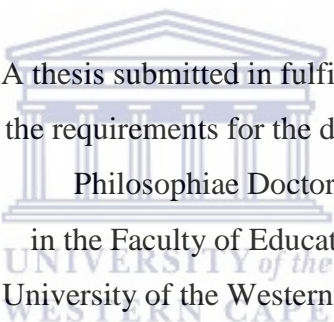


**CRITICAL THEORY, TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING
AND MINDFULNESS: A CASE STUDY OF A
MINDFULNESS TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Liza Hamman

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and a pediment, overlaid with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' in a light blue, semi-transparent font.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
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KEY WORDS

Awareness of emotions

Awareness of the body

Critical Theory

Emancipation

Emancipatory learning

Embodied learning

Mindfulness

A Western Perspective on Learning

Transformative learning

Transformative Learning Theory



ABSTRACT

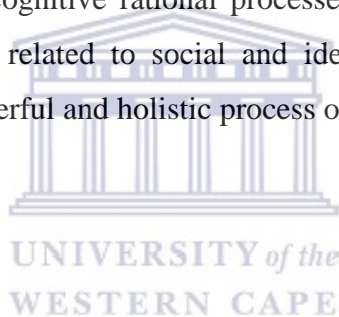
Mindfulness and the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programme is becoming increasingly popular in the Western world. These days, there are many institutes and organisations that support and promote mindfulness, while there is also a growing body of research and academic literature on the topic. Yet, despite the implicit connection to social change, the focus of secular mindfulness in the Western world has primarily remained on the benefits that mindfulness hold for the individual. This notion prompts the question whether there is a relationship between mindfulness and social change.

The key theoretical constructs that constitute the theoretical framework of my study include Habermas's critical theory and his emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, and Mezirow's transformative learning theory, which expanded the Habermasian theory in terms of adult education and learning. Guided by my theoretical framework, the primary research question was formulated as follows: 'What are the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change?'

In order to address this research question, I selected a case study research approach and collected data using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. For my empirical investigation I selected, as my case study, an MBSR programme offered in Cape Town, South Africa. The data were collected from 55 adult learners who participated in the programme. To my knowledge, this is the first academic research study that investigates the MBSR programme in the field of adult education and learning in a South African context.

Using thematic and narrative data analyses methods, I discovered that for several participants, learning mindfulness through participating in the MBSR programme, prompted embodied learning. Therefore, the concept of 'embodied learning through mindfulness' emerged prominently in the data analysis. The new knowledge that my study has generated, recognises the body as a site of knowledge production and learning. Similarly, the new theoretical perspectives that have emerged from my study, suggest that embodied learning through mindfulness can support the facilitation of emancipatory learning with the potential to generate social change.

My choice of a theoretical framework has raised a number of interesting theoretical challenges. Emancipatory embodied learning, prompted by mindfulness during the MBSR programme, can transform Western perspectives on learning. A Western perspective on learning is based on the principle that the mind functions separately from and dominates the body. A critical theoretical framework is reflective of this Western perspective on learning because of its emphasis on rational processes to create knowledge. However, embodied learning through mindfulness, challenges these dominant perspectives on learning and creates the aperture for social change. The study further found that mindfulness and participation in the MBSR programme did not enable adult learners to recognise the cultural and ideological forces that determine how they learn. However, it encouraged them to learn in a new way, through embodied learning, which was not in line with the dominant cultural influences they were accustomed to. This finding suggests that mindfulness has the potential to support a more holistic approach towards emancipatory learning which does not confine emancipatory learning to cognitive rational processes. I propose that, in combination with cognitive knowledge related to social and ideological issues, mindfulness can promote and support a powerful and holistic process of emancipatory learning.



DECLARATION

I declare that *Critical theory, transformative learning and mindfulness: a case study of a mindfulness training programme* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



Liza Hamman

May 2018



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ERIC	Education Resource Information Centre
FEMQ	Five-facet Mindfulness Questionnaire
FMI	Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory
IMISA	Institute of Mindfulness South Africa
KIMS	Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills
MAAS	Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale
MARC	Mindfulness Awareness Research Centre
MBAT	Mindfulness-based Art Therapy
MBCAS	Mindfulness-based Cognitive Approach for Seniors
MBCAS	Mindfulness-based Cognitive Approach for Seniors
MBCP	Mindfulness-based Childbirth and parenting
MBCT	Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy
MB-EAT	Mindfulness-based Eating Awareness Training
MBEC	Mindfulness-based Elderly Care
MBI	Mindfulness-based Intervention
MBRP	Mindfulness-based Relapse Prevention
MBSR	Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction
MiEN	Mindfulness in Education Network
MMFT	Mindfulness-based Mind-Fitness Training
MMFT	Mindfulness-based Mind-fitness-training
US	United States

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

I have been interested in mindfulness and methods that cultivate awareness of the present moment and reflection for many years. I read about mindfulness for the first time in 2009, while I was doing my master's degree in adult education and learning. During one of the compulsory modules I was introduced to mindfulness in relation to adult education and learning. From there my interest in mindfulness, the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme, and the practices and methods that cultivate mindfulness, grew out of my own need to lead a more meaningful and fulfilling life and to reduce my stress. At the time I was working full-time while studying part-time and I realised that I needed to learn how to actively manage my stress levels and find a more constructive way to deal with the pressures of everyday life. Therefore, my own journey with mindfulness started on a very personal note, with the need to address my own challenges.

After reading extensively about the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, I started meditating and writing in a journal on a regular basis, both methods that are known to cultivate mindfulness. I have been meditating and journaling for more than eight years now in an attempt to enhance my own mindfulness. I can report that although I did not experience any significant external changes, I have experienced inner change. I have found that my ability to handle stressful situations has improved. Additionally, I find it easier to consider situations from the perspective of another person, to act more empathetically, and increasingly have found myself becoming more concerned about the well-being of others and particularly the environment. While deepening my own mindfulness practice I have become increasingly aware of the potential impact it could have on society if other people had a similar experience. This sparked my interest in mindfulness and the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme in relation to social change and adult education and learning. What would the impact on society be if people were less stressed, more satisfied with their lives, more open to alternative perspectives, and more empathetic towards others? Based on my own experience with practising mindfulness and how it benefited me and those around me, I became interested in investigating how cultivating mindfulness could

benefit society and how learning to be mindful could make a difference in the lives of adults.

When I started my PhD journey in 2012 there were, to my knowledge, only three MBSR programmes offered in South Africa. These programmes were offered in Cape Town, Durbanville and Johannesburg at that stage. I enrolled for the MBSR programme offered in Durbanville, a residential suburb in the northern outskirts of Cape Town, to personally experience the MBSR programme and curriculum. Although I did not enrol in the MBSR programme with the intention to be a participant observer, in retrospect it seems that there may have been moments of unconscious participant-observation that enabled me to conceptualise this study. During my participation in the MBSR programme I realised that the focus of the programme was more on mindfulness than stress reduction, therefore I centred my research around mindfulness rather than stress reduction.

In 2013 the Stellenbosch University introduced the post-graduate certification course in Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBIs) aimed at developing facilitators in mindfulness. In 2015 the first cohort, of which I was a member, completed this course. During the post-graduate certification course I was taught by renowned mindfulness teachers who have been practising and teaching mindfulness internationally for many years. I developed a deeper understanding of mindfulness itself, different types of MBIs that are offered worldwide, and I honed my facilitation techniques. The course was a combination of academic work and experiential practice, which was much more intense than the MBSR programme curriculum. I participated in two four-day retreats and two seven-day retreats, which were included in the course curriculum, during these two years. Spending time in retreat, I later learned, is one of the requirements of the Institute of Mindfulness based in Massachusetts, in the United States, for mindfulness facilitators. These retreats are focused on intense mindfulness practice, which promotes insight and supports continued practice, as well as the process of facilitating mindfulness. Since completing the post-graduate certification course, I have attended retreats annually to practise my own mindfulness.

During my PhD journey I progressed from a mindfulness practitioner with a strong academic interest in the practice to being a qualified facilitator who offers courses and workshops. In 2016 I facilitated my first MBSR programme as a qualified mindfulness

facilitator. I have therefore participated in the MBSR programme, both as a participant and as a facilitator, which has allowed me to gain a more holistic view of the MBSR programme. Other graduates who completed the certification course offered at Stellenbosch University have also progressed to facilitate MBSR programmes throughout South Africa. MBSR programmes are now offered in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, George, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria. In addition to qualifying as an MBI facilitator in 2014, I had the opportunity to attend and participate in the first conference on mindfulness in South Africa. The conference was hosted by Stellenbosch University and brought well-known scholars to South Africa. Apart from attending this conference, I also presented a paper on mindfulness and the potential for mindfulness to promote social change. During this conference I also met, interacted with, and learned from several well-known academics who have researched mindfulness internationally.

Developments in South Africa, as well as my own experiences since 2012, demonstrate that although mindfulness in South Africa is still in its infancy stage, there is definite progress towards developing a strong community of mindfulness practitioners as well as an academic body of knowledge pertaining to mindfulness in South Africa. It is my hope that this study will contribute towards the continued growth of mindfulness, both as an academic field of research and a community of practitioners, in South Africa. Furthermore, I hope this study will contribute to the academic body of knowledge, both locally and internationally, in respect of mindfulness and adult education and learning, and more specifically the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

1.2. RESEARCH AIMS

With the above mentioned aspirations in mind, I developed the following research aims for this study:

- a) To generate new knowledge on the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.
- b) To investigate how mindfulness can facilitate emancipatory learning.
- c) To investigate how mindfulness can facilitate social change through emancipatory learning.

- d) To determine to what extent mindfulness training supports and enables transformative learning.
- e) To investigate the reasons for the growing popularity of mindfulness in the Western world.

1.3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Although mindfulness was traditionally cultivated in the Eastern world, globalisation has had a significant impact on the Western way of life as a result of the infiltration of Eastern cultures into Western society. As exposure to the Eastern way of life increased in the West, traditional Eastern practices that cultivate mindfulness, such as yoga and meditation, have gained popularity in contemporary society. Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 146) describes it as a phenomenon “that represents a cultural shift that may be only in its infancy”.

When considering the developments in the field of mindfulness training, it is important to understand the meaning of the concept, which will also be explored in more detail in Chapter 5. Mindfulness is believed to be the foundation of Buddhism, but it overlaps contemplative practices in many other traditions, for example the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian traditions (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Ledoux, 1998; Kahane, 2009). Although it is traditionally cultivated in a Buddhist context, it is essentially a particular way of paying attention, in a non-judgemental way, to what is occurring in both the body and the mind at a given moment. It is looking at oneself, in the spirit of enquiry and understanding (Newman, 2008). Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. xxxv) defines mindfulness as “the awareness that arises by paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally”. Similarly, Brady (2008, p. 94) describes mindfulness as an awareness of the thoughts, feelings and physical sensations that occur in the mind and it fosters the individual’s ability to notice, observe and accept these thoughts, feelings and sensations while not getting carried away by them.

The increased interest in mindfulness and the practices that cultivate mindfulness are not only reflected in the academic literature; there is also a growing number of institutes and organisations based in the Western world that promote research in mindfulness. In the United States, for instance, the Centre for the Contemplative Mind in Society¹

¹ www.contemplativemind.org

awards fellowships to academics who wish to incorporate mindfulness in the programmes they teach, and both the Mind and Life Institute² and the Fetzer Institute³ offer research grants to researchers who would like to investigate mindfulness. Additionally, the Mindfulness Awareness Research Centre (MARC)⁴, associated with the University of California in Los Angeles, offer both traditional, face-to-face courses, as well as online courses in mindfulness. In the United Kingdom, both Bangor University⁵ and the University of Aberdeen⁶ in Scotland offer masters programmes in mindfulness, while the Oxford Mindfulness Centre⁷ investigates mindfulness in relation to depression. Locally, the Institute for Mindfulness South Africa (IMISA)⁸ and Mindfulness Africa⁹ promote and encourage the practice of mindfulness. Furthermore, the University of Cape Town¹⁰ includes mindfulness in their MBA programme while Stellenbosch University offers a post-graduate certification course in facilitating MBIs in association with IMISA.

Along with these organisations and institutions, and others not mentioned in this study due to limited space, there are also global online networks that promote mindfulness, such as the Mindfulness in Education Network (MiEN)¹¹. The body of research in the academic literature is also increasing. Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. xxix) observes that the influence of mindfulness is steadily expanding beyond the medical field to include other fields such as “education, law, business, technology, leadership, sports, economics and even politics, policy and government”. It is his belief that these trends will contribute towards creating a better world for all and that mindfulness influences well-being and health, not only on a psychological and biological level, but also on a social level.

Yet, despite the implicit connection to social change, the focus of secular mindfulness in the Western world has mainly remained on the benefits that mindfulness holds for the individual. The academic literature review revealed hundreds of studies that link mindfulness to the physical and mental health of the individual. Many authors assert

² www.mindandlife.org

³ www.fetzer.org

⁴ <http://marc.ucla.edu>

⁵ www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/postgraduate-courses

⁶ www.abdn.ac.uk/education/degrees-programmes/studies-in-mindfulness-pgcertpgdipmsc-407.php

⁷ <http://oxfordmindfulness.org>

⁸ www.mindfulness.org

⁹ www.mindfulnessafrica.org

¹⁰ www.gsb.uct.ac.za

¹¹ www.mindfuled.org

that teaching people to live in a mindful manner will reduce stress, decrease burnout, promote self-esteem and a sense of well-being, enhance awareness of multiple perspectives, induce the ability to reframe contexts and engage in the present moment. Furthermore, it will promote equanimity and wakefulness and enhance the ability to focus one's attention (Ferguson, 1976; Langer, 1993; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Miller & Nozawa, 2005; Newman, 2008; Shapiro, Brown & Astin, 2011). The literature review showed that most studies on mindfulness focus on the individual benefits associated with mindfulness, while only a few touched on mindfulness in relation to social change. Authors such as Orr (2002), Hyland (2009), Cho, (2010), Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015), Chari (2016), and Walsh (2016) write about mindfulness in relation to social change and although Kabat-Zinn (2003, 2011, 2013) refers to the influence of mindfulness on society, the overwhelming literature is focused on the individual.

This lack of focus on social aspects pertaining to mindfulness in the Western world, triggers criticism from authors such as Walsh (2016, p. 106), who point out that mindfulness is often “taught to promote a greater satisfaction and success in one’s current life situation, without encouraging a radical shift in consciousness, that challenges the sources of personal dissatisfaction and their manifestation in culture and society more broadly”. In this way, Walsh continues, mindfulness simply maintains the status quo and could actually be a way to maintain the dominant ideological forces that control society. This view is corroborated by authors such as Forbes (2012) and Purser (2015). Critics of secular mindfulness insist that mindfulness in the Western world does not connect it with social issues in the way it is connected to social change in the traditional Buddhist context (Purser, 2015; Walsh, 2016). Furthermore, Purser (2015) posits that the focus of secular mindfulness programmes, such as the MBSR programme, is too much on internal processes.

Purser (2015) believes that current secular mindfulness programmes concentrate on the individual reasons for suffering while ignoring the social, political and economic reasons for suffering. Purser (2015, p. 43) observes that “the heart of mindfulness is a collective practice, that which unites people towards acting for the common good, which in turn provides the basis for human flourishing and social transformation”. Walsh (2016) proposes that in order to address the concerns pertaining to the individualisation of mindfulness, research on mindfulness should engage with critical

theory for theoretical and empirical considerations. In line with Walsh's suggestions, the present study uses a critical theoretical framework to explore a closer connection between mindfulness and social change. Authors such as Oppenheim (2013), Walsh (2016) and Purser (2015, p. 42) point to the potential of mindfulness to "become a formidable force for a radical transformation of Western capitalist society". However, these authors believe that this transformation is only possible when we change what we view as 'normal'. In other words, the focus should shift from the individual uncritically accepting society to identifying the need for social change.

It is with the need for a theoretical perspective on social change in mind and the increasing awareness of mindfulness in the Western world, in particular in South Africa, that I critically analyse learning during a MBSR programme. As mindfulness in South Africa is not a well-known or widely accepted practice yet, I am directing my study towards incorporating mindfulness training and practice into mainstream activities, particularly in the field of adult education and learning. While the benefits of mindfulness in relation to individual development and wider social change may be clear to a growing number of individuals and organisations, there is a need for further research to which this study responds. My study addresses this need by investigating mindfulness, using the theoretical lenses provided by critical theory and transformative learning theory, which to my knowledge, is an original approach to mindfulness research. With this approach my goal is to create new knowledge that will address the research questions of this study.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1. Primary Research Question

The primary research question was formulated as follows: What are the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change?

1.4.2. Secondary Research Questions

Four secondary research questions were developed to address the primary research question, namely:

- a) How can mindfulness support the learning needs which are located in the domains of instrumental, communicative and emancipatory learning?

- b) To what extent can mindfulness prompt the emergence of a new domain of learning?
- c) How can mindfulness generate perspective transformation that contributes to critical transformative learning?
- d) How can mindfulness generate critical transformative learning that provides a foundation for social change?

1.5. A CRITICAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MINDFULNESS AND ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING

In this section I provide a brief overview of the critical theoretical framework that I developed to investigate relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change within the field of adult education and learning. This critical theoretical perspective will be explored and developed in more detail in later chapters and used to conceptualise new knowledge about adult learning during an MBSR programme.

1.5.1. Mindfulness and Social Change

In current academic debates about mindfulness, the focus is mostly on individual change but authors such as Kabat-Zinn (2011, 2013), Hyland (2009), Cho (2010), Thurman (1994), Rockefeller (1994) and Orr (2002) argue that mindfulness also has a social impact through its expanding influence on individual change. Others present a different view, with Walsh (2016), Purser (2015) and Forbes (2012), who contend that mindfulness in the Western world is not connected to social issues as it is in a traditional Eastern context. As Walsh (2016, p. 106) points out, mindfulness is often “taught to promote a greater satisfaction and success in one’s current life situation, without encouraging a radical shift in consciousness, that challenges the sources of personal dissatisfaction and their manifestation in culture and society more broadly”.

Despite their criticism of mindfulness in a Western context, Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015), Chari (2016) and Walsh (2016) assert that mindfulness has the potential to promote social change if the focus is shifted from the individual to society. Purser (2015, p. 42) points to the potential of mindfulness to “become a formidable force for a radical transformation of Western capitalist society”. Walsh (2016) explains that in order to address concerns about the individualisation of mindfulness, research on mindfulness should engage with critical theory for theoretical and empirical

considerations. Responding to the apparent tensions in the academic literature, my research converges with the recommendations of authors like Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015), Chari (2016) and Walsh (2016) and prompts a critical theoretical perspective to investigate mindfulness in relation to emancipatory learning and social change.

1.5.2. Critical Theory, Emancipation and Emancipatory Learning

Although the concepts of critical theory, emancipation and emancipatory learning have been discussed and debated for many years, they remain topical and current. When working in a critical theoretical framework, it is important to note that one of the goals of critical theory is human emancipation (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). More recently, McGehee (2012, p. 89) has confirmed this view by stating that “originators of critical theory aspired for the ultimate goal of human emancipation”. Even if this goal is not realised, critical theory is aimed at producing new knowledge concerning emancipation. Critical theorists accept that even if the goal of emancipation is unrealisable, the focus remains on individual, social, political and economic concerns in the hope that it will bring society closer to a more humane existence and an improved world (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 153). In line with the goals of critical theory, emancipation and emancipatory learning were central to this study. With this goal in mind, this study focuses on producing new knowledge, through theory building, that could make a positive contribution towards creating a better society.

Habermas, who is associated with the Frankfurt School in Germany, has been acknowledged as one of the most influential critical theorists in terms of adult education by authors such as Ewert (1991), Terry (1997), English and Mayo (2012), Brookfield (2005b), Crick and Joldersma (2007), Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) and Sandberg (2012). Therefore, I decided to engage the theoretical perspectives developed by Habermas for the purposes of this study. The theory of knowledge-constitutive interests developed by Habermas (1972, p. 308) identifies three categories of knowledge-constitutive interests, namely technical-cognitive interest, practical-cognitive interest and emancipatory-cognitive interest, which all three can be tied to the generation of knowledge. This study focuses on an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation which Habermas (1972) describes as knowledge which is created by critically questioning ourselves as well as the social systems that we are emerged in. The knowledge that is created through self-reflection “releases the subject from

dependence on hypostasized powers” (Habermas, 1972, p. 310). Therefore, self-reflection enables the recognition of ideological, cultural and social influences on the creation of knowledge.

Mezirow (1981) also focuses on cognitive processes when he identifies the emancipatory learning domain based on Habermas’s theory of knowledge-constitutive interests. According to Mezirow (1981, p. 3) the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests provides a theoretical foundation for a critical theory of adult education and learning with three domains of adult learning. Mezirow (1981, p. 16) elaborates as follows: “By clearly differentiating these three interrelated but distinct ‘knowledge constitutive’ areas of cognitive interest, Habermas has provided the foundation for formulating a comprehensive theory of adult education”. Each of the knowledge-constitutive interests translates into a distinctive domain of learning which can be used to further develop Habermas’s theory. Mezirow (1981, p. 3) claims that the third domain of learning, emancipatory learning, “is the least familiar of Habermas’[s] domains of learning” and that transformative learning theory can further develop this domain of learning. To support this claim Mezirow (2003, p. 61) states: “Habermas’s concept of emancipatory learning is here interpreted as the process of transformative learning”. Seen from this perspective, transformative learning denotes emancipatory learning, with the potential to support emancipation.

Similar to Habermas, Mezirow relies on rationality embedded in critical reflection to support transformative learning, which is an extension of emancipatory learning. Many authors, such as Langer (1993), Taylor (1997, 1998, 2001), Baumgartner, (2001)¹², Orr (2002), Duerr, Zajonc and Dana (2003) and Dirkx (2012) criticise this emphasis on rationality and acknowledge the need to explore emotions and “other ways of knowing” that can encourage transformative learning (Taylor, 2001, p. 220). In support of this view, Taylor (2001, p. 234) suggests that “by exploring research beyond the narrow confines of the adult education field, much can be learned about how transformative learning takes place”. Responding to the current debates in the academic literature, I have implemented the above-mentioned suggestion by Taylor in this study, by including mindfulness in the exploration of the transformative learning process and emancipatory learning.

¹² Baumgartner cite Clark and Wilson, 1991; Lucas, 1994; and McDonald, Cervero and Courtenay, 1999

Theoretical concepts related to critical theory and transformative learning theory were used to analyse and theorise the data. The theory building process is described by Brookfield (1992, p. 80) as a process of comparing the theoretical framework to concepts identified in the data. This is similar to the description of the process of theory building by other authors such as Lynham (2002) and Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012). Lynham (2000, p. 161) defines the theory building process as “the process or recurring cycle by which coherent descriptions, explanations, and representations of observed or experienced phenomena are generated, verified, and refined”. Lynham (2002) as well as Gioia et al. (2012) describe the process of theory building as a cyclical process during which a researcher is influenced by both the data collected during the research study and by the theoretical framework. According to Lynham (2002, p. 228) the “continuous and iterative conversation” between data, that represent the experienced phenomena, and the theoretical framework will result in theory building. During the present study, the data analysis and theory building processes were conducted simultaneously, to facilitate this “continuous and iterative conversation” as suggested by Lynham and to create knowledge about mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

Theory building within a critical theoretical framework in adult education and learning is aimed at highlighting how the process of adult learning is influenced by social factors, factors that are often beyond the influence of the educators in adult education and learning (Brookfield, 2005b, p. 6). My study revealed a Western perspective on learning that favours the mind over body in learning, which is a dominant social factor that influences learning during the MBSR programme. According to Orr (2002) and Berila (2014), this separation of body and mind indicates a domination of the mind over the body, where the activities of the mind are deemed as far more important and superior to the activities of the body. Orr (2002, p. 479) asserts that “Western culture has been organized around the mind/body binarism and the assumption that [the] mind is both radically distinct from and of greater worth than the body”.

The discovery of a Western perspective on learning was an unexpected development during the data analysis process which compelled me to return to the academic literature to re-analyse my findings. I did not anticipate at the commencement of this study or when I developed the critical theoretical framework of this study that the ‘body’ would

emerge as such a central concept, but I accommodated it by returning to the literature. I found that prominent authors in the field of adult education and learning such as Dirkx (2001, 2008) and Merriam et al. (2007) recognise the separation of the body and mind in Western society and learning. I also discovered that feminist and anti-racist theorists such as Michelson (1996, 1998) explore the domination of cognitive processes in learning. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 189) explain it as follows: “The whole person is made up of mind, body, and spirit. Rarely, however, are the body and spirit taken into account when we talk about learning. Our Western heritage has defined learning as a mental process that takes place in the mind”. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 217) continues: “The knowledge base that has developed around learning and adult learning has been shaped by what counts as knowledge in a Western paradigm”. This approach was also evident in my critical theoretical framework that did not include the body in theorising processes about learning. The framework thus reflected a Western perspective on learning. Furthermore, it highlighted an unexpected aperture in my critical theoretical framework that necessitated a revisit of the academic literature to re-interpret, re-analyse and theorise the data again.

Emerging academic debates concerning a Western perspective on learning reveals that critiques of the separation of the body and mind prompts a growing interest in a more holistic way of learning which includes the body. Learning that includes the body is often referred to as ‘embodied learning’. Freiler (2008, p. 40) describes embodied learning as “being attentive to the body and its experiences as a way of knowing”. This emphasis on the body in turn resonates with mindfulness because body awareness is central to mindfulness. Cebolla et al. (2016, p. 1298) affirm that “the body and, especially, body awareness are key elements in the practice of mindfulness”. These statements were echoed in the data of this study which reveal the close connection between mindfulness and embodied learning. Furthermore, Chari (2016) proposes that embodied learning signals a way to connect individual change to social issues and demonstrates that individual change can have an impact on these issues, in particular perspectives on the domination of the mind over the body. In this way, embodied learning with the potential to challenge a Western perspective on learning, can connect mindfulness to social change and address the research questions.

The data of this study show that through mindfulness, which in turn generates embodied learning, Western cultural perspectives on learning can be adjusted. This adjustment of a Western perspective on learning represents change that is not limited to the individual but can also potentially influence the broader society. In this respect I agree with the notion by Chari (2016) that mindfulness practices that create body awareness has the potential to support social change and concur with the view of Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) that mindfulness has the potential to promote social change if individual issues are connected to social issues.

1.6. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In this introductory Chapter 1, I have provided background information that focuses on the increasing awareness and practice of mindfulness in Western society. The Eastern roots of mindfulness are acknowledged and a short description of mindfulness has been provided. I consider the potential of mindfulness to support social change. However, I acknowledge that the focus in the academic literature pertaining to mindfulness is on individual change. Critics of mindfulness in the Western world, including Forbes (2012), Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) contend that mindfulness should be linked more closely to social change. This notion represents a gap in the academic literature on mindfulness that is addressed by this study. Furthermore, new knowledge is created through a process of theory building that analyses the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

In Chapter 2, I offer a review of the literature about adult education and learning as well as critical theory that reveals the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. The chapter provides a foundation to explore in later chapters, through the data analysis and theory building processes, the potential of the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme that encourages transformative and emancipatory learning. The reasons for the literature review were to demonstrate an engagement with a relevant body of knowledge that supports the research and the development of a critical theoretical framework in Chapter 3. Chapter 2 is particularly important as it establishes the context of the study, provides an understanding of the existing literature and identifies the gaps that this study can address.

Chapter 2 also includes a brief discussion of adult education and learning in general, adult education and learning in relation to mindfulness, and adult education and learning in the South African context. It is important to note that although the MBSR programme can be considered a mindfulness-based adult learning programme, there is very little evidence of mindfulness being explored and analysed in terms of adult education and learning. Furthermore, I did not find any evidence of research on mindfulness and adult education and learning in a South African context. This chapter provides an overview of theories of adult education and learning and identifies critical theory as a theoretical perspective that can frame adult education and learning.

In Chapter 3, I offer an outline of the process of theory building. Furthermore, I construct my critical theoretical framework in which I identify the key theories and theoretical concepts in the debates about critical theory, emancipation and emancipatory learning. It is this critical theoretical framework that I use for the purposes of generating new knowledge. The chapter outlines the current theoretical debates concerning critical theory and transformative learning theory and develops these theories and associated concepts, such as emancipation, emancipatory learning, transformation and transformative learning, as theoretical building-blocks. Habermas's (1972) theory of knowledge-constitutive interests lies at the heart of the development of my critical theoretical framework and how this theory influenced transformative learning theory. The theoretical concepts and debates outlined in this chapter create a theoretical opening to analyse the relationships between the empirical research and theory in later chapters and to investigate the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

Chapter 4 provides the research design and methodology of this study. The research questions are outlined, followed by a detailed description of the research site. The research approach, a critical case-study approach, focusing on the MBSR programme as a case study, is discussed followed by an explanation why case-study research is appropriate. The research methods are described, taking into account the research methods used by other researchers who have investigated mindfulness. It was decided at the commencement of the study to use both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to collect data and each research instrument is described in detail. A discussion of the pilot study is included in this chapter and provides an overview of how

the pilot study was conducted and which changes were made to the research instruments as a result of the pilot study. The data collection process, the selection of participants and how the data were captured and stored, are also explained. Chapter 4 also includes the consideration of the data analysis process. The data analysis process is vital for the interpretation of the data as empirical evidence to substantiate and develop theoretical arguments. The data analysis processes, thematic and narrative, are described. Finally, Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues that were considered prior to conducting the research.

Chapter 5 presents the case description of the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme which is at its core an educational approach. It outlines the academic literature that contributes to the conceptualisation of the MBSR programme as an educational programme, which links it to adult education and learning and prompts the necessity to discuss the curriculum of the programme. In order to ensure a comprehensive discussion of the curriculum, the academic literature was reviewed to promote theorising and the creation of new knowledge on the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

The MBSR programme in particular is analysed in detail. It is concluded that the academic literature about the MBSR programme demonstrates that it is a well-known, widely researched programme. The philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the MBSR curriculum that provide the foundation for the development of this fast-growing field is discussed in this chapter. I note that most of the literature is focused on individual benefits and that there is a need to consider social benefits. I align my theoretical perspective with the academic arguments presented by Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015), Chari (2016) and Walsh (2016) that mindfulness has the potential to promote social change. However, the need for more research on mindfulness and social change is apparent, and one of the aims of this study is to address this gap in the literature.

Chapter 5 also includes a detailed discussion of the MBSR curriculum, the MBSR facilitator and MBSR adult learners. It is important to note that the adult learners who participated in study can all be considered middle class, which is a potential limitation of this study in terms of adult education and learning in South Africa. As part of the curriculum discussion, the subject matter of mindfulness is considered in detail. A

thorough understanding of the concept of mindfulness is vital for this study and theory building processes aimed at creating new knowledge. Other aspects that are highlighted in Chapter 5 are the programme site, the aims and objectives of the MBSR programme, as well as the curriculum content, methods and outcomes.

In Chapter 6, I describe the thematic data analysis process and how it supports the creation of new knowledge. Empirical evidence is described, interpreted, and analysed to substantiate and develop the theoretical arguments pertaining to mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. In the first section the adult learners' reasons for participation in the MBSR programme are analysed, with stress and anxiety being identified as the primary reasons for their participation. An organising theme of 'an emancipatory interest in learning' emerged when basic themes associated with participation were combined.

In the subsequent sections in Chapter 6, the organising themes of 'mindfulness of the body in mindful learning' followed by 'mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning' are identified and discussed. These themes illustrate that through mindfulness, adult learners who were previously unaware of their body and emotions, were able to acknowledge embodied experiences, indicating embodied learning. Combining the organising themes, I discovered the global theme of 'emancipatory mindful learning'. This global theme suggests the potential of mindfulness to emancipate adult learners from a Western perspective on learning that excludes the body and emotions from learning. The themes that emerged from the data were compared to my critical theoretical framework in order to theorise the data and create new knowledge. The data suggest that the body should be included in the emancipation process, informing theoretical concepts pertaining to critical theory, emancipation and emancipatory learning. These data provide the foundation or premise of new knowledge.

