientation allows for the adolescent to develop a sense of active citizenship as part of being an adolescent. Additionally, adolescents could be seen to aspire to being wealthy , as popular culture is on the rise with pop stars and reality television shows luring youth to the luxurious lifestyle of the rich and famous, to name but a few. Furthermore, in a country such as South Africa, where the majority of people live in low socio-economic environments, young people would want to aspire to something better, with the focus often being on wealth. Within the category

of wealth, as discussed in chapter 4, most of the participants ranked the aspiration *to be financially successful* as a very important life goal, suggesting that it could be more than just the allure of glamour or wealth that these adolescents aspire to. It could be assumed that the pursuit of the extrinsic life goal of wealth is associated with the learner's vision of a better life, to be a better person, and to be of benefit to their communities and/or families. Grade 11 learners could be motivated by their circumstances, such as poverty or abusive home environments, by the state and attitudes of their school and teachers, and by their own perceptions of what life might be like after matric. The results also indicate that the participants aspire to the intrinsic life goal of community, which is surprising, as one almost expects the more extrinsic goal pursuits. This could suggest that we have young people who consider giving back to others and who aspire to collectivist, rather than individualist, thinking. A possible explanation for the latter could be the ethos by which many South Africans and thus their communities live, that of *Ubuntu*, "*I am because of you*", and so having an attitude of benevolence is only natural.

Within the context of SDT however, much research has centered on the pursuit of extrinsic goals, (that of wealth, fame and image) as lowering psychological wellbeing, and instead the pursuit of intrinsic life goals (that of personal growth, relationships and community) has been encouraged and said to promote development and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The pursuit of extrinsic goals is said to be the result of basic psychological needs being frustrated (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). When one is thus intrinsically motivated, one engages in the activity for inherent satisfaction; the experience is thus self-determined and organized, promoting self enhancement and the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). Intrinsic motivation is thus characterized by experiencing

autonomy and competence (La Guardia & Ryan 2002). Studies have also shown that, whereas the self-reported attainment of intrinsic aspirations was positively associated with wellbeing, the attainment of extrinsic aspirations was not (Ryan, Chirkov, Little, Sheldon, Timoshina, & Deci, 1999). The findings within this study are therefore supported by international literature regarding the pursuit and attainment of intrinsic goals. These grade 11 learners may therefore be said to be engaging in self-enhancing activities which are self-determined, and self-regulated, thus they are able to exercise their autonomy and competency, promoting optimal development and psychological well-being.

Much research has spoken to the negative effects of extrinsic goal pursuits. For example, several studies have shown that the pursuits of extrinsic goals are associated with negative health effects, such as depression and anxiety (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Literature within the framework of Self-Determination Theory in relation to goals and aspirations and wellbeing, as previously discussed in chapter 2, has centred on international research (Grouzet et al., 2005). According to Ingrid et al., (2009), the generalization of these international findings is yet to be tested in other cultures. When research is said to be done cross culturally internationally, the focus has largely been on studies conducted in America, Europe, and Asia, and to a lesser degree in non-Western, less rich countries (Ingrid et al., 2009). Furthermore Ingrid et al., (2009) posit that an individual's life goals and aspirations represent the context and social milieu in which they find themselves. Thus the pursuit of extrinsic goals as argued by Ingrid et al., (2009), as well as Rigby et al., (1992) may not be detrimental to an individual's wellbeing, but also enhancing.

#### **5.4 Two sides of a coin: Basic Psychological Needs and the influence on goals and aspirations**

Needs are seen to provide the basic motivation for human behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996). We therefore set goals in order to achieve and attain need satisfaction (Kasser & Ryan, 2001). Within the framework of Self-Determination Theory, we distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic goal pursuits. Intrinsic goal pursuits emphasize self-determined behaviour and centre on personal growth, self-acceptance and community. Extrinsic goal pursuits involve wealth, fame and image (Kasser & Ryan 1993; 1996). Intrinsic goal pursuits are satisfying to the ‘self’ promoting psychological wellbeing and optimal development, whereas aspirations towards extrinsic goals are negatively associated to mental health, and thus psychological wellbeing (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996, Williams et al., 2000).