Chapter 7 focuses on an in-depth narrative analysis of the stories of six adult learners who participated in this study. Their stories demonstrate 'emancipatory mindful learning' as identified in Chapter 6. In this chapter I show how mindfulness and mindful learning as a result of the MBSR programme have made an impact on the lives of these adult learners. Furthermore, the stories of the adult learners have created new knowledge on the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. These adult learners' different stories, portrayed in Chapter 7, all reveal a new

awareness of the body and emotions which can be associated with embodied learning. Furthermore, their stories show a move away from a Western perspective on learning towards emancipation, which has the potential to support social change. The data provide a personal and detailed description of adult learners' experiences that inform theoretical concepts that clarify the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change by considering embodied learning.

In Chapter 8, I focus on conceptualising a critical theoretical perspective of adult education and learning, embodied learning and mindfulness. This is a departure from the critical theoretical framework that I developed for this study prior to the data analysis process which was based on rational, cognitive knowledge creation processes that constitute learning. However, the critical theoretical framework that I developed did not provide me with the tools to analyse the bodily and emotional aspects of learning that were central to this study. This limitation highlighted, similar to the data analysis process, that the body and emotions are often ignored when we consider learning and feminist and anti-racist theories that consider the body and emotions are often marginalised. Consequently, I had to return to the academic literature to validate the interpretation of the data.

In Chapter 8, I also present the findings of the study. I determine that the conceptualisation of relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change can be supported and developed by considering 'embodied learning through mindfulness' and 'the body as a site of knowledge production and learning'. Building on the new theoretical concepts that I identify and discuss in Chapter 8, I make recommendations for further research and theorising. Based on the findings of the study, I also make recommendations concerning mindfulness-based adult learning programmes, and adult education and learning programmes aimed at social change, and in particular adult education and learning programmes in a South African context. In closing, I present my conclusions and final reflections on the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING THEORY AND CRITICAL THEORY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of the study, the research aims and research questions that were investigated in the field of adult education and learning using a critical theoretical framework. In this chapter I offer a review of the literature on adult education and learning and critical theory that concerns the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. The literature review conceptualises the study and provides a foundation for exploring in later chapters, by means of a data analysis and theory building processes, the potential of the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme that encourages transformative and emancipatory learning. The critical theoretical framework will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Webster and Watson (2002, p. xiii) argue that “a review of prior, relevant literature is an essential feature of any academic project. An effective review creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge”. In a similar way, Rowley and Slack (2004), Boote and Beile (2005), Cronin, Ryan and Coughlan (2008) and Ridley (2008, p. 2) assert that a literature review is an opportunity to demonstrate that there has been engagement with the relevant body of knowledge pertaining to the research at hand. A literature review thus identifies the theories and previous research that may influence the research at hand, and it connects the research study to this body of research and identifies the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the literature. The literature review clearly states what is already known about the research topic at hand and identifies areas for further research.

The aim of this chapter is to establish a broad context for the research study, to demonstrate an understanding of the existing body of knowledge and to identify gaps in the literature that can be addressed by further research (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 4). As suggested by both Rowley and Slack (2004, p. 37) and Boote and Beile (2005, p. xvi), key themes in the literature were identified and the review was organised around these themes. Rowley and Slack (2004) specifically state that the structure of a literature

review depends on the literature and that there is not one way to structure a literature review. In this chapter, I structure the literature review around the main themes of this study which are adult education and learning and critical theory. In the first section I present an overview of adult education and learning in relation to mindfulness in a South African context. Following this, an overview of the theories of adult education and learning is presented. Although I acknowledge that there is an extensive literature about the theories of adult education and learning, it is beyond the scope of this study to review each theory in detail. A critical approach to adult education and learning, has been identified as the most appropriate for this study. In the following section critical theory, which forms the foundation of a critical approach to adult education and learning, is examined. The history of critical theory and the Habermasian influence on critical theory are considered in detail. Furthermore, the influence of Habermasian critical theory on adult education and learning is discussed in terms of the dialogues and debates in the academic literature on Habermas.

Rowley and Slack (2004, p. 32) as well as Boote and Beile (2005, p. xvi) suggest that usually articles in research journals are central to the literature review. Cronin et al. (2008) assert that journals are usually more contemporary than books as sources of information but that books should not be excluded from the process. When the literature review for this study was conducted, journals were prominent, although books were also consulted. The literature review provides discussions and clarification of concepts related to the theoretical framework of this study, and supports the development of a theoretical framework. Furthermore, I present the debates in the literature and identify similarities, differences and contradictions in the debates.

2.2. ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING

When one conducts a literature review it soon becomes evident that adult education and learning is a wide and diverse field. In the field of adult education and learning there are many different understandings that comprise adult education and learning. In some cases, the concept ‘adult education and learning’ simply refers to schooling that gives adults the chance to complete high school, while it could also refer to adult training for commercial purposes (English & Mayo, 2012). Merriam and Brockett (1997, p. 4) state that it is almost impossible to define the field because it is so large but what is important is to consider the meaning of the word “adult”. Yet, even this is not a simple task as it

may differ between cultures and societies. A person can be considered an adult for instance, based on age, or in relation to their role in society, or their level of maturity. Merriam and Brockett (1997, p. 5) refer to the work of Patterson (1979, as cited in Merriam & Brockett, 1997) when they determine that an adult can be defined as a person who has reached a certain age and has certain expectations related to their behaviour. Whether or not a person fulfils these expectations and display maturity is not relevant to the definition; it is the expectation of maturity that is central.

Merriam and Brockett (1997) also points out that it is important to distinguish between adult education and learning. They describe adult learning as a “cognitive process internal to the learner” (Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 6) while adult education is considered as “systematic, organized events intended to bring about learning”. Therefore, adult learning may exclude adult education but adult education includes adult learning. Based on these definitions of adult education and learning offered by Merriam and Brockett (1997), I propose that mindfulness training programmes, such as the MBSR programme, can be regarded as part of the field of adult education and learning. Furthermore, the MBSR programme can be deemed as a systematic, organised event aimed at learning. In the following section, I discuss adult education and learning in relation to mindfulness.

2.2.1. Adult Education and Learning and Mindfulness

According to authors such as Cullen (2011), Kabat-Zinn, (2011) and Santorelli (2014) the MBSR programme was developed as an educational programme. Santorelli (2014, para. 6) confirms that the MBSR programme has “an educational rather than a therapeutic orientation”. The educational orientation of the MBSR programme and the adult participants who participate in the MBSR programme, support my view that the MBSR programme can be included in the field of adult education and learning. Consequently, it was appropriate to survey the literature about adult education and learning and mindfulness. However, I found that knowledge on adult education and learning and mindfulness was very limited at the time when this study was conducted. This lack of knowledge pertaining to adult education and learning and mindfulness, confirms the view of Merriam and Brockett (1997) that many adult educators and learners are unaware that they are included in this wide and varied field as it seems that

mindfulness training are generally not explored and analysed in terms of adult education and learning.

However, I discovered a study by Reveley (2015) who analysed mindfulness in education from a Stieglerian perspective. Hyland (2009) considers mindfulness in relation to the ‘therapeutic turn’ in education and Yeganeh and Kolb (2009) explore mindfulness in terms of experiential learning theory. Other researchers, including Shapiro et al. (2011), point to the potential for mindfulness to support the development of transformative learning theory although they do not explore this further. Orr (2002), Berila (2014) and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) connect mindfulness to critical pedagogy which is rooted in critical theory. These authors agree that mindfulness can promote learning that challenges oppression. For instance, Orr (2002, p. 480) proposes that mindfulness “can be used to address oppressive ideologies and practices in the lives of students”. My literature review showed that although there has been some exploration of mindfulness by educational theorists, the academic literature is very limited and points to the need for further research and theory building.

In a South African context I could not find any academic studies that link mindfulness training to the South African field of adult education and learning. Yet, there are many authors who analyse adult education and learning and social change in a South African setting. In the following section I provide a short overview of adult education and learning in a South African context.

2.2.2. Adult Education and Learning in South Africa

In South Africa, not surprisingly with her history of oppression and domination, adult education and learning for social change is prominent in the academic literature. Authors that analyse adult education and learning in terms of social change include Rule (2004) who investigates dialogic spaces and social engagement in South African adult education. Walters (2005) analyses how social movements in South Africa shapes organisational and educational practices while Von Kotze and Cooper (2000) considers the potential of project-based learning to facilitate socially transformative learning. Similarly, Groener (2006) explores adult education and social transformation. Yet, the focus on adult education and learning for social change is not unique to South Africa as this trend is prevalent globally. For me, it prompts the question of how educational mindfulness programmes, aimed at adults, can contribute towards the goal of social

change. The importance of social change in adult education and learning thus strongly influenced the development of the aims and research questions of this study.

The tradition of adult education and learning for social change is rooted in the belief that the current socio-economic and political systems create inequality and oppression and that adult education and learning can challenge these systems (Baatjes & Mathe, 2004). In South Africa, with its history of apartheid, oppression and domination, the association of adult education and learning with social change is particularly prominent. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001, p. 303) confirm this view by stating that “since 1994 the new democratic South Africa has been in the process of social, political, economic and educational transformation aimed at developing an egalitarian and healthy society”. Social justice issues are also prominent for Msila (2007, p. 146) who refers to values adopted in the South African education system such as “democracy, social justice, non-racism, equality and reconciliation”. At the same time, Msila also notes that market-driven requirements are central to the South African education system. In a post-apartheid South Africa a new education system with the aim of transformation and reform was initiated at a time when the country was rejoining the global economy. As a result, adult education and learning was influenced by global practices driven by human capital theory, which focus on the needs of the market economy. Consequently, the hope that transformation could be achieved through adult education and learning has not realised (Aitchison, 2003; Chisholm, 2004, p. 3).

Shaped by human capital theory, there seems to be a narrow conception of adult education and learning for exclusively economic and market-related reasons (Unterhalter, 2003). Human capital theory rests on the premise that individual education will lead to economic growth and social benefits (Chisholm, 2004). This notion has initiated an adult education and learning sector, both in South Africa and globally, that is focused on market-driven goals and neglects to attend to the more traditional goals of adult education and learning. Gouthro and Holloway (2013, p. 41) explains:

Learning is increasingly defined as an endeavor whereby individuals must situate themselves in a competitive position in order to succeed in the global marketplace. Radical educators who believe that education should have a broader mandate need to explore alternative pedagogical approaches that will challenge adult learners to

think critically about social issues, political and economic structures and cultural concerns.

In light of the global and local trends in the adult education and learning sector and Gouthro and Holloway's (2013) call for exploring alternative pedagogical approaches that will promote critical thinking and social change, I explored alternative theories. These theories influence adult education and learning and have the potential to guide this study.

2.2.3. Theories of Adult Education and Learning

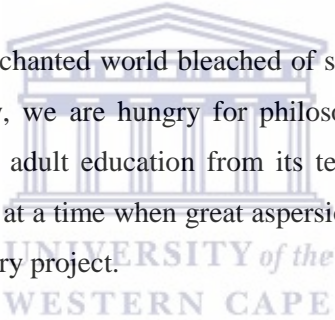
At present there are many approaches and theories on adult education and learning that are discussed in the academic literature. Illeris (2009, p. 7) states:

Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, many theories and understandings of learning have been launched. They have had different angles, different epistemological platforms and very different content. Some of them have been overtaken by new knowledge and new standards, but in general we have today a picture of a great variety of learning theoretical approaches and constructions, which are more-or-less compatible and more-or-less competitive in the global academic market.

Merriam et al. (2007), Merriam (2008a, 2008b), and Merriam and Bierema (2014) provide a comprehensive overview of adult education theories and perspectives in the 21st century. Merriam et al. (2007) identify five orientations to adult education. These are: (1) the behaviorist orientation, that focuses on technical training and careers, (2) the humanist orientation that centers on self-development, (3) the cognitive orientation that considers the mental processes involved in learning and (4) the social-cognitive orientation which is a combination of the behaviorist and cognitive approaches. The social-cognitive approach is based on the premise that people learn from observing each other. Finally, (5) the constructivist orientation which, according to Merriam et al. (2007, p. 291), "maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience" and learning is considered a cognitive process. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 293) further assert that "much of our adult learning theory is constructivist in nature". Within this orientation towards adult learning theory, these authors also include transformative learning theory as developed by Mezirow (1978, 1981). Transformative learning theory is about the "construction of meaning" and it is

“a highly cognitive process” (Merriam et al. 2007, p. 293). Mezirow (1994, p. 222) confirms this perspective by claiming: “The theory’s assumptions are constructivist”.

Within each orientation identified by Merriam et al. (2007) and briefly described in the preceding paragraph, there are a number of related perspectives. However, a detailed discussion of each of these orientations and their related perspectives fall beyond the scope of this study. Recently, a critical orientation to adult education and learning was also identified. Consequently, as a result of my emphasis on mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change during this study, I focused my literature review on a critical approach to adult education and learning. According to Merriam et al. (2007) and Merriam and Bierema (2014), a critical approach to adult learning is new in the domain of adult education and learning. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 253) states that a critical approach to adult education “consider[s] how knowledge is constructed and how the nature of its construction can liberate or dominate”. Welton (1995b, p. 11) describes it in this way:



In an increasingly disenchanted world bleached of spirituality and dominated by a manic market mentality, we are hungry for philosophical orientation and depth. This hunger has driven adult education from its tents in the wilderness into the depths of critical theory at a time when great aspersion has been cast upon the very notion of an emancipatory project.

It is this focus on liberation and freedom from domination that guided me towards considering a critical approach for this study. As pointed out earlier, South Africa is a country with a history of oppression and domination, and to me it seems that one of the aims of adult education and learning in South Africa should be to ensure that history never repeats itself. Recently, the need for critical engagement with social, political and economic issues has once again become apparent in South Africa with the rise of protests such as the ‘Fees must Fall’ student campaign, the ‘Economic Freedom Fighters’ political party and the ‘Black First Land First’ movement. As a result of the apparent need for critical engagement, it is important to investigate ways in which adult education and learning can promote goals such as freedom from oppression and domination. I conducted this study with the hope of contributing to this debate.

Consequently, I selected a critical approach to adult education and learning, aimed at emancipatory learning and emancipation. A critical approach to adult education and

learning is based on the foundation of what is known as ‘Critical Theory’ (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). In the following section critical theory is discussed in more detail.

2.3. CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory is described by Bentz and Shapiro (1998, p. 146) as an “attempt to understand, analyse, criticize, and alter social, economic, cultural, technological, and psychological structures and phenomena that have features of oppression, domination, exploitation, injustice and misery”. Welton (1995b, p. 13) adds that critical theory highlights the “dissatisfactions” caused by social structures and creates the potential for emancipation and emancipatory learning. He further asserts:

Critical theory is a theory of history and society driven by a passionate commitment to understand how ideological systems and societal structures hinder and impede the fullest development of humankind’s collective potential to be self-reflective and self-determining historical actors (Welton, 1995b, p. 14).

Researchers working from a critical theoretical framework aim to create knowledge that will not only assist people in understanding their situation, but will also help them towards changing their situation and in the process increase the scope for freedom, justice and happiness (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p.146).

This movement towards change is based on the arguments by Marx that “philosophers have always interpreted the world, whereas the point is to change it; the truth of theory is proven in practice” (Marx, as cited in Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 153). According to Bentz and Shapiro (1998, p. 153) many critical theorists believe that their work should be aimed at improving society, therefore it should be transformative. However, it should be noted that it is not necessary that it should be directly connected to change and transformation in society. Research with such specific aims, is the domain of what Bentz and Shapiro (1998) refer to as ‘critical action’ research. For a researcher working within a critical theoretical framework there is more than one way to approach a research project. The focus can be on investigating social systems and how social systems can transform an individual’s consciousness and experience. Or, another approach to critical research is to investigate how a transformation in consciousness can change an immediate situation. In my study, I investigated how a transformation in

consciousness can change an individual's immediate situation, but I also considered how this transformation can influence social change and the society at large.

2.3.1. The History of Critical Theory

When discussing critical theory in the context of adult education and learning, Welton (1995a) notes that it is important to consider the history and origins of the theory, saying that “a critical theory of adult learning and education does not make full sense without understanding the origins and impulses of critical theory” (Welton, 1995b, p. 12). Consequently, as suggested by Welton, the history and origin of critical theory is discussed in this section.

There are two traditions of critique that can be identified in contemporary critical theory, namely the critical theory that is associated with German origins and the philosophies that were developed in France. The starting point of both these traditions can be linked to the age of Enlightenment, which developed separately in Germany and in France. Within these traditions there are two pertinent researchers whose work can be identified: that of Jürgen Habermas, which can be associated with the German approach to critical theory, and the work of Michel Foucault, which developed within the French tradition (Isenberg, 1991; Biebricher, 2005).

Critical theory, associated with the German tradition, the Frankfurt School of thought and the work of renowned theorists and philosophers such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas, consists of a critique that is based on the vision of an alternative social and political order. It is concerned with human emancipation and the elimination of injustice (Morrow & Brown, 1994; Brookfield, 2005a). The founding fathers of the theory embraced ideals such as liberating people from dominant ideologies. These theorists were suspicious of dominant ideologies because they believed that ideological beliefs were based on thoughts and ideas that concealed social inequality (Carrington & Selva, 2010). Building on the work of the founding fathers of the theory, critical theory is relevant to the future and challenges the dominant social, political and economic order which, in turn, results in the need to investigate related concerns. These concerns include, for instance, the question of how dominant ideologies establish certain belief systems in society even though these beliefs do not serve the best interests of society (Brookfield, 2005b, p. 30).

The afore-mentioned German critical tradition is often associated with modernism. According to Habermas (1997), modernism is a term that describes the transition from the old to the new. The modern movement and theories included in that movement, such as German critical theory, is inspired by contemporary science and relates to the progress of knowledge as well as social and moral advancement. Habermas further observes that the philosophical discourse of modernity takes a critical position, based on radical and rational norms, which are a hallmark of the modern project (Isenberg, 1991). The French tradition of critical theory can be associated with a distinctively different approach to critique and is often referred to as 'post-modern'. A post-modern approach views the world from a different perspective and can be described as a discourse that challenges modernity (Huysen, 1984). It is aimed at a critique of beliefs about truth, knowledge, power and the self that are often taken for granted in modern theories (Flax, 1987, p. 624).

In the French tradition of critical theory, Foucault's research was central to the development of this line of reasoning. Foucault never developed a fully-fledged theory the way Habermas (1984, 1987) did, but in a well-published debate between the two he in fact challenged the concept of rationality that was so central to Habermas's work. Foucault's (1994) critical theory project is based on two main topics: the theoretical matter of reason and secondly, the practical problems associated with modernism. Foucault contends that in a modern society there are dominant social institutions, such as schools, hospitals and psychiatric wards that use their power to create knowledge. Therefore, the knowledge that is created is subjective, generates opportunities for domination and cannot be considered rational. Foucault (1994) questions the relationship between truth and authority as well as the rationalisation of knowledge that was created by power.

Foucault (1994) proposes that power relations were not sufficiently addressed in modern theories and therefore created opportunities to criticise modern rationality and reason. Foucault (1994) claims that power is not a property that belongs to the state or a dominant group; it is the result of positionality instead. Therefore, it can be evident at all levels of society. He further asserts that power creates knowledge and that it is impossible to create knowledge without power. He believes that a person should not

accept the principles of law, religion and science but rather seek to find knowledge within themselves.

Although the two traditions within critical theory support different approaches, both take a stand against positivism as an approach to the creation of knowledge and both are committed to an interdisciplinary approach (Agger, 1991, p. 126). However, Rodriguez (2011) claims that Habermas's work can provide the theoretical foundations for a study like this by enhancing conceptual understanding of theoretical concepts. Therefore, for the purposes of my study, the theory associated with Habermas is used to develop a critical theoretical framework and is central to the research question. Furthermore, the theory of Habermas aids the exploration and theorisation of the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

2.3.2. Critical Theory and the Habermasian Tradition

The Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory was established as a research institute in 1923 in the then German Weimar Republic. It was aimed at modifying and expanding the social theory of Marx to be more suitable to a new social reality and intellectual developments. Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse were the most eminent members of the original Frankfurt School but were forced into exile by Hitler in 1932. As a result they moved to the United States where their ideas began to influence the English speaking world. Horkheimer and Marcuse never returned to Germany, but Adorno did return to Germany after the Second World War and continued his work there. After the war, critical theory remained in the background until the rise of the social and student movements in the 1960s and 1970s, during which time there was a renewed interest in the critical theory associated with the Frankfurt School (Morrow & Brown, 1994; Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Lybeck, 2010).

The term 'critical theory' was used by the Frankfurt theorists to distinguish their approach from traditional theory, the latter theory being concerned with naturalistic objectives similar to the natural sciences, or otherwise known as 'positivism'. The Frankfurt theorists contend that a positivist approach to social research does not take into account historical developments that could influence society. Furthermore, social reality could not be analysed in a positivist manner that assumes an indifferent, value-free approach. Critical theorists reason that science is socially constructed and is also subjected to the spheres of ideology and human subjectivity. Therefore, these theorists

prefer an approach that favours immanent critique and dialectical reasoning and in this way they removed many of the guidelines followed by philosophers and social scientists at the time. Critical theorists believe it necessary that social research consciously engage with the process of transformation and that a critical theory should propose ways to promote a more just society based on values such as fairness, justice and compassion. In the critical tradition, the utility of a theory is evaluated based on its contribution to the philosophical vision of a moral and liberated society (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 14; Brookfield, 2005b, pp. 7-8; Baert & Da Silva, 2010; Lybeck, 2010, p. 93; Delanty, 2011, p. 72).

The original Frankfurt School had certain characteristics that distinguished it from other approaches. These included that they initially followed a Marxist perspective, although they eventually parted from the key features of orthodox Marxism. As a result they became more open to interdisciplinary theories that included methods from non-Marxist philosophies, social sciences and humanities. These were, among others, the sociology of Weber, the psychology of Freud and the cultural criticism associated with Nietzsche. These associations lead to the first effort to use empirical research methods (such as surveys) to test and refine propositions associated with the Marxist tradition (Morrow & Brown, 1994; Bentz & Shapiro, 1998).

The original Frankfurt School went through several phases that eventually directed them away from their identification with classical Marxist theory. During the first phase, the aim was to analyse factors that might contribute to a revolutionary working class and was characterised by interdisciplinary materialism, which referred to the historical materialism associated with Marx. However, they rejected the economic reductionism characteristic of Marxism and claimed that a materialistic approach could only be understood in terms of a consciousness of economic and social structures based in social being. It advocated a more subtle cultural theory and social analysis of class consciousness. This approach warranted empirical research and it incorporated non-Marxist sources. At this stage, the hope was that the German working class would mobilise and overthrow Hitler's Nazi regime and critical theory was aimed at being a vehicle to transform capitalism (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

When hope of an uprising in Germany despaired and the Soviet Union reverted to Stalinism, early critical theorists discarded their Marxist position, although they

remained opposed to the destructive results of capitalism at the time. During this second phase, the stability of capitalism was examined and it was concluded that the rise of the welfare state and the mass media's ability to distract the working class from what was believed to be their 'real' interests contributed to a general acceptance of capitalism. During this phase, Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse abandoned their interdisciplinary research programme that combined research and practice. Instead, they predicted a historical catastrophe that resulted in the failure of revolution and falsified Marxian revolutionary theory. These conclusions by prominent critical theorists caused a crisis in the philosophy of critical theory at the time (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 108)¹³.

The third phase emerged during the 1960s under the leadership of Jürgen Habermas, a student of Adorno. Habermas obtained from Adorno the concept of critical theory directed towards self-emancipation. Habermas responded to the challenges identified by the early Frankfurt School, which was to develop a research program aimed at identifying change potential. Although he was aware of the obstacles to achieve this goal, he believed that practical obstacles did not reduce the importance of theorising the conditions for transformation (Morrow & Brown, 1994 p. 186¹⁴; Baert & Da Silva, 2010).

Habermas radically revised critical theory in the context of a new era and in this way ensured its continued relevance as a critique of capitalism. This continued critique of capitalism was achieved by engaging with developments throughout the human sciences and philosophies which were not connected to Neo-Marxism. Habermas explicitly connected his version of critical theory with the original interdisciplinary work of Horkheimer in the early 1930s. Today the term 'critical theory' is associated with many different theorists from different nationalities and disciplines. The reason for the popularity of Habermas's work is because it addresses familiar problems, unlike the work of for example, Adorno, which featured speculative themes related to Marxist theory. These days, critical theory can no longer be described as a specifically Marxist approach and a number of scholars continue to explore issues in ways that can be associated with Habermas's approach (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

¹³ Morrow and Brown cite authors such as Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972 and Held, 1980

¹⁴ Morrow and Brown cite Habermas 1992a and 1992b

2.3.3. Critical Theory, Habermas and Adult Education and Learning

In developing a critical theoretical framework for this study, it was important to first explore the implications of critical theory for adult education and learning, and in particular Habermasian critical theory. Authors such as Gouthro and Holloway (2013, p. 43) argue that the work of Habermas can provide useful insights into adult education and learning. This is especially relevant in a country like South Africa where there is a need for adult education and learning that focuses on issues pertaining to social change. Drawing on Habermasian critical theory, Hart (1990, p. 125) suggests that “although emancipatory education and a critical theory of education are only rarely addressed in adult education, they provide rich opportunities for discussing primary issues of adult education”. Darder et al. (2009, p. 8) add the following:

Critical educational thought is fundamentally linked to those critical theories of society that emerged from the Frankfurt School and their contemporaries, as they sought to challenge the traditional forms of rationality that defined the concept of meaning and knowledge in the Western world.

Welton (1995b, p. 12) links adult education and learning directly to the work of Habermas when he asserts:

Critical theoretical tradition from Marx to Habermas has much to teach us about adult learning, and can provide a “foundation” for an emancipatory educational practice. A theory of emancipatory learning has always been implicitly present within the Marxian tradition; it is only with Habermas that we begin to see the “learning theory” become explicit and self-conscious.

Furthermore, Welton (1995b, p. 26) notes that Habermasian theory, including the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, has probed much debate in the academic literature as will be discussed in the following sections.

Echoing Welton’s (1995b) beliefs, the literature review revealed that there are a variety of authors who incorporate critical theory, in particular the work of Habermas, into adult education and learning. Kilgore (2001, p. 54) states that “the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has been particularly influential among critical theorists of adult learning” and other authors such as Sandberg (2012), Crick and Joldersma (2007) and Gouthro (2006) confirm this view. Similarly, Merriam et al. (2007, p. 254) recognise

the work of Habermas as “a framework for critiquing adult education as a discipline and as a field of practice”. A conflicting view is presented by Murphy and Bamber (2012, p. 103) who state that “compared to other well-known continental theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, the work of Jürgen Habermas has received relatively little attention in education”. However, this view may be the result of Habermas not directly engaging with issues related to education. Supporting this statement, Ewert (1991, p. 346) highlights:

Habermas has not directly addressed education as a social practice. In the few instances in which Habermas directly mentions education, he mentions it as an example rather than as a main topic. For this reason, the significance of Habermas’s work for education is best viewed from the perspective of educational literature that applies Habermas’s theories and concepts.

In the following sections I discuss the dialogue and debates around Habermasian theory and its application in adult education and learning. Several authors have developed Habermasian concepts concerning education and learning. Consequently I focus on authors who further developed Habermasian ideas and concepts in relation to adult education and learning and whose work addresses the central debates of my study.

2.3.3.1. Habermas and Mezirow: Theoretical Debates that Shape Adult Education and Learning

One of the most prominent theories of adult education and learning, rooted in Habermasian theory, is the theory of transformative learning as developed by Jack Mezirow. Both these theories are discussed in depth in Chapter 3, consequently I do not describe these theories in detail in this section. In his theory of knowledge-constitutive interests Habermas (1972, p. 308) identifies three categories of knowledge-constitutive interests, namely technical-cognitive interest, practical-cognitive interest and emancipatory-cognitive interest, which can be related to the generation of knowledge. In the theory of transformative learning, Mezirow (1981) interprets each of the categories of knowledge-constitutive interests as a distinctive domain of learning. These are the instrumental domain of learning, rooted in the technical-cognitive interest, the communicative domain of learning, based on the practical-cognitive interest and the emancipatory domain of learning which is related to the emancipatory-cognitive interest.

Mezirow was the first in American adult education to use the critical theories of Habermas to promote a form of adult education that is based on the “critique of assumptions through critically reflective learning” (Wilson & Kiely, 2002, p. 2). According to Gouthro (2002), Mezirow introduced Habermasian theory in the field of American adult education and learning. Since then, the theory of transformative learning has been a topic of research, discussion and debate for more than thirty years and, particularly in the United States (US), where it remains one of the most popular theories in the field of adult education and learning (Taylor, 2007, p. 173). Furthermore, the introduction of the theory in 1978 has resulted in a diverse range of theoretical, empirical and practical work (Dirkx, 2012, p. 399). My literature review confirmed the view of Dirkx and Taylor as it revealed a variety of articles that engage in the debate on the theory of transformative learning. Therefore, indirectly, there is an active body of research that engages with Habermasian theory through the work of Mezirow.

Mezirow’s learning theory can be linked to critical theory because it draws on the work of Habermas. Hart (1990, p. 127) refers to transformative learning theory as “a theory which rests on major premises of Habermas’[s] critical theory”. Along similar lines, Pietrykowski (1996, p. 86) claims that the critical theory of Habermas has been “operationalized by Mezirow into a practical strategy of adult education”. Similarly, in their discussion of critical approaches to adult education, English and Mayo (2012, p. 218) also recognise the influence of the work of Habermas on adult education and learning and point out that Habermas’s influence is best represented in education by the work of Mezirow. Newman (2012b) confirms this view when he acknowledges the influence of critical theory in the work of Mezirow.

It is important to note that Mezirow’s learning theory can be connected to critical theory not only because it draws on Habermas, but also because it is associated with emancipation and emancipatory learning through the identification of the emancipatory domain of learning. In support of this view Welton (1995a, p. 6) states: “Although Mezirow’s transformative learning theory continues to be worked and reworked... he has consistently written about the ways people understand their world and the potential available to them to effect social change”. This statement by Welton (1995a) indicates Mezirow’s commitment to issues of emancipation and emancipatory learning, which can be associated with critical theory.

English and Mayo (2012, pp. 215-216) affirm that a critical approach to adult education and learning, influenced by critical theory, usually has some social implications, although they do not restrict it to adult education and learning that is focused on social welfare. A critical approach to adult education and learning is aimed at empowering people and has a vision of an alternative society. This resonates with transformative learning theory, and Mezirow (2000, p. 8) states that “transformative learning has both individual and social dimensions and implications”. English (2012, p. 45) also recognises the role of transformative learning theory in adult education and learning when she states that “educators who use a critical lens in their teaching are well supported by transformative learning research”. The literature further reveals that transformative learning theory is also recognised by authors such as Baumgartner (2001), Merriam et al. (2007), Kitchenham (2008) and Lundgren and Poell (2016) as a significant theory in adult education and learning.

However, in my opinion, it is important to note that Mezirow’s approach to transformative learning in adult education and learning is focused on individual transformation with the potential for social transformation. This focus on individual change has been criticised in the literature by Inglis (1998), who insists that ideology critique and the examination of social structures and power is the only way to emancipation. Inglis quotes Marx (1859, as cited in Inglis, 1998, p. 73) when he asserts that “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness”. According to Inglis, this means that less emphasis should be placed on the individual’s beliefs, values and ideas and more on how economic, political and social life is structured. Inglis (1998) does not believe that the way to emancipation is through individual reflection, as promoted by transformative learning theory, but rather by understanding the structures of society and how these structures determine the social position of people. In this way, people will develop an understanding of themselves, their beliefs, ideas and values.

Yet, Mezirow (1998c, p. 70) maintains that it is imperative to acknowledge that transformative learning theory is aimed at the recognition of assumptions, which includes cultural and social norms as well as ideology. In this way it has the potential to contribute to social change. Mezirow (1998c, p. 70) emphasises:

Transformative learning is about emancipating ourselves from these taken-for-granted assumptions about social being. It involves bringing the sources, nature and consequences of this received wisdom into critical awareness so that appropriate action – including social action – can be taken.

Inglis (1998, p. 74) agrees with Mezirow that it is important that people learn to identify their own assumptions, cultural and social norms, ideologies and “taken-for-granted paradigms of power and privilege”. However, Inglis (1998) also points out that for learning to be emancipatory, it has to show people how to change social and institutional norms that have been created to maintain certain beliefs. For Inglis, personal change begins with social change and simply changing the way people see the world is not enough. Inglis claims that people cannot change their assumptions without understanding why they have these assumptions. Furthermore, Mezirow’s transformative learning theory enables learners to look at their world differently, but without challenging capitalism or a political philosophy of liberal individualism. Inglis (1998, p. 74) expresses it as critique that Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning does not address the issue of power, and states that if an individual does not develop an understanding of power, that person will never be free.

Collard and Law (1989, p. 102) share a similar assessment, pointing to what they refer to as the “fundamental problem in Mezirow’s work: the lack of a coherent, comprehensive theory of social change, a lack diffused throughout the internal structure of his theory, evident in his selective interpretation and adaption of Habermas, and partially dependent on problems within Habermas’[s] own work”. They observe, like Inglis (1998), that Mezirow does not include a critique of dominant ideology in the theory of transformative learning. Furthermore, they present as critique that Mezirow promotes an idea that emancipation is possible without social action, an idea which they do not support. Collard and Law (1989, p. 106) further reason that by not including social context and ideology, Mezirow “denies perspective transformation the power of an emancipatory theory”. Clark and Wilson (1991) mention a similar concern.

Mezirow (1991b) replied to Clark and Wilson (1991) by suggesting that the authors misinterpreted his theory. With regard to the critique by Collard and Law (1989) and Clark and Wilson (1991) that he neglected to include social and cultural context, Mezirow (1991b, p. 190) responded as follows:

I have tried to show how the internal dynamics of adult learning operate within the cultural context, how critical reflection, discourse and action can change culturally assimilated assumptions and premises which limit and distort understanding and give learners greater control over their lives. It is precisely our cultural frames of reference and how we learn to change them that transformation theory addresses.

Mezirow (1991b) highlights that although there is a relationship between social context and learning theory, these concepts are not the same. Mezirow (1991b, p. 190) further asserts that “cultural context may be understood as a society’s present store of knowledge”. It is cultural context that determines what criteria are used to create knowledge and guides the process of learning. Transformative learning makes it possible to evaluate the criteria to determine if these perspectives are still valid and reliable. I agree with Mezirow and posit the view that assessing perspectives in itself holds the potential for emancipation and can therefore be linked to social change.

Corroborating this perspective, Dirkx (2012) states that Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning, through critical reflection, creates awareness of the influence and existence of hegemonic influences and sociocultural structures. I support the view of Morley (2008, p. 419) who argues that “critical reflection holds great emancipatory potential” and that it is a necessary step to influence issues of social justice and social change. More recently, Hoggan, Mälkki and Finnegan (2017, p. 49) have validated this view by noting: “We think that Mezirow’s theoretical work offers vital insights into processes of learning and change on both an individual and collective level”.

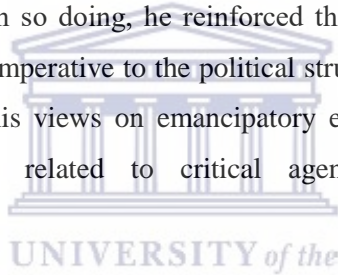
From the literature it is clear that there are two schools of thought pertaining to social change, a debate in the academic literature on adult education and learning that creates a theoretical opening for further studies. Some authors, as mentioned in the preceding discussion, maintain that ideology critique and the examination of social structures and power are the only ways to emancipation. Others such as Callahan (2004), Morley (2008), Cho (2010) and Dirkx (2012) regard individual change as a prerequisite for social change. Although I acknowledge the critique in the literature on the theory of transformative learning, I concur with the view of Callahan (2004), Morley (2008), Cho (2010) and Dirkx (2012) that individual change is necessary for emancipatory learning, emancipation and social change. I also agree with Mezirow (1991b) that it is our

cultural context that determines how we learn and what is considered knowledge. Therefore, learning is always culturally and socially situated.

2.3.3.2. *Habermas and Freire: Theoretical Debates that Shape Adult Education and Learning*

Freire's focus on social change and social justice is based on his political commitment to emancipation which can be achieved through education and aligns him with the goals associated with critical theory (Mezirow, 1991a; Au & Apple, 2007). In this section I show how dialogues and debates related to critical theory, Habermas and Freire's views influence the field of adult education and learning. Freire is described by Darder et al. (2009, p. 5) as "considered by many to be the most influential educational philosopher in the development of critical pedagogical thought and practice". Elaborating on this statement Darder et al. (2009, p. 5) observe:

Freire forthrightly inserted questions of power, culture, and oppression within the context of schooling. In so doing, he reinforced the Frankfurt School's focus on theory and practice as imperative to the political struggles against exploitation and domination. Through his views on emancipatory education, Freire made central pedagogical questions related to critical agency, voice, and democratic participation.



This statement illustrates the close link between the work of Freire and critical theory as associated with the Frankfurt School and Habermas. Therefore, I deemed it important to include Freire in a discussion on critical theory, and adult education and learning. This perspective was confirmed by the dialogue and debates found in the academic literature, which focus on the relationship between critical theory and adult education and learning.

One of the first authors to explore the relationship between the theories of Habermas and Freire within the field of adult education and learning was Mezirow, who has brought the aforementioned two theorists to the dialogue with the introduction of his transformative learning theory. Mezirow (1981, p. 7) compares the work of Habermas and Freire as follows: "The resulting transformation in perspective or personal paradigm is what Freire refers to as 'conscientisation' and Habermas as 'emancipatory action'". Supporting the approach of Mezirow to bring the work of Habermas and Freire to the dialogue, Pietrykowski (1996, p. 86) declares that "the structure of communicative

action and pedagogical praxis described by Habermas and Freire has been operationalized by Mezirow into a practical strategy of adult education” with the aim of “liberation or emancipation”. Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning shares some of the characteristics of Freire’s theory, because both of these versions share the vision of empowerment and the belief that knowledge is not “outside” the individual but is created due to new interpretations formed after new experiences. However, Freire focuses on social-justice issues, whereas Mezirow focuses on rational thought and reflection which have resulted in individual transformation (Pietrykowski, 1996; Baumgartner, 2001, p. 16; Kitchenham, 2008).

Freire, who worked with poor illiterate people in Brazil, encouraged the realisation that education based on passive listening and memorising facts did not empower these individuals. This type of education encouraged dependence on the teacher instead, who would impart knowledge to their students, but would not encourage the development of a critical consciousness. Such students would not learn how to think for themselves, therefore they would not develop the capacity to transform the world. Freire believes that education should liberate individuals, therefore, instead of relying on a more traditional model of education, he encouraged students to reflect on relevant everyday issues, such as the low pay they received (Mezirow, 1991a). In this way, the students recognised the social structures that oppressed them and that they could take action to transform their lives. This process was subsequently labelled ‘conscientisation’, which is central to Freire’s theory (2000, as cited in Baumgartner, 2001, p. 16; Kitchenham, 2008, p. 107). Freire define the process of conscientisation as “...learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions – developing a critical awareness – so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 19 as cited in Kitchenham, 2008, p. 107).

Freire recognised four culturally conditioned levels of consciousness and through the process of conscientisation, people can progress from the lower levels to the fourth, and highest level of consciousness. The first and lowest level is called ‘intransitive consciousness’, where people are focused on satisfying their basic needs and are not aware of their historical or sociocultural situation. The second level is known as ‘semi-intransitive consciousness’ in which the existing socioculture is taken for granted. Life is seen as a result of fate and beyond human control. At the third level, referred to as

'semi-transitive consciousness', people question sociocultural reality and understand that it is a human construction. However, they are very impressionable and vulnerable to manipulation by their leaders. At the fourth and last level people can question social and cultural norms as well as ideologies. This level entails a critique of social, political and economic structures. At this level, reflection that prompts action, will bring about social change. The process of conscientisation was therefore aimed at empowering individuals to take action that could result in social transformation. Although Freire considers reflection as a form of action, he only accepts reflection that results in action as transformation (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 136).

It is this development of consciousness that influenced Mezirow's theory of transformative learning within the field of adult education and learning, because according to Cunningham (1992, p. 186), conscientisation implies "critical reflection". As referred to above, Freire considers reflection as a form of action, which is an idea that informs transformative learning theory, yet he only accepts reflection that results in social action as transformation (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 137). Despite Freire's belief that conscientisation is the result of social practice, he also recognised the individual dimensions of conscientisation. Freire argued that with regards to a critical theory of education there is a relationship between the social aspect and the individual aspect. It is therefore important to find a balance between the two and not to emphasise the one at the expense of the other. The aim of a critical theory in education is to enable learners to recognise both the individual and social dimensions of conscientisation. Ignoring one of these dimensions will simply result in a delusion of overcoming them, instead of facing them and creating the possibility of change (Freire & Macedo, 2003). I align myself with this perspective that both individual and social dimensions should be included in adult education and learning aimed at social change. In his recognition of the need for including both the social and individual dimensions in the process of emancipatory learning and emancipation, Freire creates the opening for a more balanced approach towards social change, which in turn concurs with my study.

Pietrykowski (1996, p. 83) also refers to the relationship between Habermas and Freire:

The works of Paulo Freire on education and praxis and Jürgen Habermas on philosophy and critical social theory can be interpreted as complementary dimensions of a humanistic, modernist project oriented to the concrete goal of

human emancipation from forms of material, cultural and psychological oppression. Both Freire and Habermas conceive of people as moral and practical beings with the inherent capacity to make ethical judgments and to justify them rationally in open discussion.

However, Pietrykowski is critical of this relationship stating that both Freire and Habermas, and by extension Mezirow, neglects to consider the issue of power in culture and society. Pietrykowski observes that in this respect the work of Foucault can make an important contribution to adult education and learning. He explains: “Power is immanent in the act of knowing. This is one of Foucault’s leading contributions to social theory and has direct implications for a theory of adult education” (Pietrykowski, 1996, p. 92). Mezirow (1998b) responds to Pietrykowski’s critique by stating that processes central to the theory of transformative learning, informed by Habermas and Freire, can help learners to understand issues of power. Mezirow (1998b, p. 66) questions Pietrykowski’s arguments by asking: “How are we to help learners understand power structures except through an understanding of how critical reflection and discourse transform frames of reference, the concepts central to Transformation Theory?”. Yet, Pietrykowski (1998, p. 67) replies by suggesting that Mezirow’s view “closely mirrors the framework established by Jürgen Habermas” and that Habermasian theory does not recognise how power can influence discourse. Pietrykowski (1998, p. 69) argues that “by attending to the balance of power in the enforcement of these claims we can better expose and understand the micro-technologies of power as they exist in all learning environments”.

A few years later, Morrow and Torres (2002) contribute to the academic dialogue by comparing the work of Habermas and Freire as follows:

Our comparison of the approaches of Freire and Habermas to education and critical social theory is based on the identification of four shared themes: (1) a metatheoretical framework or philosophy of social science that justifies the specific tasks of a critical social science oriented toward emancipatory possibilities; (2) a theory of society as a system of social and cultural reproduction that identifies contradictions that create possibilities for transformation; (3) a critical social psychological understanding of the social subject as constructed in relation to universal developmental possibilities that are thwarted by historical forms of domination but potentially challenged through critique and practice; and (4) a

conception of individual and collective learning that is suggestive of strategies for rethinking the relations between education and transformative change (Morrow & Torres, 2002, pp. 14-15).

Morrow and Torres (2002) emphasise that their purpose is not to criticise Habermas and Freire but rather to create theoretical openings for academic work that can explore further the relationship between the work of Habermas and Freire.

Taking up this challenge, Morrow (2010) points out that several authors critique Habermasian theory for being too Eurocentric. To address the indigenous knowledge debate on Habermas, Eurocentrism and education, Morrow (2010) attempts to develop an approach to indigenous knowledge creation by incorporating the insights from Habermas and Freire. By doing so, he also further explores the work of Habermas and Freire as a complementary approach to adult education and learning.

2.3.3.3. Habermas and Brookfield: Theoretical Debates that Shape Adult Education and Learning

Another prominent theorist in adult education and learning who has elaborated on Habermas's ideas and has also responded to transformative learning theory, is Stephen Brookfield (Mayo, 2009; English & Mayo, 2012; Sandberg, 2012). Brookfield's work contributes to the academic debates in adult education and learning as well as critical theory which are central to this study. Furthermore, his work specifically refers to critical reflection that can challenge dominant ideologies. Brookfield (2000b, p. 131) explains that his understanding of critical reflection is different from how it is described in Mezirow's transformative learning theory. To Mezirow, ideological critique can be implicit but Brookfield (2000b, p. 131) reasons that "critical reflection would focus on making explicit and analyzing that which was previously implicit and uncritically accepted". For Brookfield (2000b, 2012) critical reflection must focus exclusively on challenging ideology to encourage emancipation. Consequently, Brookfield presents a contrasting perspective of what can be deemed critical reflection, which is a central concept in transformative learning theory and my study. As such, the work of Brookfield resonates with other critics on transformative learning theory, including Collard and Law (1989) and Inglis (1998).

I acknowledge this critique in the literature, but my belief is that critical reflection which focuses on ideological issues exclusively is a limited perspective of what constitutes emancipation. It is my contention that for emancipation to be realised, and to be truly meaningful, it must include individual and more personal assumptions which create the opportunity for ideological critique that resonates with personal experience and has the potential to prompt social change. Brookfield's (2000a, p. 38) description of how ideology manifests in our personal lives helped to develop my view: "Ideologies ... manifest in language, social habits and cultural forms. They legitimize certain political structures and educational practices so that these come to be accepted as representing the normal order of things". This description provides tools for recognising ideological issues during critical reflection even if it is not focused on a particular ideological concern.

Another important reason for discussing Brookfield's work is the fact that Brookfield (2001, 2005a; 2005b) clarifies the implications of critical theory for adult learning theory. He claims that "critical theory is usually not written in terms immediately recognizable to those of us primarily interested in adult learning. Yet, an analysis of adult learning is implicit in its propositions" (Brookfield, 2001, p. 13). In order to clarify these implications of critical theory for adult education and learning, he explores the work of Habermas and describes him as "probably the critical theorist best known to adult educators" (Brookfield, 2005b, p. xiv). However, he expands his analysis to include the work of other prominent critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Althusser, Gramsci, Foucault, Fromm and Marcuse. He compares the respective contributions of these authors to critical theory and analyses the potential of these theorists' ideas to influence adult education and learning. Brookfield (2005b, p. xii) declares that "a critical theory of adult learning must focus on understanding how adults learn to challenge ideology, contest hegemony, unmask power, overcome alienation, learn liberation, reclaim reason, and practi[s]e democracy". Brookfield (2005b, p. xii) describes these as the "learning tasks" of critical theory in adult education and learning.

The first learning task, which Brookfield (2005b) refers to as the most important learning task of critical theory, is how adults learn to recognise and challenge ideology (Brookfield 2001, 2005b, 2012). Ideology is described as a system of ideas that can lead to domination and oppression if these ideas do not serve the best interests of society.

These ideas, represented by ideology, often contribute to the acceptance of inequality as a normal state of affairs (Brookfield, 2001; 2005b). Brookfield (2001, p. 13) continues by arguing “a critical theory of adult learning must begin by exploring how adults learn to resist ideological manipulation”. However, Brookfield (2001, 2005b) acknowledges that ideology is not easy to identify because it is entrenched in cultural and social norms that determine how we see and think about the world. Ideology, according to Brookfield (2005b), appears to be common sense. He states:

Critical theory views ideologies as [a] broadly accepted set of values, beliefs, myths, explanations, and justifications that appear self-evidently true, empirically accurate, personally relevant, and morally desirable to a majority of the populace that actually work to maintain an unjust social and political order. Ideology does this by convincing people that existing social arrangements are naturally ordained and obviously work for the good of all (Brookfield, 2001, p. 14).

Ideology critique in adult education theory is an attempt for adults to learn how to act “on the basis of instincts, impulses, and desires that are truly our own, rather than implanted in us” (Brookfield, 2001, p. 16).

To emphasise the importance of ideology critique in a critical theory of adult education and learning, Brookfield (2001, 2005a, 2005b) points out that Habermas engaged with the work of Marx and that it is important that adult educators do not ignore Marxist ideas. However, he notes that Marxist ideas are often disregarded because it is associated with “repression, standardization, bureaucratization, and denial of creativity or liberty” (Brookfield, 2001, p. 9). Although unintentionally, Brookfield (2001) argues that an engagement with Marx is often reflected in a critical theory of adult education and learning that criticises the commodification of education. Furthermore, it is important to note that, the vision of an improved society, which is central to a critical theory of adult education and learning, is also a Marxist idea. Therefore, the work of Marx prompts the idea of a critical theory for social change. This movement towards social change is a distinctive characteristic of a critical theory that can be associated with adult education and learning. Adult education and learning is focused on providing individuals with knowledge and understanding that will enable them not only to interpret and understand the world, but also to change the world (Brookfield, 2001, p.11).

Brookfield (2001, p. 11) proposes that a critical theory of adult education and learning should “provide people with knowledge and understandings intended to free them from oppression”. The goal is to inspire action that will change the communities that adult learners live in. Therefore, a critical theory of adult education is grounded in the ability to inspire the hope that there is a better way to live. It is the vision of an improved world, where citizens are inspired to question the existing social, economic and political conditions that support oppression, and the domination of a particular world view. A critical theory of adult education and learning is aimed at creating the conditions that can promote such an alternative social, political and economic order. Thus, a critical theory is concerned with how adults learn to detect, question and challenge ideological manipulation. It depends, to some extent, on the recognition that there is a need for a “better, more authentic way to live”. In other words, it is based on the vision of a more just, fair and compassionate world (Brookfield, 2001, p. 12).

The second learning task of a critical theory of adult education, according to Brookfield (2005b, 2012), is learning how to uncover and contest hegemony. Adult education and learning is central to this task because it explores how people learn to accept and embrace an unequal social order as in their own best interest. Furthermore, it is learning how to recognise that these accepted common sense beliefs serve only the powerful in society. This leads to the third learning task of a critical theory of adult education and learning, which is learning to unmask power. Brookfield refers to the work of Foucault (1980, as cited in Brookfield, 2005b) as central to this learning task of critical theory. A critical theory of adult learning is concerned with how people learn to recognise power in their own lives and their community. Furthermore, they learn how existing power arrangements promote the interest of a few people rather than the majority and how it can be adjusted to serve the majority rather than the minority. It also focuses on how adults learn to share knowledge that promote their own power and can promote collective practices and democratic processes (Brookfield, 2005b, pp. 47-48).

Learning to overcome alienation and to accept freedom is the fourth learning task of a critical theory of adult education and learning. Brookfield (2005b, p. 50) refers to the work of Marx when he describes people as alienated when they work and live in a way that is not authentic and reflective of who they truly are. This hampers freedom, because people can only be free in a society where they are not alienated. Brookfield (2005b, p.

50) explains: “Claiming freedom, then, could be said to be the central task of adulthood, something we spend a lifetime learning how to do as we try to escape our alienated lives”. Freedom, however, is a contested concept from the perspective of critical theory. Critical theory ascertains that individual behaviour is determined by ideology, therefore, even if we think that we are free, we are acting according to ideological principles. A critical theory of adult education and learning explores how alienation can be challenged to realise true freedom (Brookfield, 2005b).

The notion of true freedom prompts the fifth learning task of critical theory, which is learning to pursue liberation. In this case the focus is on how adults learn to liberate themselves from dominant ideology. The dominant perspective in critical theory is that individual liberation is determined by social liberation. However, Brookfield (2005b) refers to the work of the theorist Herbert Marcuse who believes that critical theory should also consider individual liberation that can in turn prompt social liberation. Therefore, as Dirkx (2012) confirms, it is important to remember that the learning tasks of critical theory are not only focused on social liberation but must also include individual liberation. Brookfield (2000b, p 130) clarifies: “Ideology is not to be understood as pertaining only to our beliefs about social, political, and economic systems, but as something that frames our moral reasoning, our interpersonal relationships, and our ways of knowing, experiencing, and judging what is real and true”.

The sixth learning task of critical theory is learning to reclaim reason. Habermas played a central role in the development of this learning task. Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse believe that reason has become instrumentalised, meaning that it can only be applied to technical questions. For example, how to get to work on time or how to get good results in a test (Brookfield, 2005b). However, Habermas disagrees with Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse that all reason has been instrumentalised. Habermas argues that reason can be used to support the project of democracy (Brookfield, 2005a). Brookfield (2005a, p. 1132) asserts that “Habermas’s reclamation of reason as the heart of critical theory is a central theme in his work. Reframed as validity, reason underscores his theory of communicative action, which focuses on the assessment of validity claims”.

Learning to reclaim reason is also key to the seventh learning task of a critical theory of adult learning, namely learning to practise democracy (Brookfield, 2005a; 2005b). Habermas analysed the processes of democracy and became concerned with conditions that ensure decision making in a truly democratic way. Habermas claims that an ideal speech situation can be established which will ensure a democratic process. In his theory of communicative action, Habermas developed the concept of undistorted communication, also referred to as ideal speech. He observes that communication is usually distorted by power relations and hidden agendas among people who are communicating. As a result, he developed guidelines to facilitate undistorted and truthful communication which can facilitate communicative learning and where ideas can be openly shared and discussed (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 173; Gouthro, 2006).

These ideal conditions are described by Habermas (1984) and includes, firstly, that all participants in the communication process must only be motivated by a search for truth and must be perceived as trustworthy. Truth must be the basis of all statements otherwise the statement is invalid. Secondly, all participants in the communication process must be perceived as truthful, otherwise the communication cannot continue. Thirdly, the communication must follow a specific process, which means that a problem should be stated clearly and in a way that is understandable, while only statements based on clear reason should be considered. Fourthly, all arguments must be evaluated as either valid or invalid based on prevailing norms and values. Through this process, social knowledge will be created and participants can come to an agreement that will guide future actions (Habermas, 1984; Gouthro, 2006). However, several authors including Collard and Law (1989), Hart (1990), Bamber and Crowther (2012) and Murphy and Bamber (2012) disagree with Habermas, claiming that these ideal conditions of debate are unattainable.

Brookfield's description of the learning tasks of critical theory in adult education and learning, makes a valuable contribution to the debates and dialogue pertaining to critical theory, Habermas and adult education and learning. Yet, there are other authors who have also explored critical theory and adult education and learning, as will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.3.4. Habermas and Other Adult Education Scholars: Theoretical Debates that Shape Adult Education and Learning

In the previous sections I have examined the dialogues and debates related to three prominent authors in the field of critical theory and adult education and learning. However, there are many others who have also made contributions in this field, specifically pertaining to Habermas's critical theory. In this section I mention some of these authors whose work covers the main themes and debates of this study, but due to limited space, they cannot all be included.

One of the authors who explores Habermasian concepts is Mechtild Hart. Hart (1990) presents an assessment of the work of Habermas noting that Habermas's "analysis move[s] at a level of abstraction which leaves far behind the embedded and embodied reality of concrete individual learners" (Hart, 1990, p. 133). I concur with this statement and discovered during a late stage of my study how feminist and anti-racist theories include the embodied experience and can be used to expand Habermasian concepts. Murphy and Bamber (2012) have also corroborated Hart's point of view. Furthermore, Hart (1990, p. 133) argues that Habermasian theory is too rationalist for "a broader, more encompassing concept of emancipatory education". She continues to assert that Habermasian theory is too cognitive and that other processes that can create knowledge should be investigated. In Hart's (1990, p. 135) words:

In my own educational endeavors I have recently become more aware of the cultural or ecological sterility of an overemphasis on cognitive processes and have become more attuned to the power of non-cognitive or non-linguistic aspects as contributing to critical abilities by subtly freeing the courage and the curiosity to know and understand. This, in my opinion, illustrates the strong motivational and emotional underside of critique which still awaits critical illumination by educational theory.

Hart (1990, p. 137) highlights that there are a variety of approaches to what she refers to as "emancipatory education" and she believes that a theoretical exploration of these approaches is called for. It is this call for theoretical exploration of alternative approaches to emancipation and emancipatory learning to which my study responds.

Another author who has made important contributions to the academic debates and dialogues pertaining to Habermas's work within the field of adult education and

learning is Patricia Gouthro. Gouthro (2002) describes Habermas as one of the main influences on critical theoretical perspectives in adult education and learning. Gouthro (2006) takes a more positive stand towards Habermas's focus on rationality and cognitive processes:

Habermas'[s] focus on reason encourages educators to carefully think through what we mean when we argue about a rational or practical point of view. His theoretical framework reveals that reason is a complex concept, that can be used to justify many approaches towards learning (Gouthro, 2006, p. 8).

Highlighting another area of debate, Gouthro (2002) states that one of the critiques of Habermas has been his attempt to develop a universalistic theory that is not suitable for an increasingly fragmented world. Yet, Gouthro (2002) points out that Habermasian theory remains relevant to society, especially in terms of critical insights about adult education and learning. I agree with this perspective, which is why I used Habermasian theory during my study.

As mentioned earlier, Murphy and Bamber (2012, p. 104) are of the opinion that the interest in Habermas's work on adult education and learning has faded since the 1990s. Yet, there is evidence in the academic literature of more recent engagement with Habermas which indicates a revived interest in Habermasian theory in the field of adult education and learning. For instance, Crick and Joldersma (2007) include the theory of communicative action in their analysis of adult education and learning. Garland (2008, p. 4) agrees with the perspective of Murphy and Bamber (2012) that "the application of Habermasian critical theory to educational practices is not extensive", however, he attempts to incorporate Habermasian concepts in educational settings. For instance, Garland (2008) proposes that it is useful to see educational settings in terms of the Habermasian notion of a lifeworld and develops the concepts of communicative action and knowledge-constitutive interests. Similarly, Sandberg (2010, 2012) uses the theory of communicative action and the concept of a lifeworld, as introduced by Habermas, to analyse adult education and learning in an adult in-service education programme. Sandberg (2012) shows how Habermasian theory can highlight unresolved issues of power in an adult education setting, yet does not provide adult educators with practical guidelines to solve the problem.

Issues pertaining to power seem to be one of the most prominent critiques of Habermasian theory in the academic literature. This is what Layder (2012, p. 233) calls a “weak spot” in Habermas’s theory of communicative action. Similar to the views of Hart (1990) and Pietrykowski (1996), as mentioned earlier, authors like Inglis (1997), Huxley and Yiftachel (2000), Kilgore (2001), Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002), Thomassen (2005)¹⁵ and Layder (2012) found Habermas’s perspective of power insufficient. In his communicative theory Habermas acknowledges power, but it is regarded as a negative, distorting influence limited to political institutions of which the effects can be removed by creating ideal conditions for debate. Habermas asserts that it is possible to achieve a situation of power-free, critical debate but he does not provide any insights into how this situation can be achieved. Therefore, he promotes a powerful idea but without any direction on how it can be attained. No details are provided with regard to power itself or how it could encourage insight into how power influences decision-making as well as rationality itself (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, pp. 60-61).

Authors that support this critique often draw on the work of Michel Foucault to validate their arguments. Foucault, a critical theorist from the post-modern tradition, does not view power as limited to regimes that dominate and condition humanity, but rather as something that is present within all related activities. Foucault provides guidelines that could help individuals understand and analyse power in order to gain insight into how it can be connected to rationality and knowledge, how it can bring about change, and how understanding power can help individuals to gain greater control (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, pp. 60-61). The academic arguments for the value of the work of Foucault, especially in educational settings, prompts a discussion of the debate between Habermas and Foucault.

2.3.3.5. Habermas and Foucault: Theoretical Debates that Shape Adult Education and Learning

It is important to note that criticism of Habermas’s work concerning power, led by Foucault, have fuelled an ongoing debate in the academic literature. In the academic dialogues and debates discussed in the preceding section, authors in the field of adult education and learning such as Pietrykowski (1996), Inglis (1997) and Kilgore (2001) draw on Foucault to motivate their critique of Habermas. Collins (1995, p. 91) points to

¹⁵ Thomassen cites Devenney (2004), Duvenage (2003) and Shabani (2003)

the limitations of “abstract formulations” pertaining to Habermasian critical theory in the field of adult education and learning. He refers to the contribution of post-modernist thoughts to address these limitations and in particular to the “brilliant insights of Michael Foucault” (Collins, 1995, p. 91).

It is important to note that Habermas and Foucault were from different academic, philosophical and political contexts, although they both focused on critical analysis (Isenberg, 1991, p. 299). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Habermas and Foucault came from the German and French intellectual traditions respectively. They had one mutual reference point which is the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment informed both traditions but caused different interpretations in Germany and France. In Germany, the focus was on dialectical philosophy, sociology and Marxism, whereas in France it was on rationalism, positivism and perspectivism. As a result, the work of both authors reflects their respective backgrounds. Habermas’s work takes a distinctively modern position that is universalistic as well as theoretical and based on rational norms and values (Isenberg, 1991). Habermas, in line with modern philosophy, contends that people can use reason to improve their own circumstances as well as the circumstances of those around them. His modern project is based on advancing knowledge and supporting social justice by means of rational reasoning (Habermas, 1980, as cited in Harkin, 1998). On the other hand, Foucault’s work is particularistic and contextualised, based on an analysis of discursive knowledge, and the relationship between power and knowledge. His work, which also focuses on the ethics of self, is usually associated with post-modernism. Post-modernism challenges modernity by demonstrating how rationality is relative and related to power relations. It also highlights political and practical problems associated with a modern approach (Isenberg, 1991; Rodriguez, 2011).

Comprehensive academic literature can be found on the debate between Habermas and Foucault. These debates concluded in 1984 after Foucault’s death. Foucault asserts that power is not something that belongs to a person, a class or a state, but that it is relational and situational and that it can function at many levels. Power can cause and initiate change and can be positive or negative. According to Foucault, a power relation requires at least two participants for it to be a power relation at all. He suggests strategies to change power relations, such as externalisation, suggesting that power is

not evil in itself but can be useful (Foucault, 1994). Furthermore, Foucault assumes that power forms the basis of knowledge - a belief that Habermas strongly challenged, although he never acknowledged the flexible nature of power that Foucault describes. For Habermas, power can only be negative and destructive and he does not recognise how Foucault broadened the concept of power to acknowledge that “power can be repressive but also productive, power can be prohibiting but also permitting and encouraging” (Isenberg, 1991, p. 302). For Foucault power is related to truth, knowledge and ethics, but knowledge is not a pure function of power, and power is not a prerequisite for knowledge (Isenberg, 1991, p. 304).

In response to these arguments, Habermas accuses Foucault of abandoning reason and social reform, ideals which are associated with a modernist position (Habermas, 1989, as cited in Simon, 1994, p. 949). Michael Kelly’s book *‘Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate’* includes three essays in which Habermas specifically responds to the arguments of Foucault (Habermas, 1994a; 1994b, 1994c). Habermas argues that Foucault’s view of power makes it difficult to understand the relationship between the individual and society (Habermas, 1994b, p. 102). Habermas may be correct with this observation as Foucault’s view of power does not provide a comprehensive account for social reform. However, it should be noted that Foucault did not aim to develop a theory of society and knowledge the way Habermas did. Therefore, according to Simon (1994, p. 955), Foucault’s account of power can be more useful from a methodology point of view, but not as an alternative for Habermasian theory.