The pursuit of certain goals is therefore said to have implications for the individual and/or society (Deci Ryan, 1985; 2000; Ingrid et al., 2009; Kasser& Ryan, 1993; Kasser et al., 1995). For example the pursuit of wealth and fame could have long term implications for the wellbeing of the individual as well as societal interrelationships; people are said to then be more superficial, apathetic and aloof. Thus when basic psychological needs are neglected or unsatisfied, an individual may experience difficulty in engaging in autonomously regulated behaviour, such as setting a goal to finish school (Strassberg et al., 2010).

The third and final objective of the study was thus to look at *the influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools*. The results suggest that a significant positive relationship does exist between the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and the

pursuit of intrinsic life goals. One could therefore assume that as the adolescents' basic needs for autonomy, relatedness and competency are satisfied, so too will they be more inclined towards fostering personal growth, community and relationships as their life goals. Correlations between the variables indicate that there were stronger significant positive correlations between the learners' satisfaction of basic psychological needs and extrinsic goal pursuits, specifically that of wealth.

Furthermore the results of the linear regression indicate that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs is in fact a predictor of both intrinsic as well as extrinsic goal pursuits. International literature within the framework of Self-Determination Theory in relation to basic psychological needs and goal content is therefore saturated by studies focusing on the former; that is the satisfaction of basic psychological needs leads to increased intrinsic goal pursuits and thus wellbeing, and the reverse is found for aspirations and goals which are more extrinsic in nature. Similarly studies in which individuals have been found to pursue extrinsic goals, all speak about need frustration leading to the latter (Williams et al., 2000; Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). Very little research has focused on the value of extrinsic goal pursuits in relation to psychological wellbeing. Within this study, the result that need satisfaction is a significant positive predictor of extrinsic goal pursuits is therefore in contention with previous research, as much of the studies which have been conducted in the area of goal pursuits maintain that extrinsic goal pursuits lower psychological wellbeing, and therefore do not foster self-actualization (Ryan et al., 1999; Sheldon & Kasser 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2003). It can therefore be stated that the research surrounding extrinsic goal pursuits as valuable to psychological wellbeing and thus human development is silent.

The pursuit of intrinsic goal pursuit is therefore favoured within the context of Self-Determination Theory (Kasser & Ryan, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Sheldon and Kasser (1998) found in a longitudinal study that an individual's wellbeing, that is his/her state of contentedness with the self, was enhanced by the attainment of intrinsic goals, such as better inter-personal relationships, and self-acceptance. Extrinsic goals such as the accumulation of wealth, social recognition and image, provided little benefit. International literature has looked at the construction of goal contents in undergraduates at universities across 15 cultures (Grouzet, et. al, 2005). The results yielded what importance undergraduate students placed on differing goals they were aspiring to. Two dimensions of aspirations were then found to be important namely that of (1) intrinsic versus extrinsic aspirations and (2) self-transcendent aspirations, that is being more spiritually inclined and enlightened versus hedonism, that is aspiring to more pleasure-seeking behaviour. A study by Schmuck, Kasser and Ryan (2000) explored the intrinsic and extrinsic goal structure and their relationship to the wellbeing of German and American college students. The findings in this study depicted that the goal contents of the two cultures were similar; both German and American college students, who placed greater importance on intrinsic goals, were seen to have higher rates of wellbeing, while the reverse was found in students who aspired toward extrinsic goals

In a South African sample, the results may not necessarily be the same as those established in previous research. As previously discussed, within Self-Determination Theory, people's life aspirations reflect the culture and economic conditions in which they find themselves (Ingrid et al, 2009). Furthermore Ingrid et al., (2009) state that extrinsic aspirations are not necessarily detrimental, but may well contribute to the psychological wellbeing of individuals, especially in less rich non-Western countries.