Joining in the debate Layder (2012) has criticised Habermas for his view of power as a phenomenon that only occurs in relation to political institutions that promote social goals as well as his failure to acknowledge that power takes many different forms at many different levels in society. Layder (2012) observes that Foucault’s understanding of power is more comprehensive and includes those who resist power in everyday life. Payrow Shabani (2003) claims that insights from Foucault can better address questions of power. It is important to note that Payrow Shabani does not reject Habermas’s theory but rather considers the limitations of Habermas’s work, such as the legitimate use of power, in order to find ways to overcome it. Payrow Shabani proposes that critical theorists from different academic traditions must consider the work of others because no single theory can explain the fast-changing world. In this regard, I agree with Payrow

Shabani as it seems unlikely that one theory can clarify all the complicated issues in today's society and that it is necessary to consider alternative explanations and sources of knowledge.

During this study I acknowledge the weaknesses of Habermasian theory as presented in the academic literature. However, because Habermas has been acknowledged as one of the most influential critical theorists, in terms of adult education and learning, by a number of authors such as Terry (1997), Ewert (1991), Brookfield (2005b), Crick and Joldersma (2007), Merriam et al. (2007), English and Mayo (2012) and Sandberg (2012), I decided to develop a critical theoretical perspective on adult learning rooted in Habermas's theory of knowledge-constitutive interests. Furthermore, Habermasian theory forms the basis for transformative learning theory, an adult education and learning theory that is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential adult education and learning theories (Brookfield 2001, 2005b). This theory is also central to my study.

2.4. SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the academic literature in the field of adult education and learning that guides this study. It promotes the development of a critical theoretical perspective, which will be further discussed in Chapter 3, and allows me to theorise the empirical data and to create new knowledge on mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change in a South African context. The chapter also provided a foundation for exploring, in later chapters, through the data analysis and theory building processes, the potential of the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme that can support transformative and emancipatory learning.

In the first section of this chapter, I showed that very little is known about the concept of mindfulness and specifically the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme in a South African context. This lack of knowledge points to a need for further research which this study responds to. I presented an overview of adult education and learning theories, but focused on a critical approach to adult education and learning because of its potential to clarify the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Critical theory forms the foundation of a critical approach to adult education and learning and the impact of the work of Habermas in the field of adult education and learning is vital. Therefore, the work of

Habermas, and how his work elicited dialogues and debates in the field of adult education and learning were described in detail.

During my literature review, I found recent studies by Orr (2002), Berila (2014), Chari (2016) and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015), who have used a critical theoretical perspective to investigate the concept of mindfulness. However, these authors do not explore mindfulness in terms of Habermas's critical theory or transformative learning theory. Therefore, by using critical theory and transformative learning theory that is rooted in critical theory as my theoretical framework, I was able to make a novel contribution to the field. Furthermore, using these theories concurs with the view of Walsh (2016), who observes that it is important that research about mindfulness should engage critical theory for theoretical and empirical considerations. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the development of my critical theoretical framework in detail.



CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL THEORY AS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 I provided an overview of the literature on adult education and learning and critical theory. I mentioned that there has been limited research on mindfulness and the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme in the field of adult education and learning. I identified a critical theoretical framework as an appropriate choice for this study because it has the potential to inform the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Furthermore, the framework provides a foundation for exploring, in later chapters, the potential of mindfulness and the use of the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme to support transformative and emancipatory learning. The critical theoretical framework will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

The development of a theoretical framework is an important endeavour during the research process, as Bryman (2001, p. 8) explains: “Theory is something that guides and influences the collection and analysis of data. In other words, research is done in order to answer questions posed by theoretical considerations”. During this study, care was taken to develop a critical theoretical framework that could guide the collection and analysis of data and contribute to new theoretical perspectives.

In this chapter I outline my critical theoretical framework. In the first section, the process of theory building that I used during this study is explained. This is followed by a discussion of critical theory and in particular Habermas’s theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, which is central to this study. Transformative learning theory, which is rooted in critical theory and in particular the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, will also be considered.

3.2. CRITICAL THEORY AND THEORY BUILDING

When working within a critical theoretical framework, it is important to note that one of the goals of critical theory is human emancipation. Even if the goal is not realised it is aimed at producing knowledge about emancipation (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 153).

McGehee (2012, p. 89) confirms this view by stating: “Originators of critical theory aspired for the ultimate goal of human emancipation”. However, critical theorists accept that even if the goal of emancipation is unrealisable, it can still focus on individual, social, political and economic concerns in the hope that it will bring society closer to a more humane existence and an improved world (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 153). Along with the goals of critical theory, human emancipation, emancipatory knowledge interests and the emancipatory domain of learning are central to this study. With the aim of exploring the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change in mind, the focus of this study is on producing new knowledge in the emancipatory domain of learning, through theory building, that could make a positive contribution towards creating an improved world. Habermas (1972, p. 67) describes the process of theory building as a “transcendental-logical inquiry into the conditions of possible knowledge aimed as well at explicating the meaning of knowledge as such”. Habermas (1972) declares that the production of new knowledge has to include a theoretical inquiry to be truly meaningful.

The theory building process is often associated with a specific research paradigm and in this regard Gioia and Pitre, (1990, p. 585) state that “appropriate approaches to theory building depends on the paradigmatic assumption brought to bear on a topic”. This study is located in a critical-emancipatory paradigm, which is in line with the broader aims of this study, which were to investigate mindfulness and adult education and learning in relation to social change. The intention is to contribute towards an improved world by investigating the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation and the emancipatory domain of learning. The critical-emancipatory paradigm can be linked to the critical theoretical tradition (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Morgaine, 1992; Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Romm, 2015). However, the theory building process was also influenced by the interpretive paradigm and included theoretical assumptions typical to this paradigm, as will be discussed later in this chapter (Morgaine, 1992; Tribe, 2001; Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002; Shah & Corley, 2006). It was with these research paradigms in mind that the theory building process and theoretical framework for this study was developed.

When engaging in the process of theory building, it is necessary to define what theory is. There are a variety of definitions in the academic literature that attempts to clarify

what is considered a theory. According to Sutton and Staw (1995, p. 378) “theory is about the connections among phenomena, a story about why acts, events, structure and thoughts occur”. Gioia and Pitre (1990, p. 587) describe it as “any coherent description or explanation of observed or experienced phenomena”, while Bryman (2001, p. 5) refers to it as “an explanation of observed regularities”. Similar to the definitions of Gioia and Pitre (1990) and Bryman (2001), Pentland (1999, p. 711) describes theory as “an explanation of what is causing the observed outcomes”. Brookfield (1992, p. 79) views theory related to adult learning specifically as “the collection of explanatory frameworks, insights, hypothesis, models and propositions which account for a distinctively identifiable phenomenon or set of phenomena”. Merriam (1987, p. 188) also refers to adult education and learning specifically when she describes theory as “a set of interrelated concepts or principles that attempt to explain the phenomenon of adult learning”.

Based on the definitions of Brookfield (1992) and Merriam (1987), it was clear that it was important to develop a theoretical framework which would include concepts, principles, insights and propositions that would explain the data that were collected during this study. The theoretical framework can then be compared to the concepts identified in the data, a process which Brookfield (1992, p. 80) refers to as a “universal analysis”. This process allows a researcher to view informal theoretical tenets that are identified in the data to be “reviewed through the perspective embedded in formal theories” (Brookfield, 1992, p. 80). The aim of the process of theory building in this study is to generate theoretical explanations which could contribute to the process of theory building and the creation of new knowledge.

Brookfield (2005b, pp. 4-5) proposes that a theory must be able to explain a certain aspect of the world, what we observe and what we experience. In other words, a theory must “create explanations that impose conceptual order on reality” (Brookfield, 2005b, p. 5). Critical theory in relation to adult education and learning is aimed at highlighting how the process of adult learning is influenced by social factors; factors that are often beyond the influence of the adult educator (Brookfield, 2005b, p. 6). Another aspect that is important in terms of critical theory building is that it creates an understanding of not only “how the world is but also how it might be changed for the better” (Brookfield, 2005b, p. 7). Furthermore, according to Brookfield (2005b, p. 8), the critical theory

building process is aimed at creating hope. By analysing dominant ideologies it is possible to find a way to resist these ideologies and their influences on adult education and learning practices (Brookfield, 2005b, p. 8). During this study, the hope of an improved world is represented by creating new knowledge, through mindfulness, in the emancipatory domain of learning and considering how this can influence adult education and learning practices.

The creation of new knowledge and theory building is implicit in the research questions that this study aims to address. However, the process of how theory is developed is rarely discussed in the academic literature (Lynham, 2000). In order to support the process of theory building and development during this study, I attempted to approach the process in a structured manner. In the following sections I will discuss the process of theory building, the influence of the research paradigm on the theory building process as well as the importance of issues of validity in terms of the theory building process.

3.2.1. The Process of Theory Building

The process of theory building was key to this research project, from its conception to the conclusion. My intention was to use the theory building process to generate new knowledge, which could serve as theoretical building-blocks of a new theoretical perspective. The theory building process is described by Brookfield (1992, p. 80) as a process of comparing the theoretical framework to concepts identified in the data. This is similar to the description of the process of theory building by other authors. Lynham (2000, p. 161) defines the theory building process as “the process or recurring cycle by which coherent descriptions, explanations, and representations of observed or experienced phenomena are generated, verified, and refined”. Lynham (2000, 2002) as well as Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012) describe the process of theory building as a cyclical process during which a researcher is influenced by both the data collected during the research as well as the theoretical framework. According to Lynham (2002, p. 228), the “continuous and iterative conversation” between data, which represent the experienced phenomena and the theoretical framework, will result in theory building. This view is verified by Gioia et al. (2012). During the present study, the data analysis and theory building process were conducted simultaneously, to facilitate the “continuous and iterative conversation” as suggested by Lynham. According to Lynham

(2002, p. 229), there are five phases in the process of theory building, namely (1) conceptual development, (2) operationalisation, (3) confirmation or disconfirmation (4) application and (5) continuous refinement and development of the theory. These phases do not need to be applied in a specific order and can overlap.

Lynham's (2002) five phases of theory building, which can also be deemed a process of creating new knowledge, were used to guide the theory building process of this study. The focus was on creating emancipatory knowledge within the emancipatory domain of learning. The first phase consists of conceptual development which requires the researcher to highlight key concepts of the theory and promotes an understanding of the phenomenon that is investigated. The second phase comprises operationalisation, during which certain concepts pertaining to the theory are identified and further investigated throughout the research process. During this phase Lynham (2002, p. 232) posits that "the theoretical framework must be translated, or converted, to observable, confirmable components/elements". The application of this phase in the present study is discussed in detail in this chapter as the focus is on the development of a critical theoretical framework including critical theory and transformative learning theory.

The third phase of theory building consists of confirmation or disconfirmation, during which the research is planned, designed and implemented with the aim to confirm or disconfirm theoretical concepts related to the theoretical framework (Lynham, 2002, p. 229). Gioia, et al. (2012) emphasise the importance of the development of well-specified research questions. This phase is covered in detail in Chapter 4 with a discussion of the research design and methodology, including the formulated research questions. The fourth phase denotes application which, according to Lynham (2002, p. 233), "enables further study, inquiry, and understanding of the theory in action". The aim is to use experiences from the real world to further guide and develop the theory. This phase, which is dealt with in Chapters 6 and 7, focuses on the data analysis process and the findings of the research. Care was taken to ensure that it was easy to identify the connections between the data and the theory by including direct quotes from the data as suggested by Gioia, et al. (2012, p. 23).

The fifth phase consists of continued refinement and the development of a theory. Lynham (2002, p. 234) asserts that the aim of this phase is "to ensure that the theory is kept current and relevant and that it continues to work and have utility in the practical

world”. The fifth phase falls beyond the scope of this study, because it is similar to the first phase in that it can only be applied if further research related to the theory developed during my study is conducted. Gioia and Pitre (1990), Lynham (2000) and Webster and Watson (2002) claim that a multi-paradigm approach can enhance the theory building process. Therefore, during this study the interpretive paradigm and a critical-emancipatory paradigm influenced the theory building process. In the following section these paradigms will be discussed in more detail.

3.2.2. The Critical Emancipatory Paradigm, the Interpretive Paradigm and Theory Building

Theory and the process of theory building must be understood in terms of certain assumptions as to what constitutes knowledge (Mezirow, 1996). In this study, knowledge refers to assumptions pertaining to the critical theory of knowledge-constitutive interests as developed by Habermas (1972), and specifically the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, that guided the process of theory building and determined the research paradigm.

The term ‘research paradigm’ was first introduced by Thomas Khun in 1962, who describes it as the beliefs, values and assumptions that guide the process of knowledge creation through research. It is also defined in the literature as a “shared belief system that influences the kinds of knowledge that researchers seek and how they interpret the evidence they collect” (Morgan, 2007, p. 50). Similarly, Fossey, et al. (2002, p. 718) define it as “a system of ideas, or world view, used by a community of researchers to generate knowledge”. According to Morgan (2007, p. 52), paradigms can be regarded as “epistemological stances” that influence the type of knowledge that is created. It is a reflection of the researcher’s view on the creation of knowledge and assumptions about knowledge, therefore it can be linked to the process of theory building. Consequently, it is important that a researcher declares the research paradigm of the study at hand as well as the theory building process.

There are a variety of paradigms in the literature which are often similar but authors do not always use the same label for a specific paradigm. These include the objectivist, also known as the scientific or instrumental-technical paradigm (Morgaine, 1992; Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Mezirow, 1996; Scotland, 2012;), the interpretive, also known as the interpretist, the interpretivist or the constructivist paradigm (Gioia & Pitre,

1990; Morgaine, 1992; Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Mezirow, 1996; Scotland, 2012; Romm, 2015) and the critical-emancipatory, also known as the radical-humanist, emancipatory or transformative paradigm (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Morgaine, 1992; Mezirow, 1996; Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Romm, 2015). The objectivist paradigm is usually associated with the natural sciences. It is guided by the belief that there is a single, objective reality that can be discovered through research. Applying this objective truth or reality can then be used to control people and the environment (Morgaine, 1992, p.13; Humble & Morgaine, 2002, p. 200). The interpretive paradigm is focused on developing an understanding of meaning and the knowledge which is dependent on social reality. The guiding assumption with this paradigm is that there is no single objective truth or reality. Knowledge is created by individuals based on their own experiences and it will motivate actions. Therefore, according to this paradigm, human actions cannot be controlled or manipulated and an attempt to do so is seen as unethical (Morgaine, 1992, p. 13; Humble & Morgaine, 2002, p. 200).

The critical-emancipatory paradigm is founded in the notion that individual experience, meaning, and knowledge is determined by social systems and forces that oppress them. This knowledge is believed to be distorted knowledge. If people can recognise these forces that create distorted knowledge, new knowledge is created and they can emancipate themselves by means of individual and collective actions (Ewert, 1991; Humble & Morgaine, 2002, p. 202). Ewert (1991, p. 346) claims that knowledge is created through a process of critique and starts with how individuals recognise the influence of ideology in their own lives. This knowledge then enables them to take new actions, which can change the social system. Knowledge in this paradigm is focused on rationality to produce new knowledge. The critical-emancipatory paradigm is specifically linked to the critical theoretical tradition as suggested by Gioia and Pitre (1990), Ewert (1991) and Romm (2015). Morgaine (1992) and Humble and Morgaine (2002, p. 202) specifically link a critical-emancipatory paradigm to the critical theory of knowledge-constitutive interests developed by Habermas (1972). Mezirow (1996) refers to the same paradigm as the 'emancipatory' paradigm, which he also connects to critical theory and Habermas, but Mezirow also situates transformative learning theory in this paradigm. Therefore, because these paradigms are all linked to critical theory, it can be assumed that the authors refer to the same paradigm, namely the 'critical-emancipatory' paradigm.

A critical-emancipatory paradigm is based on the assumption that social reality is the result of the subjective experience of individuals. In this regard, it can be linked to an interpretive paradigm which shares this assumption. In an interpretive paradigm the phenomenon is analysed, interpreted and theorised in terms of how individuals experience a particular phenomenon. However, in a critical-emancipatory paradigm it is assumed that this reality is socially constructed and that individuals are unaware of the influence of social forces on their reality (Hassard, 1991; Humble & Morgaine, 2002; Shah & Corley, 2006). In the interpretive paradigm the focus is on understanding the meaning of the human experience and actions, regardless of the social and historical origins of these meanings. According to Ewert (1991, p. 346), the knowledge that is produced in this paradigm “describe[s] the world as it is”. In a critical-emancipatory paradigm, the focus is also on understanding meaning, but meaning is believed to be socially and historically constructed and the focus is on bringing an awareness of how the social and historical world determine meaning and limit actions. The knowledge that is created in this paradigm is based on a vision of how the world should be (Morgaine, 1992; Tribe, 2001; Fossey, et al. 2002, p. 720). Therefore, although the interpretive paradigm and the critical-emancipatory paradigm share certain assumptions, there are other assumptions, as mentioned in the preceding discussion, that distinguish a critical-emancipatory paradigm from an interpretive paradigm.

Although this study shared certain assumptions with an interpretive paradigm, the critical-emancipatory paradigm was considered more central because of its link to critical theory, Habermas’s theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, and transformative learning theory. These theories in turn, informed the critical theoretical framework of this study, and therefore a critical-emancipatory paradigm was deemed appropriate. Furthermore, according to Ewert (1991), the interpretive paradigm has its limitations in that it only facilitates the creation of knowledge based on a participant’s perspective, but it does not expose how knowledge is influenced by social and ideological forces. These social and ideological forces are central to knowledge creation in a critical-emancipatory paradigm which is aimed at creating knowledge that can contribute to emancipation. During this study, the aim is to engender new knowledge with the potential to contribute to emancipation, by theorising theoretical concepts related to mindfulness, emancipation and social change. In the following section, the validity of the theory building process, which is central to the knowledge creation

process, is discussed. Particular attention is paid to Brookfield's criteria for critical theory building.

3.2.3. Validity in Theory Building

During the process of theory building the validity of any new theory that is developed must be considered. All research must use a certain set of criteria to validate the quality of its findings. However, in this particular study, it was not possible to apply concepts such as validity, reliability and objectivity in the same way as it is applied in quantitative research.

Weick (1989) asserts that validation has always been assumed to be the ultimate test of theory building and theories that have been tested have always been considered the most credible. However, he declares that a concern with validation can be counterproductive when it comes to theory building in the social sciences as validation is not the primary focus. Rather, theory building in the social sciences is aimed at highlighting new relationships that have not been identified before and could transform people's perspectives and actions. Weick (1989, p. 521) argues that in the natural sciences scientists choose problems that they can find solutions for. However, social scientists select problems that need solving, whether or not they have the tools to solve the identified problems.

Weick (1989) contends that theory building is based on a representation of reality, not reality itself, and that this representation can include interviews, reports, observations or other forms of data. It is more likely that a sound theory will be developed if the representation is offered in sufficient detail, with the result that more assumptions can be revealed. Therefore, during this study, I strove to generate data that are as detailed as possible. Weick (1989, p. 523) proposes that "self-conscious manipulation of the selection process is the hallmark of theory construction" and that the number and diversity of selection criteria are vital. The greater the number of criteria applied, the more likely it is that the theory building process will result in a sound theory. It is also important that the criteria are applied consistently and not adjusted frequently, because this will hinder understanding. When the selection criteria are applied, links will be established that can be compared to theoretical assumptions (Weick, 1989, p. 524).

Furthermore, to ensure the validity of the theory, Brookfield's criteria for critical theory building were applied in this study where possible. However, Brookfield (1992) admits that it is unlikely that a theory will ever satisfy all the criteria and that setting such a standard is unrealistic, therefore I included the criteria that could contribute towards the theory building process. Brookfield (1992), like Cornelissen and Durand (2014), notes the importance of highlighting assumptions pertaining to the theoretical framework, which is characteristic to a critical analysis process. Brookfield (1992, p. 87) refers to this assumption as "assumption awareness" and considers it the first criterion for a critical theory. During this study, the data analysis process highlights the assumptions in the empirical data, while the theoretical assumptions are analysed during the theory building process. The second criterion that Brookfield (1992, p. 87) highlights and refers to as "ethical attention", denotes the importance of "ethical dilemmas implicit in the practices which derive from its theoretical formulations". Brookfield posits that loneliness and isolation may be experienced as a result of transformative learning, for instance. In order to be ethical, as suggested by Brookfield, the analysis process of this study included an honest discussion of possible negative experiences.

Brookfield (1992, p. 88) identifies the third criterion as "contextual sensitivity", which is essential for a critical adult education theory. It means that the theory building process needs to include an explanation of the sample which should include information about the sample's gender, their social class, their cultural affiliations, geographical location and their position of power in relation to others. The fourth criterion, namely 'reformulative consistency' was difficult to apply in this study, because it implies that a theory will change over time as new research is conducted. However, as suggested by Brookfield (1992, p. 89), I attempted to adopt an "invitational tone" in this study that encourages further research and critique. The fifth criterion is called "value-judgement explicitness" (Brookfield, 1992, p. 90). This criterion denotes that a theory should contribute towards the improvement of the world in general and the development of a sense of agency in adults that is "respectful, sensitive, and responsive" (Brookfield, 1992, p. 91).

In the following section, critical theory and how the theoretical framework was constructed to enable the analysis of empirical data and to generate new knowledge will be discussed in more detail.

3.3. CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory and the critical-emancipatory research paradigm, which share certain assumptions with the interpretive paradigm, resonated with the aims and research questions of this study. According to Brookfield (1992) and Bentz and Shapiro (1998), critical theory is aimed at improving the world in general and creating hope (Brookfield, 2005b). One of the aims of this study is to improve the world by investigating relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Therefore, a critical theoretical framework was an appropriate choice. Furthermore, the study was conducted in the field of adult education and learning and it was important to consider a critical theory that was associated with adult education and learning. Authors such as Ewert (1991), Terry (1997), Brookfield (2005b), Crick and Joldersma (2007), Merriam et al. (2007), English and Mayo (2012) and Sandberg (2012) recognise the work of Habermas, specifically pertaining to adult education and learning, therefore it was suitable to include the critical theory of Habermas in this study. However, it is important to note that, in the academic literature, Habermas's work has been described as overly theoretical by Terry (1997), but he still argues that it can provide a new perspective in which to examine issues of education. On a similar note, Payrow Shabani (2003, p. 4) describes Habermas's work as "overwhelming in terms both of its scope and volume", which can make it challenging for scholars to engage with.

Although my literature review confirmed the large volume as well as complicated and theoretical nature of the work of Habermas, it provided a sound foundation for transformative learning theory that was developed by Mezirow. This was another reason why I selected the critical theory of Habermas as a theoretical framework. Brookfield (2005b, p. 13) describes Mezirow as "probably the most influential contemporary theorist of adult learning" and links his work to critical theory in adult education and learning. This link to critical theory and the work of Habermas is thus confirmed by Mezirow (1991a, 1996), Newman (2012b), Baert and Da Silva (2010) as well as English and Mayo (2012). Mezirow (1996, p. 158) emphasises the link between transformative learning and critical theory when he describes transformative learning theory as a "critical theory of adult learning". Consequently, based on the academic literature, Habermas's critical theory in combination with transformative learning theory was used to develop a critical theoretical framework to analyse the data collected and to produce new knowledge relevant to the study.

3.3.1. The Theory of Knowledge-Constitutive Interests

The theory of knowledge-constitutive interests as developed by Habermas (1972), creates the aperture for critical theory to influence adult education and learning practices and theory. Yet, authors like Merriam et al. (2007, p. 253) recognise that “most practitioners in adult education are unaware of critical theory’s potential for examining practice or illuminating the nature of adult learning”. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 251) refer to Habermas as the “primary spokesperson for critical theory”. In the critical theory of Habermas, rationality is central and closely related to what is considered to be knowledge, how knowledge is gained and how it influences actions. Habermas describes the relationship between knowledge and rationality as interrelated, with rationality having an impact on knowledge and knowledge having an impact on what is considered to be rational (Habermas, 1984). Habermas’s project to expand what is deemed to be rational, is described by Thomassen (2005, p. 548) as “an attempt to rescue the emancipatory potential of modernity”. Habermas (1972, p. 311) describes rationality at an individual level as that which translates to ideology on a social level: “From everyday experience we know that ideas serve often enough to furnish our actions with justifying motives in place of real ones. What is called rationalization at this level is called ideology at the level of collective action”.

Habermas (1972) observes that our interests in either controlling nature, achieving social harmony or self-development, are a response to different problems that present themselves as part of the human experience. As a result, he developed the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests to describe the relationship between knowledge and actions as well as to demonstrate the relationship between knowledge, social structures and the past. Habermas observes that people use knowledge-constitutive interests to explain daily experiences and that it determines the type of knowledge that is created. He declares that each form of knowledge is based on a different type of rationality and that rationality is central to the way that humans acquire and use knowledge. Therefore, in each category of interest there is an appropriate form of rationality that should be applied. In this way, Habermas developed alternative types of rationality and it became possible to employ rationality for the emancipatory project (Ewert, 1991; Mezirow 2000; Thomassen, 2005; Gouthro, 2006).

Yet, the focus on rationality has been critiqued in the academic literature. Hart (1990) argues that Habermas is too focused on rationality and that there is a need for a more holistic concept of adult education and learning. Van Woerkom (2010, p. 347) refers to the “rationalistic bias in critical reflection” and asserts that theorising processes in critical theory does not include emotion. Orr (2002, p. 480) verifies this view, by arguing that knowledge which is created exclusively in the cognitive (rational) domain, cannot bring about deep levels of transformation and social change. Learning that focuses on the cognitive domain exclusively is incomplete and limited and a more holistic approach is required. According to Orr (2002) the development of a more holistic approach to learning is the only way to truly address oppressive ideologies and bring about change. My study responds to this call for a more holistic approach to adult education and learning.

Another author in the academic debates who is sceptical towards the focus on rationality in critical theory is Callahan (2004, p. 75) who asserts:

Critical theory, in particular associated with the Frankfurt School, typically focuses on rationality, both as means of domination and a mechanism for resisting such domination. The very essence of critical theory is its attempt to emancipate dominated people through reason.

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However, this focus on reason exclusively in itself, indicates domination of mind over body as argued by Orr (2002). Van Woerkom (2010, p. 347) agrees with this perspective, stating that the failure to include emotion in critical theory “reflects a strong cultural bias in Western societies”. Callahan (2004) declares that taking action is central to critical theory, yet, this is not always achieved. She believes that the reason for this failure to inspire action is a consequence of the focus on rationality as a means to emancipate people, while ignoring emotion in critical theory. Callahan (2004, p. 75) claims that “the very praxis of critical theory relies on emotion as its catalyst”. She continues:

Feelings play an important role in the praxis of critical theory because, when they accompany critical awareness, they can motivate individuals to take constructive action. To recognize this potential, however, we must first end critical theory’s cult of rationality (Callahan, 2004, p. 82).

In his theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, Habermas (1972, p. 308) identifies three categories of knowledge-constitutive interests, namely technical-cognitive interest, practical-cognitive interest and emancipatory-cognitive interest, which can all be associated with the generation of knowledge. These categories determine what is regarded as knowledge, how new knowledge is discovered and how it is discerned what knowledge is warranted. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 254) propose that Habermas's three types of knowledge "present a framework for understanding and critiquing adult education as a discipline and a field of practice", which is why the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests was included in the theoretical framework.

However, the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation is the most prominent in this study. To provide a more complete overview of Habermas's knowledge-constitutive interests, a discussion of the technical-cognitive interest and practical interest in knowledge creation is also included in the following sections.

3.3.1.1. The Technical-Cognitive Interest in Knowledge Creation

The first knowledge-constitutive interest identified by Habermas (1972) is based on interaction with the natural and social environment and is very similar to positivist knowledge. Positivist knowledge is comparable to knowledge created within an objectivist paradigm (Ewert, 1991). The technical-cognitive interest in knowledge creation is related to instrumental rationality, which involves the manipulation or control of the environment or other people and is aimed at task-oriented problem-solving, improved efficiency and performance. The focus is on the prediction of observable physical or social events, based on empirical knowledge and determined by technical rules. This type of knowledge may enable a person to perform certain tasks, do a job and solve certain practical problems. The development of knowledge relies on instrumental rational reasoning and reduces rationality to simply a means to achieve increased production. Instrumental rational actions are goal-orientated, and are usually applied in a feedback-controlled environment in a presumably objective situation. This view of rationality is useful in the natural sciences where the focus is on scientific methods that must produce technically useful knowledge. However, Habermas argues that this view of rationality is too limited as well as inadequate and needed to be expanded because moral and ethical questions were typically excluded from discussions

about social development (Habermas, 1972; Ewert, 1991; Brocklesby & Cummings, 1996; Mezirow, 2000; Gouthro, 2006).

This view is similar to the earlier Frankfurt School theorists, including Adorno and Horkheimer, who became critical of reason because of the focus on instrumental rationality and the resulting limitations to create other forms of knowledge. Habermas (1972, p. 4) contends that this type of knowledge “...appears narrow-minded, and the only task remaining is then the critical dissolution of the boundaries of positive knowledge”.

3.3.1.2. The Practical-Cognitive Interest in Knowledge Creation

The second knowledge-constitutive interest introduced by Habermas (1972) is associated with practical interests and comparable to knowledge that is created in the interpretive paradigm because the focus is on developing knowledge through the understanding of meaning (Ewert, 1991). The practical-cognitive interest can be related to the use of language to promote understanding and to organise social actions in such a way that it satisfies shared interests and needs. The practical-cognitive interest is based on communicative rationality and is rooted in interactions with other people. It also involves learning to understand the meaning of what other people is communicating to you and the reasons for their actions. According to this category of knowledge creation, Habermas developed a theory of communicative action based on the mutual agreement among participants in free dialogue (Ewert, 1991; Habermas, 1984 & 1987, as cited in Thomassen, 2005). In this category of knowledge, communication and language is the link between what is considered to be rational and reliable knowledge. When communicating, a statement is judged as rational or irrational based on the trustworthiness of the knowledge that the statement is conveying. This statement can then be evaluated based on evidence that can support the claim and by aligning it to an accepted social norm. If it is judged as rational, it can inspire action. If a statement cannot be explained or motivated, it is deemed irrational. People are behaving rationally if they reach an agreement through communication and can justify the decision by providing rational reasons for their decision (Habermas, 1984).

The process described here is closely connected to the use of language and must include at least two people who are capable of communicating by means of language and taking action. Beliefs, intentions and understanding can be discussed in this way and although

these belong to the subjective world they can be brought into the objective world through dialogue (Habermas, 1984). According to Habermas (1984), language is a means of communication that helps people to understand the actions or behaviour of others. Actions are acceptable if they adhere to the existing norms that are considered justified by those to whom they apply. If an action does not conform to a norm, the action itself as well as the appropriateness of the norm in question must be examined.

Efficient communication is central to facilitate understanding and learning in society, which Habermas refers to as “the lifeworld”. The lifeworld is described as a place where people interact on a daily basis, sharing ideas, values and beliefs based on their assumptions of how the world around them works. The home, local community and civil society can be representative of the lifeworld, but in essence it is a structure of accepted assumptions of how the world works which reveals the values of society. Habermas acknowledges that because people are emerged in their lifeworlds, it is difficult to recognise assumptions and fully understand the impact of it (Gouthro, 2006). Furthermore, Habermas (1987, as cited in Gouthro, 2006) argues that the system, whether social, political or economic, determines the daily lives, or lifeworlds, of society by means of power. He maintains that historically, the lifeworld and the system were not as far removed from each other, but with the rise of modernity, the system has become so complex that it has caused a separation between the system and the lifeworld. The system now determines the lifeworld and world views are developed to support and keep the system in place. These world views determine what is deemed to be acceptable behaviour, beliefs and goals in society.

Habermas (1984) calls a person rational if they are able to evaluate their desires and feelings in terms of their specific cultural standards and values, or lifeworld, but they are even more rational if they can question these standards. Rationality is demonstrated by a person’s communication and actions which are rooted in good reason and motivations. Any behaviour that is controversial requires an examination in terms of communication that must adhere to certain conditions. This communication represents the process of knowledge creation, during which knowledge and insight is required (Habermas, 1984). Yet, this process has been critiqued as an unattainable ideal by authors such as Collard and Law (1989), Hart (1990), Bamber and Crowther (2012) and Murphy and Bamber (2012). However, Habermas believes this communicative process

is the way to recognise how society is organised and how it can be changed. The communicative process is based on the critical examination of assumptions, morals and beliefs that guide behaviour and considering the legitimacy of information that is communicated from one party to another. This process is referred to as ‘communicative rationality’, or discourse (Mezirow, 2000; Gouthro, 2006). Habermas (1984) describes it as reaching understanding through language, which leads to rational knowledge and rational behaviour.

3.3.1.3. The Emancipatory-Cognitive Interest in Knowledge Creation

Building on the earlier discussion of the critical-emancipatory paradigm, I will now explain in more detail how this paradigm is influenced by an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation. It is the knowledge-constitutive interest that can be closely linked to the aims of this study, which is to create new knowledge that can contribute towards creating an improved world through investigating relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

The emancipatory-cognitive category of knowledge creation refers to knowledge that results from self-reflection and brings the unconscious to the conscious. Habermas (1972, p. vii) states that people should return to the “forgotten experience of reflection”, declaring that people do not reflect on a regular basis because it has been renounced by positivist arguments. Habermas (1972, p. 314) observes that “in self-reflection knowledge for the sake of knowledge attains congruence with the interest in autonomy and responsibility. The emancipatory cognitive interest aims at the pursuit of reflection as such”. Habermas (1972) does not provide a definition of emancipation but it can be deduced that he compares emancipation to “autonomy and responsibility”. To support this statement, Habermas (1972, p. 314) proposes that an “emancipated society” is one “whose members’ autonomy and responsibility had been realized”.

Consequently, this category of knowledge creation is related to emancipatory interests; our desire to be free and autonomous, to grow and develop, which fuels the human interest in self-knowledge. Emancipatory interests often lead to knowledge of how our past influences our current lives as well as issues associated with power in society (Habermas, 1972; Ewert, 1991; Mezirow, 1981; Mezirow, 1991a; Cranton & Roy, 2003). When individuals become aware of how their knowledge has been distorted by social and environmental factors, it can be seen as enlightenment. This is a necessary

condition for emancipation, which means that the individual is free and can take self-determined actions that will change the social system and can be considered social change (Ewert, 1991). Mezirow, (1981, p. 5) describes emancipation in this way:

Emancipation is from libidinal, institutional or environmental forces which limit our options and rational control over our lives but have been taken for granted as beyond human control. Insights gained through critical self-awareness are emancipatory in the sense that at least one can recognise the correct reasons for his or her problems.

Rationality within this category of knowledge creation requires the ability to be self-reflective. Habermas (1972) proposes that people search for meaning in order to reach a point of self-understanding. By interpreting experience, a person is engaged in the process of meaning making. If this is to be analysed from a critical point of view, meaning is an expression of ideological and social influences that has the potential to be transformed. Self-reflection may reveal ideological and social influences and allow the exploration of the consciousness of those who are influenced by ideology. Habermas (1972, p. 208) explains: “Self-reflection is at once intuition and emancipation, comprehension and liberation from dogmatic dependence. The dogmatism that reason undoes both analytically and practically is false consciousness: error and unfree existence in particular”. Furthermore, Habermas (1972, p. 212) claims that the “act of self-reflection that ‘changes a life’ is a movement of emancipation”. Drawing on Habermas (1972), Ewert (1991) as well as Cranton and Roy (2003) argue that emancipatory knowledge is created by critically questioning ourselves as well as the social world that we are emerged in. Similarly, Merriam et al. (2007) point out that the creation of emancipatory knowledge is aimed at uncovering the social systems that determine our knowledge.

Cranton and Roy (2003) refer to self-reflection as “the capacity to be aware and critical of ourselves and our social and cultural context”. Self-reflection promotes the ability to recognise the cultural as well as social standards and values that were inflicted on us and influenced our knowledge. Furthermore, it prompts the recognition of how cultural and social standards determine our own as well as other people’s wants and needs. It reveals how subjective our knowledge is and includes the ability to evaluate whether these standards are acceptable and constructive. Therefore, it enables a person to

recognise the constraints of social knowledge (Ewert, 1991; Cranton & Roy, 2003). Yet, this emancipatory-cognitive category of knowledge creation is not limited to the ability to reflect on the conditions that created knowledge, but also the ability to change social and speech actions that were related to that knowledge. It includes the willingness to act in a different way to free oneself and be more authentic and truthful. Therefore, in order to overcome the limitations of previously created knowledge based on one's social context, enlightenment and action are required (Ewert, 1991). Callahan (2004, p. 76) confirms this view by stating: "Theory in action, or praxis, is the heart of critical theory".

Emancipatory knowledge develops by means of the process of self-reflection, which will reveal distorted self-knowledge that in turn prevents a person from acting in a way that is reflective of their true interests. Emancipatory knowledge is therefore created by critically questioning ourselves as well as the social and cultural systems that we are emerged in. Psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology fall in this domain of learning because it requires the consideration of psychological factors to realise how an ideology determines one's moral, social and political reality (Mezirow, 1981). Habermas (1972, p. 55) describes self-reflection as a process that challenges domination and ideology. Through self-reflection, a person will understand the illusions of ideology and "the subject emancipates itself from itself" (Habermas, 1973, p. 183). In this way "dramatic personal and social changes becomes possible by becoming aware of the way ideologies – sexual, racial, religious, educational, occupational, political, economic and technological – have created or contributed to our dependency on reified powers" (Mezirow, 1981, p. 6). Emancipation becomes possible when individuals change their actions based on this new awareness, or in other words, take emancipatory action. By doing so, social activity is changed and it will have social consequences which are related to social reproduction. Thus, individual change is not limited to the individual only, but it can also be connected to social change (Ewert, 1991; Cranton & Roy, 2003).

Yet, Dirkx (2012) argues that adult education and learning that is framed in critical theory often neglects to attend to critical theory in terms of the individual, particularly individual emotion. In a discussion about self-reflection, which is central to emancipatory learning, Habermas (1972, p. 234) recognises the importance of emotion in critical theory when he states "it includes two moments equally: The cognitive, and

the affective and motivational ... Critique terminates in a transformation of the affective-emotional basis”. However, although Habermas recognises the role of emotion in critical theory, he focuses on rational reasoning to achieve emancipation. The emphasis on rationality to achieve emancipation and social change is typical of critical theory and during this study the recognition of feminist and anti-racist theories during an earlier stage could have expanded the theoretical framework.

Critical theorists aim to accomplish the goals of emancipation and social change by investigating social reality to find ways to improve and change society (Callahan, 2004, p. 77). Authors like Dirkx (2012) and Callahan (2004, p. 77) posit that “emotions are even more important in creating the individual change that drives social change. Social change begins with recognizing and implementing individual change”. The academic literature highlights the need to further investigate the role of emotions in critical theory as it has been neglected in the past. I concur with the following perspective, namely, that the role of emotion has been underused in critical theory, in particular in relation to the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation. Therefore, the academic literature prompts a theoretical aperture that this study responds to.

Habermas did not elaborate on the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation in the same way he developed the practical interest in knowledge creation. Therefore, it was necessary to look at other theories, such as transformative learning theory, rooted in the three knowledge-constitutive interests identified by Habermas. Furthermore, Habermas did not focus on education in his work, therefore, according to Ewert (1991, p. 346), “the significance of Habermas’s work for education is best viewed from the perspective of the educational literature that applies Habermas’s theories and concepts”, as reflected in transformative learning theory. Consequently, transformative learning theory is used in this study to further explore the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation. This theory will be discussed in detail in the following section.

3.4. A CRITICAL APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING: TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

In the academic literature, authors use a variety of terms to refer to transformative learning theory as developed by Mezirow. Even Mezirow does not use one term consistently. Mezirow (1989, 1992, 1991a, 1994, 1997b, 1998a, 2007a) refers to

“transformation theory” but he also uses the term “transformative learning theory” (Mezirow, 1997a, p. 5; 2009, p. 92). Other authors who use the term “transformative learning theory” include Welton (1995a, p. 6); Taylor (1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2007, 2008); Dirkx (1998); Cranton and Roy (2003); Kitchenham (2008, p.104); Illeris (2009, p. 3); Mälkki (2010, 2012) and Mälkki and Green (2014, 2016). Clark and Wilson (1991, p. 75) refer to the “theory of transformational learning” while Tennant (1993, p. 34) and Hoggan, Mälkki and Finnegan (2017, p. 49) call it the “theory of perspective transformation”. I have decided to use the term ‘transformative learning theory’ for this study, because Mezirow (2009) has used the term in his more recent work, while it is also used in the majority of the academic literature.

Transformative learning theory, as developed by Mezirow, has primarily been influenced by the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, founded by Habermas (Taylor, 1998; Baumgartner, 2001; Mezirow, 2000, 2009; Kitchenham, 2008; English & Mayo, 2012; Newman, 2012a). Brookfield (2001, p. 7) confirms: “Critical theory, as diverted via Habermas, undergirds important aspects of the transformative learning theory of Mezirow (1991), particularly his highly influential formulation 20 years ago of a critical theory of adult learning and education (1981)”. Taylor (2001, p. 234) concurs with this view and describes transformative learning theory as a prominent theory in adult education and learning by asserting that “Mezirow introduced a theory of adult learning that has had significant impact on the field of adult education”. More recently, Hoggan et al. (2017, p. 49) have added their voice to the views on transformative learning theory as follows:

It arguably remains the most robust theoretical elucidation of learning in the whole corpus of literature concerned with transformative learning. The theory of perspective transformation has proved to be a great asset to the research and scholarship in the field of adult education which has provided a solid theoretical base for understanding complex learning phenomena.

Hoggan et al. (2017, p. 52) also highlight the critical stance of transformative learning theory:

Transformative learning has for decades been viewed as something more profound, more critical, and more empowering than other forms of learning. The promise is that it allows one to critically move beyond those seemingly self-evident

assumptions governing one's thinking, feeling, and acting that have been unquestioningly internalized through socialization and education.

As alluded to earlier, Habermas (1972, p. 308) identifies three categories in his theory of knowledge-constitutive interests, namely the technical-cognitive interest, the practical-cognitive interest and the emancipatory-cognitive interest, which can be associated with the creation of knowledge. According to Mezirow (1981, p. 3), the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests suggests a critical theory of adult education and learning with three domains of adult learning. Mezirow (1981, p. 16) elaborates: "By clearly differentiating these three interrelated but distinct 'knowledge constitutive' areas of cognitive interest, Habermas has provided the foundation for formulating a comprehensive theory of adult education". Each of the knowledge-constitutive interests translates into a distinctive domain of learning which can be used to further develop Habermas's theory. Mezirow (1981, p. 4) explains: "By extension, each learning domain suggests to me a different mode of personal learning and different learning needs". These domains identified by Mezirow (1981) are the instrumental domain of learning, related to the technical-cognitive interest, the communicative domain of learning related to the practical-cognitive interest and the emancipatory domain of learning, related to the emancipatory-cognitive interest. These domains determine what is considered to be knowledge, how new knowledge is discovered and how it is discerned what kind or type of knowledge is warranted (Mezirow, 1981, p. 4). Mezirow (1981, p. 21) describes it in this way: "Each of three distinct but interrelated domains – controlling and manipulating the environment, social interaction and perspective transformation – involves different ways of knowing and hence different learning needs, different educational strategies and methods...". Mezirow (1981, p. 3) proposes that the third domain of learning, emancipatory learning, or what he also refers to as "perspective transformation", is the "least familiar of Habermas's domains of learning" and that transformative learning theory can advance this domain of learning.

As pointed out earlier, Habermas did not develop the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, or as interpreted by Mezirow (2000, p. 10) as the emancipatory domain of learning, as extensively as he had developed the practical-cognitive interest in knowledge creation. However, in transformative learning theory, the emancipatory domain of learning incorporates the process of perspective transformation and Mezirow declares that it is an extension of the emancipatory domain of learning (Mezirow, 1981).

Mezirow (1981, p. 6) describes the process of perspective transformation as “the emancipatory process”. Furthermore, Mezirow (1981, p. 18) claims that perspective transformation is “the process central to the third domain of learning”, which is the emancipatory domain of learning. However, Mezirow (1989, p. 175) admits, as a result of critique from Collard and Law (1989), that referring to the emancipatory domain of learning as a third domain of learning may be confusing. He states: “My having designated emancipatory learning as a separate and, in some sense, comparable domain of learning was confusing. It seems to make more sense to refer to it as a process rather than as a domain of learning”. Although Mezirow’s (1978) theory was developed and adjusted over the years, it remains evident that his transformative learning theory, in which the process of perspective transformation is central, can be seen as an extension of the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation.

Transformative learning theory redefines emancipatory learning as the process of perspective transformation because it is relevant to both instrumental and communicative learning (Mezirow, 1981, p. 21 & 2000, p. 10). Mezirow proposes that transformative learning is the result of the critical consideration of instrumental and communicative knowledge and is synonymous with perspective transformation, or the emancipatory process, which is central to transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1981, p. 6; Cranton, 2011, p. 77). In this way, transformative learning theory incorporates the three knowledge-constitutive interests identified by Habermas (1972) to formulate a critical adult learning theory (Mezirow, 1991a, 1996; Baert & Da Silva, 2010, p. 221; English & Mayo, 2012, p.218). The theory can be considered critical, because it describes knowledge about transformation, which is considered similar to emancipation as described by Mezirow, and further develops the emancipatory domain of learning. Therefore, transformative learning theory produces knowledge on emancipation. According to Bentz and Shapiro (1998), producing knowledge that pertains to emancipation is one of the goals of critical theory, therefore transformative learning theory can be closely related to critical theory.

The process of perspective transformation is used in this study to analyse mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change in terms of transformative learning theory which can be associated with an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation. Perspective transformation is described by Mezirow (1981, p. 6) as

the emancipatory process of becoming aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstructing this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings.

It can be described as the emancipatory learning process during which adults become aware of their culturally determined roles and relationships and how they can overcome them. In transformative learning theory it is proposed that when an adult encounters an experience or a problem for which there is no apparent solution based on past experience and knowledge, it will lead to reflection. Individuals may reflect on experience (what happened), the process (how it happened) and the premises (beliefs and assumptions that guided our actions). When an individual reflects on these premises, they are engaged in the process of critical reflection during which they challenge their norms and assumptions (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). According to Mezirow (1990b), critical reflection can lead to a transformation in the way that a person perceives the world.

There are three common themes found in transformative learning theory of which the first is experience, followed by critical reflection and thirdly, rational discourse. Critical reflection and rational discourse are identified as the basis of this type of learning by Mezirow (1981). This is noteworthy in relation to knowledge creation within a critical-emancipatory paradigm which, according to Ewert (1991), is focused on rationality to produce knowledge. These themes are also important with respect to the emancipatory learning domain, because the process of perspective transformation, which is significant in transformative learning theory, has been emphasised by Mezirow (1981, p. 18) as central to the emancipatory domain of learning. In the following sections, these themes of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse will be discussed in more detail.

3.4.1. Transformative Learning Theory: Experience

Mezirow (1997a, p. 5) suggests that “a defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience. He continues: “Facilitating such understanding is the cardinal goal of adult education”. Mezirow (1994, pp. 222-223) defines learning as “the social process of construing and appropriating new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action”. As these statements illustrate, it is the experience of the individual that provides the basis for

reflection and is the first step in transformative learning (Mezirow, 1995). According to Mezirow (1981, p. 7), adults have a natural tendency to move toward new perspectives which can be described as a “quest for meaning” and he equates making meaning to the learning process (Mezirow, 2000, p. 3; Taylor, 2000, p. 287). Meaning is an interpretation of experience and to make meaning Mezirow (1991a) believes that meaning schemes and meaning perspectives are employed. Perspective transformation describes the process of how these meaning structures are modified. Meaning schemes refer to specific knowledge, value judgements, beliefs and emotions that determine how individuals interpret specific experiences, their behaviour and opinions. Meaning schemes are adjusted frequently and form the building blocks of meaning perspectives which represent a person’s general perspective, viewpoint, evaluations, beliefs and theories. Meaning perspectives are habitual expectations, created by ideologies, beliefs, assumptions, cultural and social norms and are used to control what is perceived, understood and remembered (Mezirow, 1991a; Taylor, 1998).

These meaning perspectives determine how an individual interprets experience and enables an individual to decide what is judged as good or bad, true or false, appropriate or inappropriate and right or wrong. These perspectives are usually acquired uncritically during childhood and socialisation processes, frequently involving momentous encounters with authority figures such as parents, teachers and mentors. They enable an individual to interpret occurrences in their daily lives, but because it is a reflection of cultural and psychological assumptions, it results in a subjective world view (Mezirow, 1991a; Taylor, 1998, p. 7). Meaning perspectives are used to organise an experience, to interpret it and to give meaning to it. If an experience is incorporated into the perspective, it reinforces the perspective or, slightly adjusts it, if there is some distinction from previous experiences. If an experience cannot be incorporated into the meaning perspective, it is either discarded or it transforms the meaning perspective to adjust to the new experience (Taylor, 1998, p.7).

3.4.1.1. Awareness of Experience and Mindfulness

As discussed in the preceding section, experience is central to transformative learning theory but it is also prominent when developing mindfulness. Consequently, I discuss experience in relation to mindfulness in this section as it has the potential to inform transformative learning theory. When cultivating mindfulness, you are encouraged to

observe your own experience and not to be completely immersed in your experience. Mindfulness is aimed at the disidentification from the content of one's mind, which can include thoughts, feelings, self-concept and memories, and enable the person to look at the experience with objectivity and clarity. When an individual can observe their own experience, the experience in itself changes and development occurs (Shapiro, Carlson, Astin & Freedman, 2006, pp. 377-378). This ability can be cultivated through mindfulness and will continually accelerate as mindfulness practice continues. If a person can observe their own consciousness, or internal and external experience, they realise that they are separate from their consciousness and less likely to identify with it. As a result, a person will notice, for example, thoughts, emotions and physical pain but they have the ability to recognise these for what they are without being defined and controlled by them (Shapiro et al. 2006, pp. 377-378).

An awareness of experiences as cultivated by mindfulness, can be useful when exploring transformative learning theory. Mezirow (2000, p. 7) confirms the importance of awareness and asserts that there are two levels of individual awareness. Firstly, individuals become aware of their own thoughts and feelings, followed by an awareness of the context and source of their knowledge, values and feelings, which enables the person to critically reflect on these assumptions. For transformative learning to occur, an individual needs to be able to observe personal viewpoints and accept that the new perspective may differ from what was previously assumed to be true (Shapiro et al., 2011). However, Langer and Imber (1979, as cited in Langer, 1993) point out that people do not reconsider what they mindlessly accept as true. Langer (1997, p. 4 as cited in Mezirow, 2000, p. 7) observes that awareness is necessary to encourage reconsideration. It is this awareness that can be supported and promoted by mindfulness, because by cultivating mindfulness one is encouraged to be aware of one's own experience.

Langer (1993) argues that although teaching critical thinking, which is central to transformative learning theory, assists people in reconsidering their accepted truths and assumptions, it is not adequate, and other methods to encourage the individual's ability to consider alternative and new perspectives should be investigated. Mindfulness, which is aimed at developing awareness, can be identified as one method to improve one's capacity to observe one's own viewpoint, biases, beliefs and assumptions as well as

one's ability to relinquish old assumptions and not be limited by it. Therefore, mindfulness can assist learners in developing more inclusive perspectives in general and promote the process of perspective transformation (Shapiro et al., 2011). I agree with this perspective, yet there is a need for further research to confirm this point of view. It also created the theoretical aperture for me to investigate mindfulness using theoretical concepts pertaining to transformative learning theory.

The academic literature reveals that the intellectual acceptance of logical insights is substantially supported by the experiential awareness of these insights. Individuals identify with and have an attachment to concepts such as ethnicity, self, gender and many other beliefs and assumptions that are contained in a false consciousness and may be challenged during the process of perspective transformation (Orr, 2002, p. 492). Intellectual insight alone is not enough to break the attachment to these ideas, but experiential awareness of false consciousness and beliefs creates the possibility for change. Methods that cultivate mindfulness, such as meditation, can promote and encourage this awareness. These methods are designed to enable individuals to recognise the attachment to these concepts, ideas and beliefs and the emotional responses that accompany them and the methods can be effective in removing these attachments (Orr, 2002, p. 492).

This view is validated by Kabat-Zinn (1994), who argues that mindfulness results in an awareness and non-attachment to the content in our minds, and Brady (2008, p. 94), who asserts that mindfulness will enable an individual to observe and accept thoughts and feelings while not being carried away by them. However, it is important to note that this is a gradual process and that awareness is developed over time. Awareness could empower individuals and enable them to make choices about the attitudes, concepts and beliefs that they wish to uphold. It creates the aperture that mindfulness, through the creation of awareness, could encourage perspective transformation and the emancipatory goals associated with transformative learning theory.

Transformative learning theory has been critiqued for its emphasis on rational thought by authors such as Langer (1993), Orr (2002) and Duerr, Zajonc and Dana (2003), who contend that transformation that is pursued through intellectual methods alone, will not result in a deep level of transformation. Langer (1993) declares that critical thinking alone is not enough to facilitate transformation and that other methods to promote

individual transformation, such as mindfulness, should be investigated. Duerr et al. (2003) claim that emotional and intuitive factors should also be taken into account and similarly Orr (2002, p. 480) states that transformation cannot be limited to an intellectual level. According to Orr (2002, p. 480), it is on a physical, emotional and spiritual level that an individual experiences the most resistance to change, therefore transformative learning cannot be limited to rational thought and intellectual methods. Based on these arguments, I propose that mindfulness can expand the scope of transformative learning theory to include other forms of knowing by promoting an awareness of experience. Furthermore, it can be argued that mindfulness fosters conditions that can support transformative learning and research that investigates mindfulness in relation to transformative learning theory can make an important contribution to the existing body of literature.

3.4.2. Transformative Learning Theory: Critical Reflection

The second theme of transformative learning theory, namely critical reflection, is identified by Mezirow as a differentiating characteristic of adult education and learning (Mezirow, 1981, p.11). Mezirow (1981) claims that only adults are capable of questioning the integrity of assumptions, beliefs, and values based on previous experience. It is the ability to recognise that what we consider to be true, and use to guide our actions, may not be accurate. Mezirow (1995, p. 46) describes reflection as the “process by which we change our minds literally and figuratively. It is the process of turning our attention to the justification for what we know, feel, believe and act upon”. Critical reflection refers to the consideration and evaluation of a past experience which may pertain to an object, an event, a perception, a thought, an action, a habit or any other past event. It can be an unconscious process, when something is judged as good or as bad without even considering the reason for the judgement, or it can be a conscious process during which the reasons for the judgement are examined. If the object or reflection is an assumption, be it epistemological, ethical, psychological, ideological, social, cultural or anything that pertains to experience, there is the potential to modify an accepted frame of reference. This means that the process of critical reflection has the potential to bring about significant personal and social transformation (Mezirow, 1998a). Mezirow (2007a, p. 11) believes the transformation of an accepted frame of reference is emancipatory: “Transformative learning experiences are

emancipatory in that they free learners from the constraints and distortions of their own frames of reference”.

Drawing on the work of the philosopher Harvey Siegal (1988, as cited in Mezirow, 1998a, p. 186) Mezirow states that “critical reflection is principled thinking; ideally, it is impartial, consistent, and non-arbitrary”. Principles are determined in a rational way but in adult education and learning they are context-specific and are based on cultural and time references. For example, it is quite common for principles to be adjusted over time. Although principles themselves are context-specific, they are determined in a universal way by a process that Mezirow (1998a, p. 186) refers to as a “critical reflection on assumptions” (CRA). This is achieved by entering into a discourse with others who assess alternative beliefs. It requires the ability to critically reflect on one’s own assumptions in relation to reason assessment, which is a distinctly adult dimension of learning.

Yet, Brookfield (2012) argues that reflecting on assumptions alone is not enough to be considered a critical reflection. He contends that ideology should be included in reflection processes to be considered critical, but he acknowledges that this is not easy. Brookfield (2012, p. 293) continues: “To challenge ideology we need to be aware of how it lives within us and works against us by furthering the interests of others. Without this element of ideology critique the process of clarifying and questioning assumptions is reflective but it is not necessarily critical”. He clarifies: “Critical reflection as ideology critique focuses on helping people come to an awareness of how capitalism shapes belief systems and assumptions (i.e. ideologies)” (Brookfield, 2012, p. 299). Although Mezirow does not respond to Brookfield directly, in a response to Collard and Law (1989), who voiced a similar critique, Mezirow states that he may have underemphasised the role of social aspects, such as ideology and social action, in his theory of transformative learning. He explains:

Adult education goals like social action, intellectual development, cognitive and moral development, self-actualization, democratic participation or liberation, and social or political goals like freedom, liberty, equality, justice, human rights and others are all of great importance, but they are only instrumental. From my perspective, their common purpose is to foster the conditions and abilities

necessary for an adult to understand his or her experience through free, full participation in critical discourse (Mezirow, 1989, p. 174).

Mezirow (1989, p. 172) warns that adult educators should not have specific political goals, which can be regarded as indoctrination. Instead, the goal of adult education should be critical reflection on “taken-for-granted relationships” which may be oppressive.

Based on the debates in the academic literature, I recognise the concerns voiced by authors such as Collard and Law (1989) and more recently Brookfield (2012). Yet, Mezirow’s warning that adult education and learning that is closely associated with specific political goals can easily be seen as indoctrination, raises an important point. In my opinion, it seems more authentic to allow adults to discover oppressive forces based on their own experiences rather than guiding them towards the recognition of a specific “taken-for-granted” perspective. With this study, I explore whether mindfulness can support this process which may prompt social change by transforming “taken-for-granted” perspectives.

3.4.3. Transformative Learning Theory: Rational Discourse

The third theme of transformative learning theory is rational discourse, which is considered the medium for critical reflection to turn into action. Discourse is central to transformative learning theory and is based on human communication and the ability to understand and critically reflect on what another person is communicating in terms of, for example, intentions, values, moral issues and feelings. Communication always includes these elements and therefore requires critical reflection on not only the meaning of the words but also the assumptions, morals, norms and truthfulness of what is communicated (Mezirow, 1998a, p. 188). Mezirow (1998a) argues that discourse is rational if it enables mutual understanding, if it is objective, if it allows the analysis of all actions and statements, and understanding is reached by considering evidence, insights and the strength of rational arguments.

In order to facilitate transformative learning through discourse, certain conditions such as trust, solidarity, security and empathy have to be created to enable the transformative learning process (Cranton & Kasl, 2012, p. 395). However, Cranton and Kasl (2012) as well as Newman (2012a) declare that it is impossible to create these conditions.

Furthermore, Cranton and Kasl (2012) assert that discourse is not always the only route to transformative learning, which indicates a need to investigate alternative routes to achieve transformation. My findings, which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, endorse this point of view that rational discourse is not the only way to achieve transformative learning. Mezirow limits the process of perspective transformation to the participation in rational discourse and has been criticised by many authors, such as Langer (1993), Taylor (1997, 1998, 2001), Baumgartner (2001¹⁶), Dirkx (2001, 2012), Orr (2002) and Duerr et al. (2003) for not including the affective and emotional aspects of learning in his theory of transformative learning. According to these authors, Mezirow does not address issues such as understanding emotions, feelings and values. According to Cranton and Kasl (2012), transformative learning is not limited to cognitive processes but include additional rational, social, relational and intuitive processes. In his later work Mezirow (2000) has recognised the importance of these aspects in the process of learning but the focus remained on critical reflection and discussion (Baumgartner, 2001).

With this study, I attempt to respond to this critical assessment of transformative learning theory in the academic literature by analysing how mindfulness can support other forms of knowledge that may also have an impact on transformative learning.

3.4.4. Transformative Learning: The Process of Perspective Transformation

The work of Mezirow (1978) introduces the process of perspective transformation, also referred to as the process of transformative learning, the transformation process or simply transformative learning in the academic literature. Mezirow (1981, p. 16; 1991a, p. 150; 2007a, p. 12) and others like Clark and Wilson (1991), Tennant (1993), Hoggan et al. (2017) refer to “perspective transformation”. Yet, Mezirow (1990a, p. 146) mentions both “perspective transformation” and the “transformation process” when discussing the same concept. Mezirow (2003, p. 61) and Dirkx, Mezirow and Cranton (2006, p. 124) call it “the process of transformative learning” while Mezirow (2000, p. 7) explains the term ‘transformative learning’ as follows:

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change,

¹⁶ Baumgartner cite Clark and Wilson, 1991; Lucas, 1994 and McDonald, Cervero and Courtenay, 1999

and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

Similar to the term ‘transformative learning theory’, there is also little continuity in the academic literature with regard to what constitutes transformative learning and perspective transformation, but I gathered that both refer to the same process.

There is evidence of extensive theoretical exploration of transformative learning and perspective transformation in the academic literature, but Hoggan et al. (2017, p. 61) maintain that “despite the ongoing development, there still exist many facets of perspective transformation that are undertheorized”. This points to an opportunity for further research and theorising pertaining to transformative learning theory, which this study responds to. The concepts transformative learning and perspective transformation are central to this study, with the focus on emancipation and emancipatory learning (Mezirow 1981, 2000). Emancipatory learning is derived by Mezirow from the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation as identified by Habermas. Mezirow (2003, p. 61) states: “Habermas’s concept of emancipatory learning is here interpreted as the process of transformative learning”. Seen from this perspective, transformative learning is emancipatory learning with the potential to prompt social change. The transformation is achieved by employing rational reflection on experience during which the learners become aware of their unconscious roles, beliefs and assumptions. Once a learner has recognised these assumptions and beliefs there is an opportunity to change it and make new choices.

Mezirow (2000, p. 3) observes that part of the human condition is the need to understand experiences, to make meaning of it and to integrate it into what is already known. If an individual is unable to make meaning or understand an experience, they fall back on tradition or uncritically accept explanations by authority figures. Therefore, Mezirow (2000, p. 3) believes it is important that adult education and learning promotes “contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions, and validating meaning by assessing reasons” which can result in perspective transformation (Duerr et al., 2003; Shapiro et al., 2011). Mezirow (1981, p. 7; 1994, p. 224; 2007b, p. 22; 2009, p. 18) identifies ten phases during the perspective transformation process. However, it is important to note that it is not essential that these steps or stages are followed. Although

learning was not analysed in terms of these phases during this study, they are included in the theoretical framework to provide an overview of the process.

During the process of perspective transformation, or transformative learning, the first phase usually denotes a disorientating dilemma. A disorientating dilemma represents the experience that is the foundation of perspective transformation. A disorientating dilemma is a life situation where previous perspectives are not effective in interpreting experience anymore. It requires change and learning and is often very difficult (Mezirow, 1981). Experiencing a disorientating dilemma is the first step towards perspective transformation which makes this type of learning very crisis-centred, and raises the question whether transformative learning is limited to individuals who are experiencing a crisis.

Following the experiential phase is the second phase, which is self-examination, and the third phase which is the critical assessment of assumptions (Mezirow, 1981, 2009; Taylor, 1998). The fourth phase is the recognition of the experience of others. During this step it is recognised that others have experienced similar dissatisfaction which resulted in transformative change. It is the recognition that what was thought to be a private dilemma is actually shared by others (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 209). Mezirow (1991a, p. 185) describes perspective transformation as a “social process” because people often engage with others in order to understand an experience or a dilemma that they are struggling to interpret for themselves. When a person finds a perspective that makes sense to them, they interpret it to make it their own, with the result that even when one is accepting a perspective expressed by another person, it will never be exactly the same. The social process can also include sharing these new perspectives with friends, peers and mentors and by means of rational discourse new perspectives are validated. If a new perspective is reinforced by others, it can assist in creating the possibility of transformation. This step is also an important step in the transformative learning process that could indicate social change. Mezirow (1998c) declares that if individuals find others that share transformed values, meaning perspectives and frames of references, it is an indication of social and cultural change. These social changes start in the family, in the workplace and in the community.