Rigby et al., (1992), argue that the pursuit of extrinsic goals may not be detrimental to well-being or hinder optimal development if they originate from the 'self'. Therefore it is likely that these learners are intrinsically motivated by extrinsic rewards. Therefore one could assume that for these learners the accumulation of wealth and success is seen or viewed as an investment for the betterment of their futures. These Grade 11 learners find themselves in a country, such as South Africa, which is culturally and socio-economically diverse (Hall & Lake, 2010). According to Hall and Lake, (2010) in 2008 it was estimated that 71 % of South African children lived in formal housing. It could therefore be assumed that the findings of Hall and Lake (2010) include adolescents and subsequently learners. These learners seek a better standard of living, wealth and/or fame in order to improve their circumstances. The question then becomes how we foster extrinsically motivated behaviour that is self-determined and self-regulated. Researchers Malmberg, Ehrman and Lithén, (2005) state that when adolescents set goals, they form part of their internal motivational process.

The current findings therefore suggest that there is a value of extrinsic goals in non-western countries, such as South Africa. The process and/or development relating to the 'internalization of a value' as becoming part of the self, may serve as a possible explanation as to why these learners whose basic psychological needs are met, still aspire to extrinsic goals. The learners could be seen to 'internalize the value' placed upon the aspiration *to be financially successful*. Therefore the importance of wealth and the likelihood of its attainment could be seen to provide financial stability and resources needed for the possibility of further self enhancement and self-regulated behaviour and growth among these Grade 11 learners

South Africa may be said to be an economically difficult country to grow up in. South African learners could therefore be naturally inclined to pursue both intrinsic as well as more extrinsic goals, as this would bring success, financial security and/or resources where none existed before, thereby promoting psychological wellbeing. No research exists within the South African context on basic psychological needs, goals and aspirations and the influence of basic psychological needs on the goal contents of adolescents in South Africa. These findings suggest that various other factors influence the relationship between basic need satisfaction and its relationship in the pursuit of goals and aspirations.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

Limitations of this study included;

- The parental consent for child participation, which was a challenge. In the initial stages of the implementation of the data collection for the main study, parents were unenthusiastic in their responses to the request for their child's participation in the study. The ethical committee was approached with consultation from the Dean of the Law Faculty at UWC, who is a specialist in Children's Rights, to assist in managing the problem. As this study was not considered a threat, a revised ethical statement was submitted to the ethics committee, which allowed adolescents to consent to or withdraw from the study. This was accepted and applied in the data collection process.
- Permission to conduct research at the schools was generally a challenge as principals felt that there was not sufficient time to allow for the data collection process. School rosters were a challenge and time for data collection had to be continually negotiated so that minimal disruption occurred at the school.



- Another limitation identified is the study's use of the cross sectional research design. This type of research design only allowed for one segment of the given population to be examined at one point in time, with one focus area, that of basic psychological needs and their influence on the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners. Given the use of the cross sectional correlational design, also means that one cannot talk about causal relations, but merely 'relations' between the variables. The study recognizes that these results may not be generalizable to the population of South African adolescent youth at large, but it is hoped that it may result in future and further study of the phenomenon, cross culturally within South Africa and Africa.
- A further limitation of the study was that the reliability coefficients, or Cronbach alphas, did not meet the conventional standards. Although according to Schmitt (1995), a reliability coefficient of 0.50 is not necessarily bad.
- The possibility of these results, therefore being blanketed to the rest of the adolescent youth in South Africa, is not possible. However this is not the intention, it is rather intended to be a premise for further research into these phenomena.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In South Africa a question put forth in relation to the goal content of Grade 11 learners, reads as follows: Although the study found that the participants were more inclined to intrinsic goal pursuits, we have to ask, is the pursuit of extrinsic goals detrimental to their wellbeing?