The fifth phase involves exploring the possibility of new roles, relationships and actions. During this step, new roles, relationships and actions are explored that are

different from roles, relationships and actions based on previously accepted beliefs (Mezirow, 1981, 2009; Brock, 2010). The sixth phase denotes a course of action that is planned. This step focuses on finding new ways to integrate the aforementioned new roles, relationships and actions with daily life (Mezirow, 1981; 2009; Brock, 2010). The seventh step has to do with new knowledge and skills that are acquired. The knowledge and skills to execute these plans are acquired and it often pertains to instrumental learning which involves manipulation or control of the environment or other people. It is usually aimed at task-oriented problem-solving, improved efficiency and performance (Mezirow, 1981, 1991a, 2000). The eighth phase consists of new roles that are experimented with. Individuals act in a new way that are different from their usual behaviour and not aligned with old beliefs (Mezirow, 1981, 2009; Brock, 2010). The ninth phase comprises the development of confidence and self-confidence, i.e. confidence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships that developed based on reactions and feedback from new behaviour (Mezirow, 2000; Brock, 2010).

The tenth and final phase refers to a new perspective which is integrated with an individual's life (Mezirow, 1981, 2009). However, Newman (2012a, p. 37) highlights that changes in behaviour is often viewed as perspective transformation, which is based on observable behaviour and the assumption that this indicates transformation. He cites examples such as a university professor acquiring new technological skills, which indicates that she acquired a new skill but cannot be considered transformative. Cranton and Kasl (2012, p. 395) concur with Newman's (2012a) perspective that new behaviour in itself cannot be considered evidence of transformation; it has to be linked to consciousness, or a changed habit of mind. Responding to this argument on transformative learning, Dirkx (2012, p. 399) agrees that the term 'transformative learning' is used and interpreted in too many different ways and often refers to any type of change or process of learning. The use of transformative learning becomes problematic when it is not well-grounded in theoretical foundations. If this is not the case, Dirkx (2012) believes that Newman (2012a) is justified in arguing that transformative learning is just another way to discuss learning in relation to change. Learning a new skill, acquiring new information, taking on a new role or occupation in itself is not enough to indicate transformative learning. Confirming the view of Cranton and Kasl (2012), Dirkx (2012, p. 400) points out that it is the development of

consciousness that distinguishes transformative learning from other types of adult education and learning.

In light of the academic debates and critique of transformative learning, which informed the theory building process and the creation of new knowledge, the development of consciousness, and not only changed behaviour, was deemed an indication of transformative learning for this study. Another critique of transformative learning highlighted in the academic debates by Cranton and Kasl (2012) is that transformative learning theory does not consider social aspects. To address this critique, the theory of transformative learning in relation to social change, and how mindfulness can influence this relationship, will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

3.4.5. Mindfulness, Transformative Learning Theory and Social Change

As mentioned earlier, transformative learning theory is rooted in critical theory. This study investigates whether mindfulness can prompt transformative and emancipatory learning that are in line with the goals of critical theory and a critical-emancipatory paradigm. This alignment with critical theory creates the potential to link mindfulness to social change and enable relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Although Mezirow's transformative learning theory does not include the examination of issues pertaining to social justice and social change, it does address the individual transformation that authors such as Morley (2008), Cho (2010) and Dirkx (2012) believe precedes social transformation. Ahteenmaki-Pelkonen (2002) points out that it is important to remember that Mezirow developed his transformative learning theory with the aim to enable adults to understand their own experiences and to empower them to be able to take social action when necessary.

Mezirow proposes that social action and social justice can be the consequence of individual change but he does not want to make that decision for the learners. Transformative learning will give them the skills to work towards social change but it is up to the individual to decide in what way they want to employ these skills (Ahteenmaki-Pelkonen, 2002, p. 6). Furthermore, Mezirow (1991a, p. 209) declares that it is important to clarify what is meant by social change because "social action means different things to different people". For some it means changes in personal relations, for others it may refer to change at an organisational level while for another group of people it may refer to change at a systems level such as political, economic, educational

and bureaucratic systems. It is this last type of social change, at a systems level, that is the most difficult to achieve, because to bring about change at this level requires specific information and skills. However, transformative learning theory does not address these issues, which falls in the domain of social action education aimed at creating instrumental knowledge. A social-activist educator can help learners to discover the history and consequences of accepted norms, cultures, ideologies and institutionalised practices that oppress learners. They can also help learners to develop the necessary skills to bring about change. Transformative learning does not seek to achieve political goals such as liberty, equality and emancipation directly but it is accepted that learning is a social process which may have implications for social action. Transformative learning theory can assist learners to construct personal meaning and derive political goals from that, which may result in the commitment and motivation that can drive social action (Mezirow, 1991a, p. 210).

The lack of focus on social change is one of the critiques in the academic debates on the theory of transformative learning as was discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Authors such as Collard and Law (1989), Welton (1995a) and Inglis (1998) reason that a theory derived from Habermasian critical theory should focus more overtly on social change. For Habermas, social transformation is the primary focus whereas transformative learning theory is more concerned, although not exclusively, with individual transformation. Theorists of the Frankfurt School, whom Habermas associates with, believe that social transformation occurs as a result of individual and institutional change. The objective of the Frankfurt theorists is to encourage a methodology that would promote critical thinking and enable individuals to exercise more conscious control. Critique proceeds from investigating a critical issue on a macro level concerned with an ideology analysis and the exposing of a false consciousness to a micro level that investigates how individuals position themselves in relation to a critical issue. Critique is based on the internal transformation of a society through a process of self-reflection and deals with how macro issues are connected to micro issues. Therefore, it can be argued that critical theory supports broader social transformation, but it also recognises the importance of self-transformation, or individual transformation, as represented by transformative learning theory and mindfulness (Delanty, 2011, p. 72; Dirkx, 2012).

According to Delanty (2011, p. 87), it is this process of identifying forms of individual transformation that is one of the greatest methodological challenges of critical theory. This “critical theory of self”, however, is rarely acknowledged by adult education and learning scholars and practitioners (Dirkx, 2012, p. 402). It is suggested in the literature that mindfulness has the potential to promote individual transformation. For instance, Orr (2002) notes that in order to achieve a deep level of transformation, it is necessary to investigate pedagogical practices that engage with individuals in a more holistic way and declares that mindfulness is a way to achieve this goal. Therefore, mindfulness could address this specific methodological challenge associated with critical theory. Based on the literature review, I have concluded that emancipation, which is one of the aims of critical theory, can be promoted by the development of mindfulness. However, further empirical research is necessary to support this claim.

During this study, I analyse the learning process during a mindfulness adult learning programme in terms of a critical theoretical framework as outlined in this chapter. The assumptions associated with a critical theoretical framework relate to social change and emancipation, which in turn, resonate with the overall objectives of this study. I wanted to determine whether the knowledge that is created through mindfulness can assist people to understand their situation, move them towards taking action to change their situation, and whether this action will move beyond the scope of their own lives to include social action and change. The critical theory of Habermas and Mezirow’s transformative learning theory were selected to develop a theoretical framework for this study, as these theories can be associated with a critical approach to adult education and learning, as was confirmed by the academic literature.

3.5. SUMMARY

In Chapter 2 I reviewed the literature on adult education and learning and critical theory and in this chapter the potential of critical theory and transformative learning to inform adult education and learning theory were discussed. The process of theory building was clarified and theoretical assumptions pertaining to the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests and transformative learning theory were highlighted to support the data analysis and theory building process. The weaknesses and critiques of these theories were also acknowledged and discussed. This prompted the identification of gaps in the theoretical framework with the potential to guide the theory building process.

Rational thought and reasoning were identified as the theoretical building-blocks in both the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests and transformative learning theory. More specifically, rational reasoning was identified as the foundation of new knowledge that prompts individual and social change. However, both theories have been criticised for not including other forms of knowledge. This omission illuminates the need for a more holistic approach towards critical theorising and creates a theoretical point of departure for theorising how mindfulness, and learning during a MBSR programme, can introduce a more holistic approach towards critical theory. This theorising process has the potential to create new knowledge on adult education and learning aimed at creating social change and to reveal the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. In Chapter 4 I will discuss the research design and methodology that I employed to collect the data that informed the research questions and the theorising process.



CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 the critical theoretical framework that is the foundation of this study was discussed. This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology that was used and Chapter 5 will provide a detailed case description. In this chapter the primary and secondary research questions are outlined, followed by a description of the research site. The research approach, namely a critical case-study approach, is delineated, followed by an explanation why case-study research was deemed appropriate. Afterwards, the research methods are considered, including a discussion of the research methods used by other researchers who have also investigated mindfulness. At the time I developed the research proposal, it was considered suitable to use both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to collect data and each research instrument is described in detail. During my research I discovered the limitations of such an approach, therefore the quantitative instruments were focused on collecting biographical information and to identify candidates for the qualitative interviews. Following this discussion, the pilot study will be introduced. In this section I provide an overview of how the pilot study was conducted and which changes were made to the research instruments as a result of the pilot study. Thereafter, I outline the data collection process, the selection of participants, as well as how the data were captured and stored. The data analysis process, both thematic and narrative, is explained in detail. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the ethical principles that were considered before and during the study.

The aim of the research design and methodology, outlined in this chapter, was to collect, analyse and theorise data that will contribute to creating new knowledge pertaining to mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. The data were collected from adult learners who participated in a Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme to investigate the potential of mindfulness to support transformative and emancipatory learning.

4.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.2.1. Primary Research Question

The primary research question formulated for this study was as follows:

What are the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change?

4.2.2. Secondary Research Questions

To address the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were formulated:

- a) How can mindfulness support the learning needs which are located in the domains of instrumental, communicative and emancipatory learning?
- b) To what extent can mindfulness prompt the emergence of a new domain of learning?
- c) How can mindfulness generate perspective transformation that contributes to critical transformative learning?
- d) How can mindfulness generate critical transformative learning that provides a foundation for social change?

4.3. RESEARCH SITE

At the time when the data for this study were collected, the MBSR programme in South Africa was offered in Cape Town, Durbanville, George, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and Pretoria. The MBSR programme was specifically selected because it is the only mindfulness-based programme, to my knowledge, that is offered in South Africa on a regular basis. I decided to recruit participants from Cape Town and Durbanville because firstly, I am based near Cape Town which made it easier to find a suitable time and place to conduct interviews. Secondly, there were more facilitators in this area at the time, which meant that there were more MBSR programmes offered in Cape Town and as a result, more potential participants for my study. Another reason why I decided to focus my research on the MBSR programme is because I have not only participated in this programme but also facilitated it, which gave me insight into the structure, method of facilitation and curriculum of the MBSR programme. I believe that my own

experience helped me to relate to participants during interviews and improved the data collection process.

After I was given permission to approach MBSR facilitators by the chairperson of the Institute for Mindfulness South Africa (IMISA), I approached the facilitators who were based in Cape Town at the time, Anna, Deon and Nathley as well as Brenda¹⁷, who was based in Durbanville. Anna allowed me to collect data for the pilot study from her group who started the MBSR programme in January 2015. However, she did not want me to collect data from her other groups that she was facilitating later in the year because she wanted to conduct her own research on these groups. The second facilitator I approached was Deon, who did not want to give me access to his groups. He did not provide a reason for his decision and I had to respect that.

The third facilitator I approached was Nathley who was the only person I did not know personally from participating in mindfulness programmes, retreats and conferences. After connecting via email and a telephone conversation, Nathley agreed to allow me to collect data from the participants in her MBSR programmes. I collected data from groups starting in February 2015 and November 2015. Nathley allowed me to collect data from a group starting in April 2015 but she later informed me that she cancelled the MBSR programme because of renovations at the venue. The next MBSR programme was scheduled for July but she wanted to distribute my pre-course research instruments¹⁸ herself during that MBSR programme. I delivered the questionnaires a week before the MBSR programme started. However, she forgot to distribute them at the beginning of the MBSR programme. As a result, I had to collect data from the last MBSR programme of 2015 which started in November and finished before Christmas. These turn of events delayed the data collection process and I could only complete my final interviews in January 2016 as nobody was available for interviews during the December holiday period.

The last facilitator I approached was Brenda, who was based in Durbanville. She allowed me access to her MBSR programme which started in May 2015. Brenda

¹⁷ Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the MBSR facilitators

¹⁸ I refer to the pre- and post-course research instruments and not the pre- and post-programme research instruments because at the time when I developed these instruments and collected the data I believed that it was the most appropriate description. Later, after I updated my literature review of the MBSR programme, I deemed it more appropriate to refer to it as a programme, but it was too late to change the description on my research instruments.

preferred that I came in to introduce myself at the first session of the MBSR programme but distributed and collected the post-course research instruments herself after the final session. As Brenda offered the MBSR programme only once during 2016, there was only one opportunity to collect data in Durbanville.

4.4. RESEARCH APPROACH

In previous research on mindfulness, researchers have used a variety of approaches including quantitative and qualitative research to collect data, however, no studies that used a critical case-study approach could be found. A critical approach can be distinguished from other approaches in that it considers the principles used to guide this type of research. Firstly, the choice of methods and the way these methods are employed cannot be separated from the theory informing the problem and secondly, it recognises that social structures are constructed by human beings and that non-empirical aspects are made explicit components of research practice. It is accepted that research cannot be ideologically neutral; therefore it is considered justified to conduct research with a critical-emancipatory agenda (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 257). However, it is important to keep in mind that it cannot be expected that all critical research programmes will have immediate critical-emancipatory results (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

In order to conduct this investigation of a specific programme, a critical, case-study approach was deemed to be the most appropriate. Case-study research is often compatible with the problems identified in critical research because it is concerned with the intensive investigation of the specific (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 253). In the following section the nature of a case-study approach is discussed.

4.4.1. Case-Study Research

Critical theory is associated with a diverse research programme (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p.6), and I selected a critical, case-study approach for my research which enabled me to examine the MBSR programme in detail. Although case studies are not exclusively linked to critical research, it can be associated with critical research if it deals with theoretical questions pertaining to critical theory. The theoretical research questions of this study are related to critical theory, prompting the critical case-study

approach. This is not unusual as Morrow and Brown (1994, p. 251) confirm that case-study research has been closely associated with several critical research studies.

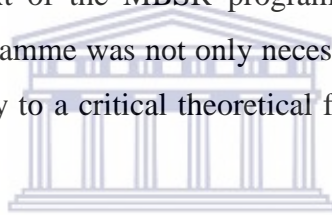
A case-study approach enabled me to gain insight into and promote understanding of the research topic at hand (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark & Morales, 2007). Furthermore, in support of this view, Bryman (2001, p. 47) and Welman and Kruger (2001, p. 21) assert that case-study research enables the researcher to understand the uniqueness of a particular case in all its complexity and it facilitates the intense examination of a single case. A case study can be referred to as “a limited number of units of analysis (often only one)... such as an individual, a group or an institution” that are examined (Welman & Kruger, 2001, p. 183). Miles and Huberman (1994, as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 27) suggest that a case study has to occur within a bounded system where there is a limit to the number of people that can be interviewed. If there are no limitations to the number of potential interviewees, the phenomenon does not qualify as a case study.

A case study is defined by Flyvbjerg (2011, p. 301) as “an intensive analysis of a single unit, (as a person or a community) stressing developmental factors in relation to the environment”. In this definition, “a single unit” is similar to a bounded system and indicates that the choice of a case study does not refer to a methodological choice but rather to what will be investigated. Merriam (1985, p. 206) elaborates:

A case study can test theory as well as build theory, and use data gathering and data analysis techniques common to traditional forms of research. Neither is a case study defined by its focus upon a single social unit. A community is a social unit, for example, and one can survey that unit, conduct an experiment with it, or study the unit's history. A case study differs from other research methods primarily in the nature of the product. The case study results in an intensive, holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon or social unit being studied.

Therefore, based on the literature that I consulted, I believe that examining the experience of learners that were enrolled in the MBSR programme constituted a case study. The MBSR programme can be considered a bounded system because there was a limit to the number of potential interviewees.

The definition developed by Flyvbjerg (2011, p. 301) also refers to a “relation to the environment” which refers to the context of a case study. Therefore, the boundaries of the study are crucial in order to determine what will be considered part of a case study and what will be considered context. Context is particularly important when working within a critical research paradigm because critical theorists regard knowledge as concrete rather than abstract. This notion is based on the principle that knowledge should be considered within a context and not by removing it, or in other words, not isolating it from its context. This is particularly important when knowledge is aimed at creating change, as is the case with a critical inquiry, because a phenomenon is the result of its context and cannot be analysed outside its context. It is only when the historical and broader social context in which a phenomenon occurs is taken into account that it can be understood completely (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 147). In Chapter 5, which is focused on the description of the MBSR programme, the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the MBSR programme are discussed to highlight the social context of the MBSR programme. Including the broader social context of the MBSR programme was not only necessary for a case-study approach but it also linked the case study to a critical theoretical framework that considers issues of social change.



Flyvbjerg (2011, p. 301) refers to a case study as “a single unit”, which is similar to a bounded system, indicating that the choice of a case study does not refer to a methodological approach but rather to what is investigated. A researcher could, for example, use quantitative or qualitative research methods, or mixed-method research (Flyvbjerg, 2011). According to authors such as Stake (2005) and Flyvbjerg (2011), it is not the methodological approach that determines whether a study can be deemed a case study or not, but rather the fact that the unit that is being investigated has boundaries. Although using a case study is a very common way to do qualitative research, Stake (2005) asserts that it is not exclusively qualitative. According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004, p. 42), case studies often use more than one method because it is a way to capture the case in more depth as well as to ensure design validity. These authors reason that if a research study requires more than one method of data collection and if it is a bounded system, such as the MBSR programme, it requires a case-study design.

Corroborating the perspective of Stake (2005) and Henning et al. (2004), Merriam (1985, p. 206) states:

Rather than surveying a few variables across many cases, the case study intensively examines the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of the phenomenon as possible. Several methods of collecting data are used to reveal the total picture of the case under study.

She continues:

Data gathered through interviews, observation and document analysis are primarily qualitative in nature and it is these data that are used directly to build the intensive, thick description of a case study. Data that is primarily quantitative — test scores, survey responses, attitude measures, and so on, might also contribute to developing the fullest picture possible of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1985, p. 208)

As the literature indicates, a critical, case-study approach does not pre-determine the methods that should be used during data collection, but qualitative methods are most useful to develop a “thick description”. As a result, more than one method was used to collect data during this study. A case study includes detailed data of the case, no matter what methods are used, and in this particular case, a variety of methods were used to gather detailed information. However, Henning et al. (2004, p. 33) caution that it is important to select methods that complement each other and are aimed at answering the research questions. In the following section, I discuss the research methods that I used during this study to collect data and the motivation for choosing the specific methods.

4.5. RESEARCH METHODS

In other academic research studies that have investigated mindfulness, researchers use a variety of methods including quantitative and qualitative measures to collect data; however, I did not come across any studies that employed a critical approach. Duerr, Zajonc, Dana (2003), used surveys to collect data, while Rauch (2011), Carlson and Brown (2005), Brown and Ryan (2003) and several others used attitude measurement scales, such as a Likert scale, to measure mindfulness in relation to contextual performance and well-being. Shapiro, Oman, Thoresen, Plante and Flinders (2008) used a Likert scale in combination with self-report diaries from participants that recorded daily meditation practices to collect data, while Duerr (2004a) and Hunter and

McCormick (2008) used data from personal interview data. Duerr (2004b) used observation as well as different types of interviews, such as semi-structured and naturalistic interviews, to collect data.

Considering the methods used by researchers who have focused their research on mindfulness, and the critical-emancipatory agenda of the present study, I selected a case-study approach. This choice allowed me to use mixed methods to collect data while staying focused on my specific case (Bell, 1999; Yin, 2003; Creswell et al., 2007).

4.5.1. Mixed Methods

Mixed-method research was to some extent developed based on academic literature on triangulation and is usually associated with the use of different sources of data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011, p. 287). According to Yin (2003, pp. 97-98), it is essential that a researcher conducting case-study research use multiple methods to collect data, known as methodological triangulation, because in this way a wider range of issues can be addressed and the findings will be more reliable. Yin asserts that by using more than one method of data collection not only endorses reliability, but it is also one of the benefits of case-study research.

Mixed-method research allows a researcher to combine quantitative and qualitative data in a single study and is based on the premise that the use of both types of data in combination promotes insight into and a better understanding of the research problem (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 as cited in Creswell, 2011, p. 271). The research question is central when following a mixed-method approach and according to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011, p. 288), it is the research question that determines which methods of data collection will be used. When using a mixed-method approach, a researcher will first collect and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data, then use these methods in a single study or in multiple phases of a programme of studies, and finally frame the procedure within a specific theoretical lens. This process will lead to a specific research design for the study (Creswell, 2011, p. 271). For my study, I decided that the research questions warranted the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, framed in a critical research paradigm. The aim was to develop a “thick description” as suggested by Merriam (1985, p. 208) from the

qualitative instruments and use the quantitative instruments to develop “the fullest picture possible of the phenomenon under study” (Merriam, 1985, p. 208).

The use of mixed methods has been critiqued in the literature and concerns raised are often related to research paradigms. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011, p. 287) observe that these days researchers who use a mixed-method approach come from a variety of philosophical backgrounds, including critical theory. However, quantitative and qualitative methods are associated with contradictory paradigms and therefore it is asserted that a researcher using mixed methods is mixing paradigms (Creswell, 2011). However, authors such as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that methods to collect data should not be directly linked to a paradigm and that a specific research paradigm does not dictate a certain type of data collection and analysis. Concurring with this view, Creswell (2011) asserts that qualitative and quantitative methods should not necessarily be linked to a specific paradigm, but should refer to methods instead. In this study, quantitative and qualitative methods were used within a critical framework. This approach is similar to the work of Mertens (2003, 2010a, 2010b), who used mixed methods within a transformative-emancipatory framework and connected it to social justice issues.

Furthermore, critics of the use of mixed methods also contend that mixed methods favour quantitative approaches over qualitative approaches in the research design, and in many studies this has been the case. However, the opposite is also true and in some studies qualitative methods are prioritised, especially in mixed-method studies that fall within a transformative-emancipatory framework such as the already mentioned work of Mertens (Creswell, 2011, p. 277). During this study, similar to the research of Mertens, qualitative research methods were prioritised over its quantitative counterpart. The reason was that the quantitative instruments would enable me to develop a more complete picture of the case, whereas the focus of the data analysis was on qualitative methods.

The research design is central in determining how to conduct mixed-method research and there are several options. Convergent designs (previously referred to as triangulation) involve quantitative and qualitative data collected simultaneously, while an explanatory design, also referred to as an exploratory design, involves two phases of data collection. Quantitative data are collected, followed by the collection of qualitative

data or it can be collected the other way around. Embedded designs, where one form of data is embedded in the other can also be used (Creswell, 2011, p. 279). For my study, an explanatory design was selected. Quantitative data were collected at different stages during the data collection process, followed by the collection of qualitative data. The quantitative data that were collected determined the qualitative data collection process because the quantitative data enabled me to identify the people I wanted to interview.

However, it is important to note that adopting a critical research approach implies an attempt to avoid the extremes of a quantitative search for patterns and rules or a qualitative reduction of explanations to meaning descriptions (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 249). Crucial to the research is an awareness that a critical approach does not merely attempt to describe and understand meaning, rather, it is aimed at criticising and transforming meaning, as was my aim during this study.

4.5.2. Quantitative Methods

A quantitative method was selected because I believed that would enable me to use a standardised measure to compare variables, such as the participants' levels of compassion and social awareness before and after the MBSR programme. Taking into consideration the quantitative methods used by other researchers who focused their research on mindfulness, I selected to use self-completion questionnaires as well as an attitude scale to collect quantitative data. Authors such as Desbordes et al. (2012) and Soler et al. (2014) used self-completion questionnaires to collect data on mindfulness, while Brown and Ryan (2003), Carlson and Brown (2005), Rauch (2011) and several others used attitude measurement scales, such as a Likert scale, to measure and compare mindfulness.

When using self-completion questionnaires and attitude scales as I did during this study, it is important that all the questions are easy to follow as well as easy to answer. The advantages associated with self-completion questionnaires and attitude scales usually include the fact that it is easy and quick to administer. It can be distributed to all the participants of a particular research study at the same time and does not necessarily require individual attention to each participant. Furthermore, self-completion questionnaires and attitude scales can circumvent the possibility that questions are asked in a different way by an interviewer because no interviewer will be necessary (Bryman, 2001; Phellas, Bloch & Seale, 2012).

However, Bryman (2001), as well as Phellas et al. (2012), refer to the disadvantages associated with these instruments such as the fact that respondents cannot be prompted if they are uncertain how to answer a question. This highlights the need for all questions to be clear and easy to answer. Furthermore, participants cannot be asked to clarify if an answer is unclear or ambiguous and they cannot be asked to elaborate on an answer. It is also important not to include too many open-ended questions as participants may then become tired of writing. Furthermore, only relevant questions should be included because if there are too many questions to answer, especially questions that seem irrelevant to participants, they may give up to complete the questionnaire. Bryman (2001, p. 131) notes that “respondent fatigue”, as described here, is a real danger and therefore long questionnaires should be avoided.

Bryman (2001) argues that it is often necessary to collect more data once the data have been collected by means of self-completion questionnaires and attitude scales. Therefore, in the present study, qualitative methods were used to supplement the data that were first collected by means of quantitative methods. Although the Likert scale was developed with much care, I discovered that the Likert scale questions that I developed at the beginning of the study were not helpful in terms of the data analysis and interpretation. Unfortunately, the questions that were asked in the Likert scale did not address the prominent themes that emerged from the qualitative data and it did not answer the research questions either. At the time I developed the instrument I used the literature review on mindfulness as well as the theoretical framework to formulate the questions. Yet, it seemed that the close-ended questions had limited potential to reveal new information that I could use to theorise the data. In hindsight, I believe that some of the questions on political awareness, religion and culture, were unlikely to provide any meaningful information as the MBSR programme is unrelated to any of these subjects. I included these questions in the hope that it will inform my critical theoretical framework, but these were of little use during the data analysis and theorising process as few participants indicated any changes in their attitudes related to social and ideological issues such as religion, politics and ethnicity. This signalled that mindfulness and the MBSR programme could not be linked to social change by creating a new awareness associated with religion, politics and ethnicity.

During the qualitative data analysis, the body and embodied emotions emerged as a key theme that informed the research questions and the theorising process. The Likert scale did not incorporate these themes as I was unaware of the central role that the body and embodied emotions would take in this study at the time when I developed the research instruments. For instance, I did not include one question about body awareness in the Likert scale, the only question I included that referred to emotion was ‘my emotions control me’. This oversight was a result of a Western perspective on learning. This perspective is evident in the theoretical framework which focuses on cognitive processes that constitute learning as well as my own thinking processes. At the time, I did not incorporate the body in my understanding of what constitutes learning, and as a result did not include any questions about the body in the Likert scale.

When I became aware of this omission, I considered analysing some of the questions about specific emotions such as empathy and compassion separately with the hope that this will provide me with meaningful data that would address the research questions. According to Clason and Dormody (1994), using individual Likert scale items is common practice. Bertram (2007, p. 2) add that “each specific question (or ‘item’) can have its response analyzed separately, or have it summed with other related items to create a score for a group of statements”. Boone and Boone (2012) propose that it depends on the researcher whether they would like to report on the Likert scale as a whole or on single items included in the scale. Subedi (2016, p. 42) confirms that if questions cannot be combined with others it is necessary to analyse them separately. Yet, Clason and Dormoday (1994, p. 34) claim: “It is not a question of right and wrong ways to analyze data from Likert-type items. The question is more directed to answering the research questions meaningfully”. Unfortunately, the Likert scale did not inform my research questions in a meaningful way, therefore it was problematic for me to include it in the data analysis process.

Another reason why I was hesitant to include the Likert scale in the data analysis was that one of the participants, during the semi-structured interview, admitted to not answering the questions truthfully. Another participant said that she simply “ticked the boxes”, which created the impression that her answers were not carefully considered and were probably not very reliable either. Furthermore, there were others who simply left out questions, making me wonder if they did not want to answer the question or if

they actually did not take care to ensure that they had answered all the questions. This is similar to a concern that Hartley (2013, p. 84) raises: “This example shows that some respondents simply tick the same box for every item, perhaps without considering carefully enough the meaning of each one”. Newsome, Waldo and Gruszka (2012) who used Likert scales to investigate mindfulness add: “Confidence in the results is based on the assumption that the group members filled out the measures given to them honestly and accurately”. I had reason to believe that this was not the case with my study. I questioned the reliability of the data collected with the Likert scale and as a result did not include it in the data analysis process.

Yet, the Likert scales were useful for identifying candidates for the semi-structured interviews in this study. By comparing the pre- and post-course Likert scales, I was able to identify MBSR programme participants who indicated personal changes such as increased patience with themselves, who felt that their lives were more meaningful, who liked themselves more and felt they were more in control of their emotions after participating in the MBSR programme. I was also able to identify MBSR programme participants who felt more patient and empathetic towards others. In the end I was disappointed in the limited usefulness of the data that I collected using the Likert scales, but I decided that it was best to use the Likert scales for the purpose of identifying candidates exclusively. Therefore, during the present study, self-completion questionnaires and attitude scales were administered to identify potential interview candidates, and to collect biographical particulars of the participants. The focus of the data analysis process was on the qualitative data.

4.5.3. Qualitative Methods

I used qualitative research methods to capture participants’ experiences in an attempt to, as Tshoko (2007) calls it, make sense of the world from the perspectives of the participants. For this study I used semi-structured and narrative interview schedules to collect data. In previous studies that used qualitative methods to investigate mindfulness, Duerr (2004a) and Hunter and McCormick (2008) used data collected from personal interviews. Duerr (2004b) used observation as well as different types of interviews, such as semi-structured and naturalistic interviews, to collect data.

According to Yin (2003), conducting interviews is a common way to collect data during case studies because case studies are usually about human affairs that should be

reported and interpreted by the participants themselves. Interviews can provide important insights into a situation. Further advantages associated with qualitative interviews include the fact that qualitative interviews, according to Bryman (2001), can be directed to focus on the specific issue being researched, which in this case is mindfulness within a critical theoretical framework. Furthermore, an interview is a good way to gain insight into individual experience and how people are making sense of their experiences. During an interview the interviewer can encourage the participant to elaborate or clarify an answer when necessary, or, if a participant loses focus, they can be gently reminded of the question. It is also an opportunity to ask questions of a more sensitive nature that cannot be asked by means of quantitative methods such as self-completion questionnaires (Welman & Kruger, 2001; Phellas et al. 2012).

Bryman (2001) as well as Phellas et al. (2012) also refer to the disadvantages of interviewing, for example the fact that interviews can be time-consuming as it can take several hours. Furthermore, the participants may be reluctant to reveal certain information about themselves and therefore not disclose all relevant information. It is also vital that the interviewer exercises caution during interviews by not asking questions in a leading way because this may influence the participants' answers. However, it should be taken into consideration that interviews are based on what Yin (2003, p. 92) calls "verbal reports" and can be influenced by issues such as bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate verbalisation. To address these concerns, interviews are usually recorded because it is a way to ensure the accuracy of the data that are captured. However, recording devices should only be used on the following conditions: firstly, an interviewee should give their permission for it to be used, secondly, they should give permission that if the interview is transcribed or systematically listened to afterwards, the researcher should be comfortable enough with the recording device to ensure that it will not create distractions and lastly, the researcher should still listen during the interview itself and should not use the recording device as a substitute for listening (Yin, 2003, p. 92).