Previous research suggests that extrinsic goal pursuits are linked to an array of poor mental health and thus wellbeing outcomes. For example, research suggests that pursuing extrinsic goals was positively related to depression, higher levels of anxiety, narcissism, negative effects, and also negatively related to self-actualization, (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996). Can these findings that were conducted in more affluent Western countries become the prototype of South African adolescent learners and their well-being. As stated previously, Ingrid et al., (2009) suggest that this generalizability cannot be made. The findings of this study differ from those of Western research, and therefore suggest that there is a value of extrinsic goals in non-Western countries, such as South Africa, contributing to wellbeing. This study is the first of its kind to consider the influence of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners at secondary schools, and thus adolescence, in a South African and African context. The study is therefore intended to spark further research into the field of basic psychological needs and their value in the field of adolescent goals and aspirations, so that research and its outputs can move from an international to a more contextualized and South African approach.

## **5.7 Recommendations for further study**

**The following are suggestions for curriculum development, intervention and future research:**

- Factors such as culture, parenting styles and family structure should also be looked at as variables which could be seen to have a profound impact on the

satisfaction and/or frustration of basic psychological needs of adolescents, as well as the way in which their goals and aspirations are formulated.

- As the results indicate, this cohort of South African Grade 11 learners, are geared toward both intrinsic and extrinsic goal pursuits. And although as literature suggests extrinsic goal pursuits may not be detrimental to the adolescents' psychological wellbeing, it does not mean that intrinsic goal pursuits should not be fostered and/or encouraged within the period of adolescence. The national curriculum statement for Grades 10-12 (Department of Education, 2005), stipulates that goal setting, decision making and career counselling are part of the school curriculum, and are therefore taught at schools. How this information is relayed within the school context should be reviewed, with particular attention being given to not only goal content, but “why” adolescents set and aspire towards particular life goals, as the literature suggests that when adolescents set goals it is as a result of their internal motivational processes. Therefore a recommendation to the education department, may be to design a programme which looks at the “what” and “how” and “why” of goal setting in adolescence.
- Future research should also look at having a particular focus on the home and social contexts in which adolescents are found, as research suggests that the environment plays a pivotal role in the satisfaction and/or frustration of needs. Within the South African context this would be paramount, as our country is diverse not only in culture, but also in terms of the many social ills our young people face. Perhaps future research could look at the effect of socio-economic status, exposure to community violence, family structure, and thus parenting styles on the satisfaction and or frustration of basic

psychological needs, and how this in turn influences their goals and aspirations.

- The current study aimed to fill a void within South African research surrounding the period of adolescence, their basic psychological needs and goals and aspirations. It is hoped that further study may be undertaken within this realm, especially within the South African context, so as to bridge the gap between Western and Non-Western research, making the implementation of intervention strategies and the application of theory more homogenous and practical.



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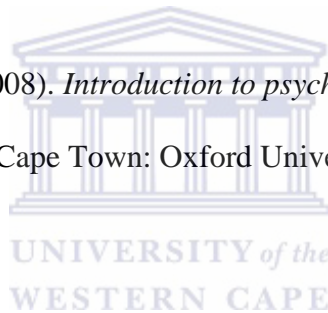
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## Appendix A



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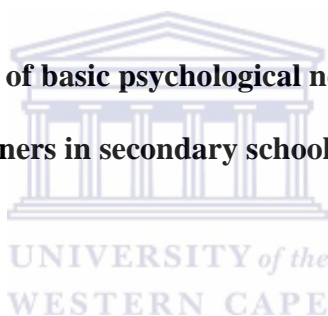
*Tel: +27 21-9592970/2277*

E-mail: [nroman@uwc.ac.za](mailto:nroman@uwc.ac.za)

## RESEARCH INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Parent / Guardian.

**Project Title: The influence of basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools**



**What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Lauren Schilder a Masters Student at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to voluntarily participate in this research project because you are Grade 11 learners at a secondary school. The purpose of this research project is to determine and examine the influence of basic psychological needs on the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners.