To address these concerns, I was careful not to ask leading questions or to influence the answers of participants in any way. As suggested by Yin (2003), I recorded the interviews to ensure the accuracy of the data. I used my cell phone as a recording device and I believe I was comfortable enough with the device not to cause any distractions or

interruptions. Before commencing the interview, I switched off all incoming calls or messages to ensure that there were no interruptions during the interviews. After recording the interviews I transcribed the interviews myself.

4.6. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

4.6.1. Pre-Course Self-Completion Questionnaire (Appendix A)

Similar to Desbordes et al. (2012) and Soler et al. (2014), I used a self-completion questionnaire to collect data before the start of the MBSR programme. These questionnaires were handed out to the research participants before the commencement of the MBSR programme and they were asked to complete it by themselves. As recommended by Bryman (2001), I designed the instrument in such a way that the questions were easy to answer and I did not include many open-ended questions. The pre-course self-completion questionnaire was used to collect biographical particulars such as age and level of education while also collecting data pertaining to the participants' community involvement. Participants were also asked about their understanding of mindfulness before the commencement of the MBSR programme and their reasons for participation.

4.6.2. Pre-Course Likert Scale (Appendix B)

Like Brown and Ryan (2003), Carlson and Brown (2005) and Rauch (2011) I used an attitude scale to collect data for this study before the commencement of the MBSR programme. An attitude is defined by Welman and Kruger (2001, p. 149) as “a disposition towards a particular issue, the so-called attitudinal object, which may be influenced by individuals and events and is less permanent than personality traits”. A Likert scale consists of a prepared questionnaire with a pre-determined set of scaled responses representing statements about the attitudinal object. These responses are then counted, the outcome calculated and the results are interpreted in order to reveal the respondents' attitude towards a specific object (Welman & Kruger, 2001, p. 150; Henning et al., 2004, p. 1).

I compiled a Likert scale to measure participants' attitudes towards theoretical concepts associated with a critical theoretical framework before and after the selected MBSR programme. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, this approach had its limitations because I did not include questions about the body in the Likert scale. As explained

earlier, this omission was a result of a Western perspective on learning that is evident in both my critical theoretical framework, which focuses on learning as a cognitive process, as well as my own, internalised Western perspective on learning that I was unaware of at the time. The instrument was designed with the aim that each individual should experience the question in the same way and that it should enable the researcher to record the answers in a similar way. The reasoning behind this approach is that different answers can be ascribed to differences between the individuals, and not to differences in the data collection methods (Fowler & Mangione, 1990, p. 19).

I identified the Likert scale as the most suitable attitude measuring scale for the purposes of this study because it is the easiest attitude scale to compile and can be multi-dimensional (Welman & Kruger, 2001, p. 150). Another factor contributing to the choice of a Likert scale for the purposes of this study is the fact that it has been employed in previous research projects that investigated mindfulness. There are several scale instruments that have been developed by researchers to measure an individual's level of mindfulness and those found most frequently in the literature include the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS), and the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI).

Based on my literature review, the MAAS scale seems to be the most popular among researchers and it has been employed by, among others, Brown and Ryan (2003), Carlson and Brown (2005), MacKillop and Anderson (2007) and Black, Sussman, Johnson and Milam (2012). Researchers such as Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney (2006), Baer et al. (2008), Van Dam, Earleywine and Danoff-Burg (2009) preferred the FFMQ scale while Dekeyser, Raes, Leijssen, Leysen and Dewuff (2008), Hansen, Lundh, Homman and Wångby-Lundh (2009) and Nicastro, Jermann, Bondolfi and McQuillan (2010) used the KIMS scale. In light of the aims of this study, I assessed the usefulness of the different measurement scales to determine the most appropriate instrument for the purposes of my research. At the time I developed the instrument, I believed it would be best to develop my own scale based on my literature review and theoretical framework. Therefore, I developed my own Likert scale.

The pre-course self-completion questionnaire and the pre-course Likert scale were administered together.

4.6.3. Post-Course Self-Completion Questionnaire (Appendix C)

A post-course self-completion questionnaire was administered after the completion of the course which is similar to the approach followed by Desbordes et al. (2012) and Soler et al. (2014) to collect data. This questionnaire collected data about the MBSR programme attendance. This helped me to identify participants for the semi-structured interviews, as I did not want to interview participants who missed more than two sessions. In this questionnaire I also asked participants to share their understanding of mindfulness after the completion of the MBSR programme.

4.6.4. Post-Course Likert Scale (Appendix D)

I used the same Likert scale that was administered at the beginning of the MBSR programme to measure participants' attitudes after the completion of the MBSR programme. By doing so, I was able to measure and compare participants' attitudes before and after their participation in the MBSR programme. This approach to collecting data is similar to the approach of authors such as Brown and Ryan (2003), Carlson and Brown (2005), Rauch (2011) and several others who have used Likert scales to collect data before and after a mindfulness programme. The primary aim of the Likert scale was to identify suitable candidates for the interview process. As a result of the limitations of this measuring instrument, as discussed earlier, the remaining data collected in this way were not analysed in detail.

The post-course self-completion questionnaire and the post-course Likert scale were administered together.

4.6.5. Semi-Structured Interview Schedule (Appendix E)

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed guided by a thorough literature review, the theoretical framework and a review of interview schedules and questionnaires used in previous studies on mindfulness. Hunter and McCormick (2008), Duerr (2004a) and Duerr (2004b) used semi-structured interviews to collect data for studies focused on mindfulness. I conducted the interviews to record the participants' experiences in detail, and to obtain an in-depth knowledge of these experiences. I used the data that I collected by means of the self-completion questionnaires and the Likert scales to select the participants whom I approached for these semi-structured interviews. Participants were interviewed after the completion of the MBSR programme and based

on the results of these interviews a number of them were asked to participate in a second narrative interview.

An interview was selected because it could be used to complement and explain the data that were collected by using the quantitative research instruments. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are used frequently to investigate the concept of experience and the meaning of experience (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). According to Yin (2003, p. 89) one of the most important sources for case-study data is the interview. However, conducting an interview can be challenging because the researcher has to ensure that the interview follows a certain line of inquiry and satisfies the needs of the research while at the same time asking questions in an unbiased, friendly and non-threatening way. Yin identifies three types of interviews in case-study research namely (1) a structured interview, (2) a semi-structured interview and (3) a focused interview during which the interview is either structured or semi-structured but conducted in a short period of time. Usually, in case-study research semi-structured interviews are used to collect data because it allows the research to inquire about certain issues while giving the respondents an opportunity to express their opinions. During this case study, a semi-structured interview was used because it allowed the respondents to express their opinions and it supported the critical-emancipatory agenda of the research and the generation of new knowledge.

To promote the creation of new knowledge, as suggested by McCabe and Holmes (2009), participants were encouraged to seek their own inner truth (self-knowledge) and reveal these to the researcher during the interviews. It is suggested that the researcher use interviews to explore common sense assumptions and encourages the participants to follow suit. With the guidance of the interviewer, a participant can discover new truths by considering their own thoughts. The participant is then invited by the interviewer to act on their own thoughts and truths and in this way a new way of being is opened up (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1523). Thus, during the interview process participants and the researcher may gain a new understanding (knowledge) of themselves which can result in new ways of being. Emancipation is achieved by self-examination and new actions taken by the participants (McCabe & Holmes, 2009).

It is important to note that the interview is not always a liberating experience but can also be a repressive event when a participant comes to view themselves in a poor light

or deviant. However, it can also be a liberating experience because it provides a space where social relations, power, actions and thoughts can be explored. In this way, from a critical perspective, the interview as a repressive event can be challenged because the researcher, as the facilitator, can encourage the participant to seek knowledge rather than judging themselves (McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1522). According to Thomas (1993, as cited in McCabe & Holmes, 2009, p. 1522), critical qualitative research is emancipatory because it opens a new way of seeing and emancipates by the disruption of the status quo. The researcher should thus allow the participants to express themselves in their own words. Furthermore, the researcher should be open to questions from the participants, be willing to adjust the research agenda to reflect the interests of the participant, and remain sensitive to their position in relation to the participant, the broader social context of the research as well as the agenda of the research. Above all, the researcher should encourage participants to self-explore so that they can gain knowledge of themselves. Finally, the researcher should respect the knowledge and experience of the participants.

Both the semi-structured interview schedule and the narrative interview schedule that were employed during this study were designed in such a way that it encouraged the generation of emancipatory knowledge. As suggested in the literature, I strove to remain open to questions from participants during interviews, and to remain sensitive to the position of the participant in relation to myself as the researcher, the social context of the research as well as the critical-emancipatory agenda of the research.

4.6.6. Narrative Interview Schedule (Appendix F)

To my knowledge, the narrative interview has not been used by many studies investigating mindfulness to collect data, but I did find a study by Morone, Lynch, Greco, Tindle and Welner (2009) who used a narrative analysis of diary entries to analyse mindfulness. Including this method of data collection in a study focused on a MBSR programme, was therefore a relatively new way to collect data. This instrument enabled me to delve deeper and to collect rich data from individuals who indicated some level of emancipation or transformation during the semi-structured interviews. Roseneil (2012) posits that a narrative interview enables a researcher to explore meaning as well as historical context in more detail than with semi-structured

interviews. Therefore, during this research study, narrative interviews were used to supplement the data collected during the semi-structured interviews.

A narrative interview is deemed to be a biographical research method. Biographical research can be associated with a variety of approaches and research strategies but there is no specific theory that can be linked to this type of research (Zinn, 2004). Zinn (2004) identifies three general streams of research in biographical research. The first is generic narrative research, the second is biographical research focused on identity and the third is focused on specific issues. The aims associated with biographical research are also varied, some researchers focus on producing a rich description while others are focused on identifying how actions and certain structures are linked. Research methods associated with biographical research can include letters, publications, autobiographical writings and the narrative interview. During this study, data were collected by means of a narrative interview focusing on specific issues. The reason for this is that characteristics of a narrative interview can be reconciled with the emancipatory aims of this study as well as with the intended methods of data analysis. The focus of narrative research falls on the narration that is produced by the interviewee during the interview process, which is often considered in terms of power and empowerment (Zinn, 2004). Therefore, it is a suitable method of data collection for a study such as this one that adopts a critical approach and has emancipatory goals.

During a narrative interview the first step for the interviewer is to ask an opening question that will enable the interviewee to tell their life story. To ensure that the interviewee is not interrupted, the interviewer does not ask any further questions but encourages the interviewee by indicating interest and attention in a non-verbal way. The interviewee is offered the opportunity to speak as well as to emphasise what he or she thinks is relevant with regard to their own story. During the second part of the interview, when the interviewee has completed the narration, the interviewer may ask the interviewee to elaborate on certain events mentioned during the narrative as well as issues that have not been mentioned. However, it is possible to conduct this interview in a more structured way by focusing the opening question on a specific area of interest (Zinn, 2004; Roseneil, 2012). During this study, the narrative interview was more structured and the interviewee was asked to focus the narrative on issues related to mindfulness, emancipation, transformation as well as social awareness and change.

Roseneil (2012) asserts that a narrative interview enables a researcher to explore meaning and socio-cultural as well as historical context in more detail than is the case with semi-structured interviews. Therefore, during this study, narrative interviews were used to supplement the data collected during semi-structured interviews. Roseneil (2012) continues to argue that this type of interview can be expressive of the conscious concerns of interviewees as well as their unconscious assumptions. However, one of the disadvantages of the narrative interview is that the interviews tend to be long with irrelevant information which can make the process of data analysis a daunting task. Furthermore, some interviewees may not find the narrative easy and may need considerable encouragement from the interviewer (Hards, 2012).

During this research study the semi-structured interviews enabled me to identify individuals who indicated emancipation and transformation or a specific interest in social issues. These individuals were invited to participate in a narrative interview. The narrative interview consisted of a three-part structure as suggested by Hollway and Jefferson (2008, p. 310). According to Hollway and Jefferson (2008), narrative interviews can be structured according to a particular theme and during this study it was structured based on a theme of mindfulness, emancipation and transformation as well as social awareness and change.

During the first part of the interview the interviewees were asked to tell their life story in general. I suggested that they reveal where they grew up, their family connections, where they work and other things that may be important to them, but the interviewees were able to tell their story and to focus on what is important to them. Once they had finished telling their life story, the interviews progressed to the second part, where they were prompted to discuss issues pertaining to mindfulness, emancipation and transformation as well as their interest or involvement in social issues, if applicable. During the third part of the interview they were asked to elaborate around certain aspects of their story that they mentioned during the interview.

4.7. PILOT STUDY

Before the data for the study were collected, a pilot study was conducted. The reason for this is that the literature suggests that pilot studies can be helpful in detecting any problem areas in the research design or instruments and that a pilot study can increase the reliability and validity of results. A pilot study can be useful in ensuring the validity

and reliability of results because it ensures that data are collected consistently throughout the study. Furthermore, it can be informative with regard to research protocol and whether selected recruitment methods will be successful (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001; Simon, 2011). During a pilot study, data are collected in exactly the same way as it is collected during the main study. During my study, pre- and post-course research instruments as well as semi-structured and narrative interviews were used to collect data during both the pilot and the main study.

The pilot study was conducted in January 2015 with the aim of recruiting five participants. The facilitator of the group was willing to allow me to collect data from her group, however, she preferred that the questionnaire be sent to the potential participants electronically. She was concerned because participants paid to participate in the MBSR programme and she didn't want to take up any of their time by asking them to complete a questionnaire. As a result, I created an electronic questionnaire, using the website Freeonlinsurveys.com. The process of completing the documents online was relatively simple. An e-mail (see Appendix M) introduced the research to the potential participants, and they could then simply click on a link which would take them directly to the questionnaire. Participants didn't have to first open an attachment, then complete it, and to save it again before returning it to me, a process which I thought would make it more difficult to complete and less likely that I would receive a response. Also, by providing a link, it was easy to respond to my request by using a cell phone or tablet while it was not necessary to use a personal computer or a laptop. I was hoping that by making it as easy as possible for the participants to participate in the research, it would be more likely that they would complete the questionnaire.

The link, with an accompanying email explaining the purpose of the research, was sent out via the facilitator's assistant. However, although the email was sent to 25 potential participants, at the time when the MBSR programme was about to commence, I had received only one response, which was not adequate to conduct a pilot study. Because I did not have limitless opportunities to recruit research participants, it was important to me that I complete the pilot study with this particular group. I phoned the facilitator and asked her if she would consider allowing me to recruit four more participants who arrived early at the venue. If they could complete the questionnaires prior to the MBSR programme, I would not take up any of the facilitation time. I explained to her that it

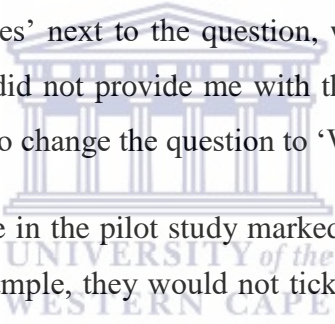
would take about 5-10 minutes to complete the survey so it shouldn't take up too much of their time. I then discovered that she was under the impression that it would take about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire and that this was the reason for her initial hesitation and her insistence on electronic questionnaires. It highlighted to me the importance of clarifying the time required to complete a questionnaire the next time I approach an MBSR programme facilitator. Once she realised that it would only take 5-10 minutes, she was willing to introduce me to the group, allow me some time to explain the purpose of the study and ask for volunteers who would be willing to participate in the study.

I went to the first session and was introduced by the facilitator to the group. I explained the purpose of the research very briefly and also emphasised that participation is voluntary and confidential. After the introduction I asked for four volunteers which I found quite easily. They completed the questionnaires as well as the consent forms and I left after about 15 minutes. The facilitator allowed me to return during the last session to ask my volunteers to complete the post-course research instruments as she was aware of the fact that people often do not respond to data collection requests that are sent to them electronically after the completion of the MBSR programme. Seven weeks later I returned for the final session and asked the five participants to complete the post-course questionnaires.

The pilot study revealed that the electronic version of the pre-course instruments was not very useful in recruiting participants. This was quite obvious based on the low response rate. Only 1 out of 25 people responded and therefore it was better to rather physically distribute the questionnaires at the venue just before the commencement of the MBSR programme. However, it was useful to have the electronic version as a back-up when it came to the post-course questionnaires because participants sometimes missed the last session. Then I could simply send the link to them via email.

As suggested in the literature, the goal of a pilot study is to ascertain whether all instructions and questions are clear and understandable. In order to achieve this, participants were asked for feedback with regard to the research instruments and to identify questions that were difficult to understand, misleading, inappropriate or ambiguous. These questions were then removed or adjusted. Participants were also asked whether they would like to suggest any questions that they believe should be

included in the study. Furthermore, all questions were evaluated in terms of whether it produced the type of information that was needed for the study. The interview process was also monitored to determine the duration of an interview. If interviews took too long, the interview schedule needed to be adjusted by removing unnecessary questions (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001; Simon, 2011).

I captured the data from the research instruments that I collected during the pilot study using Freeonlinesurveys.com. It was much easier capturing the data in this way instead of typing it directly into an Excel spreadsheet. After I captured the data, I exported it to an Excel spreadsheet and analysed the data using Excel, as was my original intention. While capturing the data I discovered that the participants did not fully understand one of the profile questions in the pre-course questionnaire, namely how they earned their income. What I wanted to know was what their occupation was and I phrased the question in a way that would not exclude people who might receive an income from an alternative source such as a spouse or an ex-spouse. However, I found that one participant simply stated 'yes' next to the question, while two others simply said that they were employed. This did not provide me with the information that I was looking for and therefore I decided to change the question to 'What is your occupation?'.


I also found that two people in the pilot study marked the line in-between two answers on the Likert scale. For example, they would not tick the 'agree' or 'disagree' box but the line in between although there was a box for 'undecided'. When I asked them about that later they said that they could not decide what the answer was and did not even notice the 'undecided' column. To prevent this from happening again I moved the column marked 'undecided' from the end of the table to the middle of the table between the headings 'agree' and 'disagree'.

After I collected and captured the data, I selected three participants to interview. The interview schedule worked well and there was no need for any changes. It took between 30-45 minutes to complete the semi-structured interviews and I deemed this as an acceptable time frame. Therefore, there was no need to remove any of the questions. I selected one person from the three participants for a narrative interview. This interview lasted about an hour, and I also found that no changes were necessary with regards to the interview schedule.

Data collected during a pilot study are usually not included in the main study's results because changes made to the research instruments during the pilot study could cause problems with data accuracy (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). However, Simon (2011) points out that it is important to describe, clarify and justify any changes that were made. If no changes were made to the research instruments this should also be noted. Therefore, I have included a discussion of the changes that were made as a result of the pilot study, although the changes were minor and no major changes were required. However, the data collected during the pilot study were not included in the main study's results.

4.8. DATA COLLECTION

I have selected the MBSR programme, a mindfulness-based adult learning programme, as the research site for this study because it is homogeneous and offered on a regular basis in Cape Town and surrounding areas. During 2015, when the data were collected, it was offered nine times at the different venues. I collected data from Cape Town-based MBSR programmes starting in February and November as well as one MBSR programme in Durbanville which started in May.

At the beginning of the MBSR programme, before the start of the first session, I administered the pre-course self-completion questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the pre-course Likert scale (see Appendix B) in person where possible. I collected these immediately to avoid any data being lost. If the MBSR facilitator wanted to administer and collect the instruments themselves, I collected it from them as soon as possible. Then, 7 weeks later, after the completion of the last session, I administered the post-course self-completion questionnaire (see Appendix C) as well as the post-course Likert scale (see Appendix D) in person, where possible. Once again, I collected the completed questionnaires immediately or from the facilitator if they decided to collect the data themselves. During the pilot study, I distributed and collected the pre- and post-course self-completion questionnaires myself. However, the facilitators of the different groups starting in February and May preferred that I only came in for the first session and they distributed and collected the post-course questionnaires themselves during the last session. During the last MBSR programme of the year, which started in November, the facilitator preferred to distribute both the pre- and post-course questionnaires herself during the first and the final session.

Based on the data collected by means of the pre- and post-course research instruments, selected participants were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E) which took place after the completion of the MBSR programme. Finally, based on the data collected during the semi-structured interviews, 15 participants were approached for narrative interviews (see Appendix F).

4.8.1. Selection of Participants

Selecting participants for a research study, or in other words sampling, is of utmost importance to ensure the validity and credibility of the research findings. Therefore, as suggested by Oppong (2013), careful consideration was given to the selection of participants and to ensuring that they provided information that is relevant to this study. Oppong (2013) states that in order to promote validity and reliability, sample size as well as sampling methods must be taken into account. Taking into consideration the significance of an adequate sample size, the aim was for at least 50 participants to complete the pre- and post-course research instruments. In the end, 55 participants completed the pre-course and 49 the post-course questionnaires. Thus, 49 participants completed both the pre- and post-course research instruments. Thirty participants took part in the semi-structured interviews and finally, 15 participants were invited to participate in a narrative interview. I believe that this was an adequate sample size for this study in that it enabled me to draw valid and reliable conclusions.

During the quantitative phase of the research study, all MBSR programme participants were offered the opportunity to complete the pre- and post-course research instruments before and after the MBSR programme. After comparing the results of the pre- and post-course research instruments, those who indicated that they participated in community activities, or reported a significant personal change or no change at all after the completion of the MBSR programme were contacted to request an interview. This approach can be referred to as purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, also referred to in the academic literature as theoretical sampling, means that participants are selected because of their experience or knowledge of the topic being researched and ensures that a researcher selects a segment of the population that can inform the research. It is a sampling strategy that considers both the theoretical framework and the research questions (Curtis, Gesler, Smith & Washburn, 2000; Bryman, 2001; Welman & Kruger, 2001; Tuckett, 2004; Oppong 2013). During this study, participants were selected for

semi-structured interviews based on their experience, as were reported in the pre- and post-course research instruments, which indicated whether they provided more information than others.

Only participants who completed both the pre- and post-course research instruments and attended at least six of the eight weekly sessions, as well as the full-day session, were considered for a semi-structured interview. The selection of participants for the narrative interview was also based on purposive sampling. During the interview process participants who indicated a level of emancipation and transformation or an interest in social issues were identified. During the narrative interview participants were asked to share their life stories in order to compile their life history and delve deeper into the issues highlighted by the aims of this research.

4.8.2. Data Capturing and Storing

The consent forms, the pre-and post-course research instruments as well as the interview transcripts and notes were used as the database for this study. Yin (2003) proposes certain guidelines for the storing of data and suggests that the database should be kept separate from the research report.

Following Yin's (2003) guidelines, a database was created by keeping the raw data that led to the conclusions separately in a safe place. This included the results from the pre- and post-course research instruments, the interview transcripts and the notes made by myself during the research process. As advised by Yin (2003), the circumstances under which the data were collected, such as the time and place, were also indicated on the pre- and post-course research instruments as well as the interview transcripts. To show that the required procedures were followed during the data collection process, the signed consent forms were included in the database. Creating this database ensured that no evidence was lost by either carelessness or bias.

4.8.3. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation is suggested by Wodak and Meyer (2009). It was achieved during this study by using different methods to collect data, including self-completion questionnaires, a Likert scale, semi-structured interviews as well as narrative interviews.

This approach is also encouraged by Yin (2003, p. 83) who argues that there are certain principles that are important when collecting data for case studies as it increases the quality and supports the validity and reliability of the data collected. These include the following: (1) there should be more than one source of evidence, (2) the case study database should be separate from the research report and (3) there should be a chain of evidence that indicates the links between the research questions, the data collected and the conclusions.

Considering Yin's (2003) guidelines, during this study a mixed-method research approach was used to ensure that there is more than one source of data. According to Yin (2003), a case study is more accurate and convincing if more than one source of data has been used and furthermore it increases validity. Secondly, a case-study database was created by keeping the raw data that led to the conclusions separately in a safe place. This included the results from the self-completion questionnaires, the Likert scales, the interview transcripts and notes made by myself during the research process. Yin (2003) suggests that the circumstances under which evidence were collected should also be included in the database, such as the time and place of the interview. Therefore, this was also included in the database and the results of the questionnaires as well as the interview transcripts indicated the time and place of data collection. Yin (2003) also posits that the circumstances under which data were collected should follow procedures and to show that these procedures were followed, the signed consent forms were included in the database. By creating this database, I ensured that no evidence was lost by either carelessness or bias which could influence the reliability of the case study.

Furthermore, to ensure reliability a chain of evidence was created as suggested by Yin (2003). Care was taken to ensure that there was a clear link between the research questions, the data collected and the conclusions drawn and that an independent reader of the study would be able to follow these links. This was achieved by citing relevant portions of the case study database, such as interviews, to establish a clear relation between the data collected and the conclusions drawn. These guidelines were followed because according to Yin (2003), it will ensure that the data collected are valid and reliable for further analysis. However, it is important to note that objectivity of the findings was not achieved, because researchers who work within a critical-emancipatory

framework declares openly that they advocate certain objectives and goals during the research process which may influence the findings.

4.9. DATA ANALYSIS

Within the critical-emancipatory paradigm, data analysis was based on the raw data collected using the quantitative and qualitative instruments. As discussed earlier, the focus of the data analysis process was on the qualitative data. Data analysis can be described as “a systematic search for meaning” (Hatch, 2002, p. 148). Hatch (2002, p. 148) continues:

It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories.

Basit (2003) describes data analysis as an attempt by researchers to develop a better understanding of what they have studied and to refine their interpretations.

I collected and then captured the data from both the pre- and post-course instruments on the website freeonlinesurveys.com. Following this, I exported the data from the website to an Excel spreadsheet. I then began the process of designing an Excel spreadsheet that I could use to combine the answers in a meaningful way and from which I could draw conclusions. I compared the pre- and post-course answers of individual participants and identified changes in the answers to specific questions. The pre-course self-completion questionnaires (see Appendix A) were used to compile a profile of the participants and based on the analysis of the pre-course and post-course instruments, I identified candidates to be interviewed. As discussed earlier, the use of the Likert scale was limited to the identification of potential interview candidates only, and the data collected in this way were not analysed further.

The semi-structured interviews and the narrative interviews were analysed based on my records and transcripts of the interviews and the computer program Atlas ti was used to aid the process of analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the semi-structured interviews while a narrative analysis process was used to analyse the narrative interviews. In the following sections these approaches to data analysis will be discussed in more detail.

4.9.1. Thematic Analysis

During this study I gathered a substantial amount of data, therefore I needed an analysis method that could incorporate this. A thematic analysis is suitable to work with large sets of data and can provide “rich, detailed and complex data” (Alhojailan, 2012, p. 42). Clarke and Braun (2013, p. 120) describe a thematic analysis as “essentially a method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data”. During a thematic analysis, such as the one conducted during this study, a researcher will look for themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Alhojailan, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82), a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set”. Buetow (2010, p. 123) suggests that thematic analysis “attempts in general to reveal core consistencies and meanings in text by identifying and analyzing themes”.

The aim of this study was theory building within a critical theoretical framework and Alhojailan (2012) proposes that a thematic analysis is appropriate for generating theory. This view is verified by Braun and Clarke (2006), Borrell (2008) and Clarke and Braun (2013) who agree that thematic analysis can support a variety of theoretical frameworks. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 78) reason: “Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data”. However, they do suggest that a researcher make the epistemological and theoretical assumptions clear when conducting this kind of analysis. During this study the theoretical assumptions were clarified by developing a comprehensive theoretical framework and by clarifying the epistemological assumptions associated with a critical-emancipatory approach, as discussed in Chapter 3.

A thematic approach can exclusively focus on the experience, meaning and reality of participants, but it can also include an analysis of how these are influenced by the social context (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Borrell (2008) argue that a thematic analysis that is associated with a critical theoretical and epistemological framework, should not only consider how individuals make meaning of their experience but also take into account how the social context can influence this process. This view is verified by authors such as Braun and Clarke (2006) as well as Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013), who

argue that the social context should be taken into account if the theoretical or epistemological framework requires it.

Another reason why a thematic analysis was deemed appropriate for this study is its flexibility and the fact that data can be examined inductively and deductively (Alhojailan, 2012). In other words, themes can be identified in an inductive and deductive way in the data set. When following an inductive approach, the themes in the data are closely linked to the data itself and there is no attempt to make the data fit the theoretical framework. However, researchers cannot simply ignore the theoretical and epistemological framework. A more deductive approach, which is aimed at theory building, will be guided by the researcher's theoretical interests and may therefore result in a more detailed analysis of certain aspects of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this study, similar to an approach followed by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), the data were analysed inductively and deductively. In this way an attempt was made to allow the data to direct the process while also addressing the research question and promoting the theory building process.

4.9.1.1. The Thematic Analysis Process

During the thematic analysis, a systematic process was followed by identifying the themes in the data. As suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001), the themes were categorised into basic, organising and global themes. Basic themes reveal the least about the data and need to be presented with other themes to be meaningful. Organising themes disclose more about the data by bringing the basic themes together and summarising the main assumption of the basic themes. Global themes are considered macro themes and combine the organising themes into a significant theme. Global themes describe the text as a whole within the context of the analysis and usually convey the most significant aspect of the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Goldbart & Marshall, 2004). Identifying basic, organising and global themes in the data was similar to an approach to thematic analysis that was used by Goldbart and Marshall (2004), MacIntosh and Johnson (2008), Lyons, O'Malley, O'Connor and Monaghan (2010) and Manafo and Wong (2012).

The literature review revealed that most thematic data analysis processes followed similar phases or stages. Therefore, the six phases as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) were incorporated during this study. Although authors such as Attride-

Stirling(2001), Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), Cruzes and Dyba (2011) and Alhojailan (2012) also describe similar phases of thematic data analysis, I decided to use the framework for analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), because it was the most comprehensive. Although these stages are presented in a linear format, data analysis is often not a linear process and during this study I often moved back and forth between the phases.

Phase one consisted of reading through the data several times. Braun and Clarke (2006), Cruzes and Dyba (2011), as well as Alhojailan (2012), recommend that a researcher reads the data repeatedly before commencing the coding process. Phase two entailed coding the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), coding the data means organising it into meaningful groups. Attride-Stirling (2001) asserts that words, passages and quotations can be coded. Similarly, Goldbart and Marshall (2004, p. 197) state that codes should be applied to “meaningful segments of the textual data”. Cruzes and Dyba (2011) describe coding as the process of identifying certain segments of text.

Phase three focused on the development of themes. Goldbart and Marshall (2004) as well as Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), claim that once the data have been coded, these codes can be connected to identify themes in the data. In a similar vein, Basit (2003) maintains that coding can link the raw data to concepts and themes that can help the researcher to interpret the data. This view is verified by Attride-Stirling (2001), Braun and Clarke (2006) as well as Cruzes and Dyba (2011). Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that this is also the phase during which a researcher can start considering how themes that describe the data can be analysed as well as how these relate to broader themes.

Phase four consisted of reviewing the themes identified in phase three. Attride-Stirling (2001) and Cruzes and Dyba (2011) reason that during this phase certain themes will be eliminated. A researcher may realise that the data are not adequate to support a certain theme, while other themes may merge because of similarities. During this phase the themes are refined. Phase five involved deciding which themes should be analysed and connected to the theoretical framework. At this point each theme was considered individually as well as how the theme related to the research question and the theoretical framework. During this phase the basic, organising and global themes were identified as suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001).

Phase six was the final phase during which the data were interpreted and related to the research question and theoretical framework. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is at this time that the data analysis process goes beyond description of the data to interpretation of the data. In the previous phases, which entail the description of the data, the data are organised to show themes but during the final phase an attempt is made to show the significance of the themes related to broader themes, meanings and implications. This is the phase that the data will be linked to the literature and theorised. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 86) describes it in this way: "...the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data".

Theorising the data during the final phase of analysis substantiates a Habermasian perspective that emphasises the theorising of knowledge. Habermas (1972, p. 301) claims that knowledge must be removed from the interest that has created it and theorised to inspire action: "The only knowledge that can truly orient action is knowledge that frees itself from mere human interests and is based on Ideas – in other words, knowledge that has taken a theoretical attitude". The knowledge created by the participants was theorised by connecting the themes identified to concepts pertaining to the critical theoretical framework. This process is referred to as 'universal analysis' by Brookfield (1992, p. 80) and is similar to an approach followed by Forrester (1992) to conduct fieldwork within a Habermasian theoretical framework. Where the theoretical framework could not explain the themes identified in the data, I consulted the literature in adult education to further explore that specific theme.