**What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire will ask you questions about:

- You, and the goals and aspirations you have for your future.
- Your parents, specifically, the relationship they have with you.

This questionnaire will be completed at school, with permission of your parents, principal and teachers at a time which is not disruptive to your learning. Completion of the questionnaire will be less than 30 minutes.

**Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, the information you provide will be totally private; no names will be used so there is no way that you can be identified as a participant in this study. The information will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality. Your name will not be reflected on the questionnaire. The information obtained from the survey will be collated with the information from other completed surveys. Therefore there will be no way to connect you to the survey questionnaire.

**What are the risks of this research?**

There are no known risks in participating in the study.

**What are the benefits of this research?**

Information about this topic is limited. This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools. Since information about this particular research in South Africa is relatively limited, this study will increase the knowledge for (1) parents, (2) teachers/school, (3) practitioners and (4) the broader society. Furthermore, this study will highlight the pivot role the fulfillment of basic psychological needs plays in in the goals and aspirations we have for our future.

**Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study. If you decide to participate in this research study, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop

participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

**Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?**

Every effort has been taken to protect you from any harm in this study. If however, you may feel affected you can be referred to your nearest community resource for assistance.

**What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by Lauren Schilder, a Masters Student in the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Lauren Schilder at: 073 751 4926 or email: 2411164@uwc.ac.za. Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact my supervisor: Dr. Roman (Supervisor – Chairperson – Social Work Department) 0219592277/2970 or email: nroman@uwc.ac.za.

**Appendix B**

<b>PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BY TICKING YOUR RESPONSE</b>					
<b>GENDER</b>	MALE			FEMALE	
<b>AGE</b>					
<b>GRADE</b>					
<b>NAME OF SCHOOL</b>					
<b>RACE</b>	COLOURED	BLACK AFRICAN	WHITE	INDIAN/ASIAN	
<b>I live with</b>	Both my parents	Only mother	Only father	Guardian/Caregiver	
<b>Home Language</b>	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Other	
<b>My parents are:</b>	Married	Live together but not married	Single and do not live together because they have never been married	Single because he/she is widowed	Single because he/she is divorced
<b>ASPIRATIONS</b>					
<p>Everyone has long-term Goals or Aspirations. These are the things that individuals hope to accomplish over the course of their lives. In this section, you will find a number of life goals, presented one at a time, and we ask you three questions about each goal. (a) How important is this goal to you? (b) How likely is it that you will attain this goal in your future? and (c) How much have you already achieved this goal thus far? Please <b>CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING (NOT AT ALL, MODERATELY OR ACHIEVED)</b> in answering each of the three questions about each <b><u>LIFE GOAL</u></b>.</p>					
<b>To be a very wealthy person</b>					
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely	
<b>To grow and learn new things</b>					
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	



How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have my name known by many people</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To successfully hide the signs of aging</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To work for the betterment of society</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be physically healthy</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have many expensive possessions</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be admired by many people</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To share my life with someone I love</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important

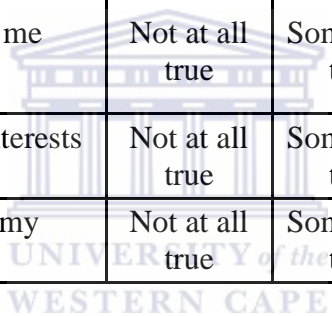
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have people comment often about how attractive I look</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To feel good about my level of physical fitness</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be financially successful</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be famous</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have committed, intimate relationships</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To keep up with fashions in hair and clothing</b>				

How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To work to make the world a better place</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To keep myself healthy and well</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be rich</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To know and accept who I really am</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have my name appear frequently in the media</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To achieve the "look" I've been after</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To help others improve their lives</b>				

How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be relatively free from sickness</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have enough money to buy everything I want</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To gain increasing insight into why I do the things I do</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To be admired by lots of different people</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have deep enduring relationships</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have an image that others find appealing</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To help people in need</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have good friends that I can count on</b>				

How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>To have a physically healthy life style</b>				
How important is this to you?	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
How likely is it that this will happen in your future?	Not likely at all	Somewhat likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>Basic Need Satisfaction in General</b>				
<b>Feelings I Have</b>				
<p>Please read each of the following items carefully, thinking about how it relates to your life, and then indicate how true it is for you. Use the following scale to respond:</p> <p>Please rate your agreement with the following statements, bearing in mind your feelings <b>during the last week.</b></p>				
1. I felt a sense of contact with people who care for me, and whom I care for.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
2. I was lonely.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
3. I felt close and connected with other people who are important to me.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
4. I felt unappreciated by one or more important people.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
5. I felt a strong sense of intimacy with the people I spent time with.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
6. I had disagreements or conflicts with people I usually get along with.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
7. I was successfully completing difficult tasks and projects.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
8. I experienced some kind of failure, or was unable to do well at something.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true

9. I took on and mastered hard challenges.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
10. I did something stupid, that made me feel incompetent.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
11. I did well even at the hard things.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
12. I struggled doing something I should be good at.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
13. I was free to do things my own way.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
14. I had a lot of pressures I could do without.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
15. My choices expressed my “true self.”	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
16. There were people telling me what I had to do.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
17. I was really doing what interests me.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true
18. I had to do things against my will.	Not at all true	Somewhat true	True	Very true



## THE PANAS

**This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you experienced these feelings and emotions over the PAST FEW WEEKS. Use the following scale to record your answers.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

<p>VERY SLIGHTLY OR NOT AT ALL</p> <p>A LITTLE</p> <p>MODERATELY</p> <p>QUITE ABIT</p> <p>EXTREMELY</p>
---

	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
Interested					
Distressed					
Excited					
Upset					
Strong					
Guilty					
Scared					
Hostile					
Enthusiastic					
Proud					
Irritable					
Alert					
Ashamed					
Inspired					
Nervous					
Determined					
Attentive					
Jittery					
Active					
Afraid					



**Appendix C**



**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

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**E-mail: [nroman@uwc.ac.za](mailto:nroman@uwc.ac.za)**

**ASSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**Title of Research Project:**

**The influence of basic psychological needs on the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools**

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Witness.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Study Coordinator's Name: Dr N Roman**  
**University of the Western Cape**  
**Private Bag X17, Belville 7535**  
**Telephone: 021 959 2277/2970**  
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## Appendix D

**Table 3.3 Basic Measure of Psychological Needs Categories**

Category	Questions	
	Need Satisfaction	Need Frustration
<b>Relatedness</b>	<b>Question 1</b> I felt a sense of contact with people who care for me, and whom I care for.	<b>Question 2</b> I was lonely
	<b>Question 3</b> I felt close and connected with other people who are important to me.	<b>Question 4</b> I felt unappreciated by one or more people important people.
	<b>Question 5</b> I felt a strong sense of intimacy with the people I spent time with.	<b>Question 6</b> I had disagreements or conflicts with people I usually get along with.
<b>Competence</b>	<b>Question 7</b> I was successfully completing difficult tasks and projects.	<b>Question 8</b> I experienced some kind of failure , or was unable to do well at something.
	<b>Question 9</b> I took on and mastered hard challenges.	<b>Question 10</b> I did something stupid, that made me feel incompetent.
	<b>Question 11</b> I did well even at the hard things.	<b>Question 12</b> I struggled doing something I should be good at.
<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Question 13</b> I was free to do things my own way	<b>Question 14</b> I had a lot of pressures I could do without.
	<b>Question 15</b> My choices expressed my “true self”.	<b>Question 15</b> There were a lot of people telling me what I had to do.
	<b>Question 17</b> I was really doing what interests me.	<b>Question 18</b> I had to do things against my will.



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