4.9.1.2. Validity and Reliability of a Thematic Analysis

A good thematic analysis needs to ensure that the analysis process is consistent with the theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this study, I considered theoretical concepts pertaining to a critical theoretical framework as discussed in the theoretical framework. In this way I ensured that the thematic analysis process was consistent with the theoretical framework.

Clarke and Braun (2013) caution that a researcher should not be tempted to use the data collection questions as the themes for analysis. Themes that go beyond the questions should be allowed to emerge from the data. Furthermore, researchers should not be tempted to omit phases that familiarise them with the data. These include reading the

data several times and coding the data before identifying themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013). During this study themes were not based on the questions used for data collection to allow themes to emerge from the data. Furthermore, the data were read several times before coding started. Once the data were coded, the themes were identified that related to the critical theoretical framework.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also warn against themes that are not consistent and coherent, as well as a poor analysis because of failure to provide adequate examples from the data. Furthermore, care should be taken not to make claims that are not validated or contradicted by the data. During this study an attempt was made to avoid these problems by carefully developing coherent themes that were well-supported by the data.

4.9.2. Narrative Analysis

In adult learning, narrative learning can be strongly linked to development and transformation. The narrative framework looks at life as a story, which is determined by the individual. Although social-cultural context shapes our experiences, it is the meaning that an adult brings to these experiences that determine what is learned. A narrative is empowering, because although we cannot control our circumstances or the events that occur in our lives, it is possible to determine how we interpret them and make meaning of them (Merriam et al., 2007; Clark & Rossiter, 2008). Therefore, because the narrative is empowering, it is a suitable method of analysis for a study that uses a critical theoretical framework aimed at creating knowledge about emancipation.

It is important to note that a narrative is not only focused on the cognitive. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 215) point out that “how we story our lives includes not just cognitive but emotional, bodily and spiritual dimensions”. This view is verified by Clark and Rossiter (2008) who observe that stories are holistic. A narrative analysis of the data was suitable for this study because it enabled me to consider both the emotional and physical (bodily) aspects that are part of the learning process. These aspects were also revealed as important during the thematic analysis. Stories that are shared in a narrative analysis can help us understand ourselves as well as the world we live in. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 215) explain: “Narratives are also windows into development and transformational learning. They enable us to make sense of our experience, which is what adult learning is all about”.

4.9.2.1. *The Narrative Turn*

The origins of the narrative can be traced back as far as Aristotle who analysed the Greek tragedy. It involves the representation of events, experiences and emotions and is usually well-organised. In its simplest form a narrative has a clear beginning, middle and end. Aristotle believed that narratives often present stories of the unexpected and that it was not an exact representation of the world, therefore a narrative analysis often focuses on the uniqueness of a story (Hyvärinen, 2008; Riessman-Kohler, 2008). However, despite the fact that the use of a narrative analysis dates back to Aristotle's time, there are at least three narrative turns in the twentieth century that were identified in the literature. The first turn was when the narrative analysis became popular in the early 1920s and 1930s following research by the Chicago School of Sociology and its interest in personal life stories (Riessman-Kohler, 2008; Butler-Kisber, 2010).

However, the interest in the narrative analysis subsided during the 1940s and 1950s when the emphasis shifted to quantitative research methods. The second turn was during the 1960s and 1970s with a revival of the interest in narratives because of the emergence of new identity movements, such as the women's movement, which criticised positivism and the realist epistemology. These movements promoted the emancipation of marginalised groups and the narrative approach highlighted stories of women who have been marginalised (Riessman-Kohler, 2008; Butler-Kisber, 2010). The third turn was in the 1980s when there was a 'burgeoning interest in narrative' and theorists from a range of research fields such as psychology, sociology and education started exploring this method (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 62; McMullen & Braithwaite, 2013). As evident from the literature review, this interest continued to grow and develop over the years.

4.9.2.2. *Narrative Analysis Explained*

A narrative analysis usually refers to an account shared by a person based on past and present experiences and enables the researcher to explore the human experience at a deeper level (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Clark and Rossiter (2008) reason that a narrative can be useful because it describes experience from the inside, rather than from the outside as it is observed. McMullen and Braithwaite (2013, p. 92) state that "[a] narrative inquiry has as its core a focus on the study of experience as it is lived". Butler-Kisber (2010) describes it as a way in which people make sense of their experience and

explain their actions. It allows issues to emerge that the researcher may not have taken into account otherwise and can reveal intimate thoughts, reactions, frames of references and cultural conventions. It provides a new way to study thoughts, memory, socialisation and culture (Smith, 2000). A narrative analysis is not aimed at the explanation of a phenomenon, rather, it is aimed at the interpretation of meaning. Through their story, human beings understand and give meaning to their lives. (Smith, 2000; McMullen & Braithwaite, 2013). Similarly, Riessman-Kohler (2008, p. 3) describes a narrative as a connection of events which will result in certain actions or meanings that the narrator wants to bring across. It is valuable because “stories reveal the truth about human experience” (Riessman-Kohler, 2008, p.10).

A narrative is defined by Smith (2000) as “an oral, written or filmed account of events told to others or to oneself (monologue)”. It refers to personal experiences or the experiences of others and can include stories, myths, folktales and fairytales. Therefore, the literal truth of the experiences as expressed in the narrative is not important (Smith, 2000). This view is confirmed by authors such as Burck (2005, p. 252) who refers to narrative as “the way individuals present their accounts of themselves” and Richmond (2002) who claims that a narrative is not actual reality but rather a reflection of the narrator’s point of view. Feldman, Sköldberg, Brown and Horner (2004, p. 147) refer to the narrative as “a basic tool that individuals use to communicate and create understanding with other people and for themselves”. They continue to describe narratives as the way that individuals “make sense of the world and their place in it” (Feldman et al. 2004, p. 148). During a narrative an individual will reveal stories of the past, the present and how they believe the future should be (Richmond, 2002; Feldman, et al. 2004; Bamberg, 2006).

Burck (2005, p. 252) argues that the narrative is used “to make sense of our lived experience” while Emerson and Frosh (2004) argue that we use the narrative to create a story of the self. The focus on experience makes this a suitable method for a study such as this, which is focused on adult education. John Dewey, who is described by Huber, Caine, Huber and Steeves (2013, p. 220) as “the paramount philosopher in education in the 20th century”, believes that education, life and experience cannot be separated. Huber et al. (2013, p. 220)¹⁹ refer to the work of Dewey when they state that “education

¹⁹ Huber et al. (2013) cite Dewey 1925, 1934, 1938

is life and life is education, and to study life, to study education, is to study experience”. Atkinson (2010) confirms the view that a narrative analysis is a suitable approach for educational research and points out that it is an interdisciplinary research methodology with powerful possibilities for expanding educational research. Atkinson (2010, p. 93) notes that “all knowledge is storied, troubles and interrogates traditional conceptions of knowledge and what counts as knowledge production”.

Riessman-Kohler (2008) and McMullen and Braithwaite (2013) confirm that a narrative analysis is not associated with a specific theoretical framework. McMullen and Braithwaite (2013) propose that narrative analysis falls within an interpretive framework but within the interpretive framework it can also be associated with a critical framework as demonstrated by the work of Emerson and Frosh (2004). Furthermore, Riessman-Kohler (2008) claims that although a narrative analysis focuses on a particular experience, it can be generalised to promote the process of theory building. The theoretical framework enables the process of theory building during a narrative analysis. Emerson and Frosh (2004) contend that by using the theoretical framework, different types of questions can be asked about the narrative analysis. In this way new knowledge can be produced. They suggest that a study that takes a critical perspective, such as this one, considers the dominant social discourse that is influencing the narrative. As a result, the theoretical framework can provide tools to focus the narrative on more than individual aspects but also include social aspects.

Johnstone (2001), Riessman (2004) and Bamberg (2006) endorse the view that a narrative analysis can reveal dominant discourses. Johnstone (2001, p. 644) asserts that the political and social effects of a narrative should also be analysed. He explains:

... storytelling not only as a way of creating community but as a resource for dominating others, for expressing solidarity, for resistance and conflict; a resource, that is, in the continuing negotiation through which humans create language and society and self as they talk and act.

Bamberg (2006) reasons that personal accounts can reveal how dominant discourses are resisted. He continues to argue that it may be possible, by means of a narrative analysis, to establish more clearly how hegemonic discourses emerge which can encourage strategies that challenge these discourses.

During a narrative analysis, the focus is on moving from a particular, unique story to the general (Riessman-Kohler, 2008; Huber et al. 2013). The story is the data and the focus will be on the story as a whole and how to theorise the story (Riessman-Kohler, 2008; Huber et al. 2013). This is the difference between a narrative analysis and a thematic analysis; during a thematic analysis a researcher will consider specific components and theorise that. Furthermore, during a thematic analysis the data are coded and organised into themes whereas during a narrative analysis the focus is on extended accounts from participants that are kept together as units. Aspects such as why the participant is telling the story, what they mean by the story, who they are telling the story to and what it reveals about social processes, are analysed (Emerson & Frosh, 2004; Feldman et al. 2004; Riessman-Kohler, 2008).

During a narrative analysis it is accepted that the researcher participates in the creation of the narrative. Riessman-Kohler (2008) points out that the interview itself will influence the narrative, while Butler-Kisber (2010) notes that the interpretation by the researcher will also play a role. She notes that the same story can produce different narrative accounts based on the researcher. Emerson and Frosh (2004) concur with this view stating that interpretation is influenced by the researcher's specific focus and theoretical interest. It is acknowledged that the researcher's interpretation is not the only interpretation of the text and that there may be other interpretations. Therefore, it was important to acknowledge my role in the production of the stories that were presented during the narrative analysis. The stories were influenced by the critical theoretical framework of this study and may have been interpreted differently by another researcher.

4.9.2.3. The Narrative Analysis Process

During the narrative analysis process the researcher constructs the stories based on the data. As with other research methods, different approaches can be identified. Riessman-Kohler (2008), as well as McMullen and Braithwaite (2013), identify a variety of approaches, yet there is no guide on how to approach the analysis process. With a narrative analysis, the focus can be on the themes in the narrative, the structure of the narrative, the units of discourse or the language used as well as the interaction between the narrator and the researcher (Riessman-Kohler, 2008; McMullen & Braithwaite,

2013; Parra, 2016). Robert and Shenhav (2014)²⁰ note that specialists in narrative analysis have offered a variety of typologies in this respect. However, there does not seem to be one specific approach, or step-by-step guide for a narrative analysis. According to Burrill (2015), this means that there is an opportunity for creativity when it comes to a narrative analysis, as a researcher can find creative strategies to analyse the data.

Elliot (2005), Hyvärinen (2008) and Riessman-Kohler (2008) argue that the work of William Labov and Joshua Waletzky (1997 as cited in Hyvärinen, 2008) has been so influential that most narrative analyses will incorporate their approach in some way. The method provided a clear approach to recognise a narrative (Hyvärinen, 2008). During a narrative analysis based on the work of Labov and Waletzky, the researcher will look for six structural elements in the data. These structural elements include the abstract (which is a short summary of the story), orientation (which refers to the time, place, participants and situation), complicating actions (plot of the story), evaluation (meaning of the experience), resolution (the outcome of the story) and coda (the end of the story) (Riessman-Kohler, 2008; Butler-Kisber, 2010). It must be noted that not all of these elements will be present in every story-telling and the elements need not follow a specific sequence.

Examining these structural elements can help a researcher to find the relationship between meaning and action (Riessman-Kohler, 2008). However, this model is criticised for ignoring contextual aspects that is vital to a narrative and is also more suitable for dealing with shorter texts (Hyvärinen, 2008). Context was very important during my study because it is focused on adult education and learning and uses a critical theoretical framework. Therefore, this approach was not suitable for this study and I searched for an alternative data analysis approach. Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional structure does include the context and seemed like a more appropriate approach for this study. Furthermore, they developed their approach based on the work of the educational theorist, John Dewey, and their work focuses on the educational context. The three dimensions included in this approach developed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) are temporality, sociality and place.

²⁰ Robert and Shenhav cite Mishler, (1995); Elliot, (2005); Clandinin and Rosiek, (2007); Riessman-Kohler, (2008); Phoenix, Smith and Sparkes, (2010)

These dimensions were considered continuously throughout the data analysis process of my study. The first, temporality, means that events and experiences from the past, the present and the future should be taken into account. Usually, considering the future means investigating what is implied for the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Clandinin, Pushor & Murray, 2007; Wang & Geale, 2015). Temporality, according to Elliot (2005, p. 7) is a key feature of narrative stories and clarifies the plot. According to Elliot (2005), a story usually involves a change in a situation, which is demonstrated by temporality because it creates a link between events.

The second dimension is sociality. Using this approach a researcher will analyse a story in terms of the experience of the story teller, the social environment and the interactions with other people (Clandinin et al. 2007; Wang & Geale, 2015). In this way the narrative considers both the personal and social conditions of the story (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). A narrative cannot be examined without taking into account the context (Smith, 2000; Feldman et al. 2004). The third dimension is place, which is included by considering the situation of the story teller and the environment that may have influenced the story teller (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al. 2007; Wang & Geale, 2015). Richmond (2002) and Connelly and Clandinin (2006) posit that this dimension includes the setting of and the character in the story, the immediate physical surroundings and the person the narrator is speaking to.

According to Johnstone (2001), Richmond (2002) and Clandinin (2006), identifying the story is the first step during a narrative analysis. The summary, or abstract, of the basic story, is the point or message that the researcher believes the narrator is trying to bring across. Johnstone (2001) and Feldman et al. (2004) argue that a narrative can include several stories. Feldman et al. (2004) assert that a narrative analysis should start by identifying the stories that are told within each interview and that these stories can be linked to broader themes. When searching for the summary of a story, or the abstract, it can be associated with the approach developed by Labov and Waletzky as mentioned in an earlier discussion. I identified the story as the first step in my narrative data analysis process. However, the other structural elements of Labov and Waletzky's approach, as previously discussed, were not included in the data analysis process of my study. Once the stories were identified, the three-dimensional approach developed by Connelly and Clandinin (2006), was used to further develop the narrative analysis. Therefore, the first

step during the narrative data analysis process in my study was to identify the story. The second step was to examine temporality, including the past, present and future. In the third step I analysed sociality, or the interactions with others and the environment. Finally, in the fourth step I considered the place and background information, which was the influence of the immediate environment and the situation of the story teller.

Similar to the approach of Richmond (2002), I found it useful to develop a story map for each participant, based on the four steps in the data analysis process as described in the preceding paragraph. The story map that served as a framework is portrayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Story map as a Framework for the Narrative Analysis Process

Factors identified in four-step process of narrative analysis	Explanation of steps and action taken by researcher
1. Abstract	A short summary of the story is recorded.
2. Sociality: Interactions with others Social and cultural influences	Consider the experience of the story teller and interactions with others. Consider the experience of the story teller in terms of the social and cultural influences.
3. Temporality Past Present Future	Events from the past that are relevant to the story are considered. Events from the present that are relevant to the story are considered. Events from the future are considered. Often these are implied.
4. Place Background Information	The environment where the story was produced. Situation of the story teller.

(Adapted from Johnstone, 2001; Richmond, 2002; Bamberg, 2006; Clandinin, 2006; Connelly and Clandinin, 2006; Riessman-Kohler, 2008; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Wang & Geale, 2015)

Although the data were not presented in a way that reflected the story map, the story map guided me to deepen the analysis process and to theorise the findings.

4.9.2.4. *Validity and Reliability of a Narrative Analysis*

In terms of validity, trustworthiness, rather than the positivist notion of truth, is important (Emerson & Frosh, 2004; Butler-Kisber, 2010). Authors such as Coulter and Smith (2009), Trahar (2009) and Atkinson (2010) point out that one of the critiques of the narrative analysis process is that it does not represent a clear route to the truth. Trahar (2009) acknowledges that a narrative analysis does not bring forth one 'truth', because it is believed impossible for two people to interpret a story in exactly the same way. Coulter and Smith (2009) assert that the focus on objectivity and truth is related to the dominance of a positivist paradigm and that narratives do not reflect the truth of the experience. Instead, it is a reflection on the experience and does not consider a universal truth. Furthermore, critics of a narrative analysis contend that narrative texts present accounts that are ambiguous, contrasting and often do not provide conclusions or solutions (Atkinson, 2010). In response, Atkinson (2010) contends that the value of narrative text is in the questions asked and not the solutions offered.

It is acknowledged that interpretation will be influenced by the researcher and his/her specific theoretical interests, therefore it is impossible to identify one objective 'truth'. Yet, the interpretation has to be plausible if the researcher wants to influence theory and practice. To ensure trustworthiness and plausibility the interview text must be displayed. Although the story is co-constructed by the participant and the researcher, by displaying the text, the participant retains some control over their own story (Emerson & Frosh, 2004; Trahar, 2009). Butler-Kisber (2010, p. 13) verifies this approach by acknowledging "the importance of including the voices of the participants for more authentic portrayals". Plausibility is enhanced when the voice of the participants is clear in the text and when it can be proved that a substantial amount of time has been spent in the field and a substantial body of text has been provided (Butler-Kisber, 2010). During this study, the text from the interviews was displayed during the data analysis process to ensure validity and reliability. Furthermore, considerable time was spent collecting data as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Validity is ensured by means of a rigorous and transparent research process. Trahar (2009) reasons that because narratives are analysed in a variety of ways, it is important that the researcher illustrates how the data were gathered and analysed. Furthermore, authors like Trahar (2009) and Butler-Kisber (2010) emphasise that it is vital that the

role of the researcher is acknowledged in the construction of the story as well as the social and contextual influences. The researcher has to acknowledge the biases and assumptions they bring to the study. During this study, the critical-emancipatory agenda of the research process was declared, acknowledging the biases and assumptions that the researcher might bring to the study. Another critique of the narrative analysis process as pointed out by Trahar (2009), is that the individual is deemed more important than the collective. However, this critique can be addressed by considering how the individual is influenced by the broader social context. During a narrative analysis, both the individual voice and the social context must be included. During this study, the focus was on relating the individual experience to the broader social context that may indicate social change. Therefore, the individual and the broader social context were both considered.

4.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research involves ethical dimensions which are central to conduct significant and valuable research. These need to be taken into account prior to conducting the research. The ethical principles that I adhered to, as suggested in the academic literature, was firstly to obtain informed consent from the relevant institutions as well as the MBSR facilitators and participants. Other ethical issues that were considered were voluntary participation, potential harm to participants, privacy, confidentiality, power and possible bias.

Informed consent is a key ethical issue when conducting research and means that all people and institutions involved in the research must understand what their participation entails, as well as to have the option to decline to participate or to withdraw from the research at any point they wish to do so (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001; Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008; Allmark et al., 2009; Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011). The MBSR programme that I used as my research site is associated with the Institute of Mindfulness South Africa (IMISA). Therefore, my first step was to contact the chairperson of IMISA, to explain the purpose of my study and obtain his permission to conduct the research (see Appendixes H & I). Once I had the consent of the chairperson of IMISA I contacted the MBSR programme facilitators. I sent them a letter to explain the purpose of my study and to request their permission to approach people who were participating in their MBSR programmes at the time (see Appendix J). I also asked them

to sign a consent form (see Appendix K). Finally, I approached the potential research participants and invited them to participate in the study. I presented them with an information sheet about the research (see Appendix G) and if they were willing to participate in the research study I asked them to sign a consent form (see Appendix L) prior to conducting the research. I explained the aims of the research study prior to collecting the data and gave them the opportunity to clarify any uncertainties before asking them to sign the consent form.

Participation in research may imply an intrusion in the participant's life. It is something that the participant did not ask for and may cause inconvenience. Furthermore, social research may require people to reveal personal and sensitive information, therefore it is important that participation is voluntary (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 521; Orb et al. 2001; Allmark et al. 2009). Voluntary participation, according to Drew et al. (2007), means that each participant will be free to decide whether or not they want to participate without being manipulated, forced, deceived or coerced in any way. During this study, each participant's decision about whether or not they would like to participate in the research study was respected and participation was voluntary.

In addition, I strove to be sensitive to the effect that my research could have on others and the potential harm related to emotional distress that certain questions, for example questions about one's emotions and body awareness, may have caused the participants. Allmark et al. (2009) point out that research can potentially harm both participants and the researcher. Participants may be harmed by interviews that are emotionally intense while an unsafe environment may cause physical harm to both participants and the researcher. Physical safety was not a problem during this study because interviews were conducted in a safe environment of the participant's choice under non-threatening circumstances. It is possible, however, that some questions could have prompted an emotional response from the participants. Therefore, I emphasised to the potential participants, that participation was voluntary and that I would respect their right to participate or to decline to participate. The self-completion questionnaires and the Likert scales that I developed to collect the data did not include any questions of a sensitive nature; however, participants were advised that if they found it intrusive they were not obligated to complete the questionnaires. The semi-structured and narrative interview schedules included a number of questions that could be regarded as sensitive

and could have caused some discomfort or distress. Therefore, during the interview process I was aware of this possibility and I offered participants the opportunity to take a break or to discontinue the interview should they feel uncomfortable or unable to continue at any time. I ensured that participants were aware of the fact that they were free to withdraw at any time during the research should they wish to do so as suggested by Fouka and Mantzourou (2011).

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Bryman (2001, p. 480), Drew et al. (2008) and Fouka and Mantzourou (2011) argue that in order to prevent any harm to the participants, care should be taken to protect the confidentiality of records as well as protecting the identity of participating individuals. In my research I maintained the confidentiality of all records, the research site where I conducted the research as well as the identity of individuals participating in the research. Pseudonyms were used when the results were written and analysed. As recommended by Drew et al. (2008), Allmark et al. (2009) as well as Bibby (1997), all identifying descriptors were removed from the data. All data records were stored in a safe place and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research. These procedures were clearly stated in the consent form (see Appendix L) to ensure that all participants were aware of this arrangement.

Furthermore, I also considered issues related to power. Allmark et al. (2009) as well as Orb et al. (2001) reason that power can become an ethical issue if participants are interviewed by a person that they have some kind of relationship with. A case in example would be a course facilitator interviewing people who are trained by them. Power was not a concern during this study because I had no previous or future relationship with the research participants. However, I was aware of the potential impact of power relations during the data collection process. Allmark et al. (2009) note that power can also become an ethical issue if vulnerable groups such as children or disabled people are interviewed. This was not an issue during this study considering that all participants in the MBSR programme were legally competent adults who were able to give their consent to participate in this study.

Finally, I endeavoured to avoid any bias in my research design, data analysis, interpretation and any other aspects of the research where objectivity was required. I strove to adhere to all the research ethics obligations as defined by the University of the Western Cape and to come to an honest conclusion.

4.11. SUMMARY

In Chapter 3 I developed the critical theoretical framework that informs this study and in this chapter I explained the research design and methodology of this study that was used to guide the research questions within the field of adult education and learning. I examined the advantages and disadvantages associated with the research methods that I selected to collect the data during the MBSR programme as well as the data analysis process. I also considered how the data analysis processes I selected would influence theory building and the creation of new knowledge that will reveal the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Following the recommendations in the literature, I did everything in my power to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Furthermore, using the academic literature as my guide, I endeavoured to conduct the research ethically, avoiding any harm to the adult learners who participated. In Chapter 5 I will provide a detailed case description of the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme.



CHAPTER 5

THE MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION PROGRAMME: CASE DESCRIPTION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Building on Chapter 4 that focused on the research design and methodology, in this chapter I present the case description of the selected case study. In the first section of this chapter, I provide a short review of the theoretical work on the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme and mindfulness. This draws attention to the fact that there is limited theoretical work on mindfulness and the MBSR programme in the field of adult learning and education. In the next section I argue that, based on the academic literature, the MBSR programme can be conceptualised as an adult learning programme which links it to adult education and learning and prompts the necessity to discuss the curriculum of the programme. I then proceed to discuss the philosophical underpinnings of the MBSR programme followed by an overview of the curriculum of the MBSR programme.

The MBSR programme, as developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1996), is a Mindfulness-based Intervention (MBI) which is at its core an educational approach and the focus of this study. Although the MBSR programme is closely associated with the medical world, Kabat-Zinn (1996, 2011), Santorelli (2014) and Hyland (2017) highlight that the programme has an educational rather than a therapeutic orientation, while Rosenzweig, Reibel, Greeson, Brainard and Hojat (2003, p. 88) specifically refer to MBSR as an “educational intervention”. Cullen (2011), Kabat-Zinn (2011) and Santorelli (2014) point out that the MBSR programme, as an educational intervention, is aimed at adults. In this study I refer to the MBSR programme as a ‘mindfulness-based adult learning programme’ to conceptualise the adult education and learning orientation of the MBSR programme. As will be discussed in this chapter, the MBSR programme has a specialised curriculum content that constitutes it as a learning programme. Therefore, I propose that it can also be conceptualised as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme.

The discussion of academic literature, debates on the MBSR programme and mindfulness in this chapter is aimed at the development of an in-depth understanding of

mindfulness and the MBSR programme. The literature reveals that the weight of the MBSR curriculum leans towards mindfulness rather than stress reduction. Consequently, when I conceptualised the study, I decided to focus on the mindfulness component of the MBSR programme. The academic literature review and the description of the MBSR programme curriculum enable the exploration of emancipatory and transformative learning, prompted by the MBSR programme and the cultivation of mindfulness during the MBSR programme. Furthermore, the academic literature review creates the opportunity to explore the potential of the MBSR programme, as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme, to provide the foundation for fostering transformative and emancipatory learning. In this way it informs the conceptualisation of the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

5.2. METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

The methodology used for the literature review was shaped by authors such as Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt and Walach (2004), Greeson (2009), Baer and Sauer (2009), Harrington and Pickles (2009), Dayes (2011), Piet, Würtzen and Zachariae (2012), Khoury et al. (2013), Norton, Abbott, Norberg and Hunt (2015), Zoogman, Goldberg, Hoyt and Miller (2015), Nilsson and Kazemi (2016) and Badker and Misri (2017). These authors analysed and conducted literature reviews on mindfulness and the MBSR programme. Information obtained from books and selected reputable internet sites was also included but the focus was primarily on articles from peer-reviewed journals. The databases that were used to find the articles included EBSCOHost, Academic Search Complete, EconLit, ERIC (Education Resource Information Centre), Health Source, MasterFILE Premier, MEDLINE, PsychARTICLES, Business Source Complete, CINAHL Plus, Teacher Reference Centre, Jstore and SocINDEX.

I discovered thousands of articles about mindfulness and the MBSR programme, it was necessary to develop criteria for selecting the literature for review. The criteria were based on themes which emerged in the literature search. The first theme was understanding mindfulness-based interventions and the MBSR-programme in the context of an adult learning programme. The second theme focussed on the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the curriculum of the MBSR programme. This theme included the introduction of mindfulness in the Western world and how it

can be related to social change. The third theme was the MBSR programme curriculum and the components of the curriculum. Furthermore, other studies about mindfulness and theory building were also taken into account.

5.3. MINDFULNESS AND THEORY BUILDING

The development of MBIs and MBI curricula, such as the MBSR programme curriculum, is influenced by the growing body of academic research. Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 284) describes this trend as “the exponential rise in the number of scientific papers each year on the subject of mindfulness”. From the academic literature review it was clear that most studies focus on the effects of mindfulness and the MBSR programme. In a 2006 literature review, Shapiro et al. (2006) already noted that, in the preceding 20 years, the majority of research focused on the effects of the MBSR programme. Five years later, Cullen (2011, p. 188) found that there were hundreds of research papers on the effects of the MBSR programme. My own literature review confirmed this. It also revealed that research focused on the MBSR programme is mostly quantitative in nature, with very few qualitative studies that could be found. Kerrigan et al. (2011) reports similar findings.

Research papers relate the effects of MBSR programme to physical and mental conditions such as depression²¹, anxiety²², pain²³, stress²⁴, rheumatoid arthritis²⁵, social anxiety disorder²⁶, HIV²⁷, cancer²⁸, menopause²⁹, self-compassion³⁰, and empathy³¹. There is also evidence of neurobiological studies associated with the MBSR programme. For instance, Hölzel, Carmody et al. (2011) found an increase in the grey matter of the left hippocampus of the brain which is associated with emotional regulation. Yet, in 2015 Tang, Hölzel and Posner conducted a review of studies that consider neuroscience in relation to mindfulness meditation and concluded that there are

²¹ Bohlmeijer, Prenger, Taal and Cuijpers (2010); Marchand (2012); Song and Lindquist (2015)

²² Kabat-Zinn et al. (1992); Bohlmeijer et al. (2010); Marchand, (2012); Song and Lindquist (2015)

²³ Grossman et al. (2004); Marchand, (2012)

²⁴ Carlson, Speca, Patel and Goodey (2003); Rosenzweig et al. (2003); Grossman et al. (2004); Shapiro, Astin, Bishop and Cordova (2005); Bohlmeijer et al. (2010); Young (2010); Marchand (2012); Song and Lindquist (2015)

²⁵ Pradhan et al. (2007)

²⁶ Goldin and Gross (2010)

²⁷ Gayner et al. (2012)

²⁸ Carlson et al. (2003); Dobkin (2008); Witek-Janusek et al. (2008)

²⁹ Carmody, Crawford and Churchill (2006)

³⁰ Birnie, Speca and Carlson (2010)

³¹ Birnie et al. (2010)

still several shortcomings in existing studies. Tang et al. (2015, p. 213) elucidate: “Findings on the effects of meditation on the brain are often reported enthusiastically by the media and used by clinicians and educators to inform their work. However, most of the findings have not yet been replicated”. Tang et al. (2015, p. 222) continue:

Studies suffer from low methodological quality and present with speculative post-hoc interpretations. However, there is emerging evidence that mindfulness meditation might cause neuroplastic changes in the structure and function of brain regions involved in regulation of attention, emotion and self-awareness.

My literature search revealed that the MBSR programme is a well-known and widely researched MBI offered worldwide. Although the overwhelming majority of research on mindfulness focuses on the individual effects, there is evidence of linking mindfulness to established theories. For instance, several studies explore mindfulness in relation to behavioural theory. Cognitive-behavioural therapy is based on cognitive-behavioural theory (Hupp, Reiman & Jewell, 2008) and several references to cognitive-behavioural therapy can be found in the academic literature on mindfulness. This was initiated by the development of the Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) programme in 2002 by Segal, Williams and Teasdale who integrated aspects of cognitive-behavioural therapy into the MBSR programme (Williams, Russell & Russell, 2008, p. 524). Studies focusing on mindfulness and cognitive-behavioural therapy included Roemer and Orsillo (2002), Orsillo, Roemer and Barlow (2003), Singh, Lancioni, Whaler, Winton and Singh (2008), Baer and Sauer (2009), Kuyken et al. (2010), Dayes (2011), Burton, Schmertz, Price, Masuda and Anderson (2013) and Shonin, Van Gordon and Griffiths (2014). Other authors such as Lynch, Chapman, Rosenthal, Kuo and Linehan (2006) and Wagner, Rathus and Miller (2006) link mindfulness to dialectical behaviour therapy, which is rooted in dialectical theory (Lynch et al. 2006, p. 461).

There is also evidence of mindfulness being explored in terms of other theories. Chari (2016) links mindfulness to affect theory, Stizman (2002) connects mindfulness to the theory of human caring, Fletcher and Hayes (2005) analyse mindfulness in terms of relational frame theory, Chatzisarantis and Hagger (2007) relate mindfulness to the theory of planned behaviour and Brown, Ryan and Creswell (2007b) associate mindfulness with self-control theory. Snyder, Shapiro and Treleaven (2012) investigated mindfulness using attachment theory whereas grounded theory is used by

authors such as Mason (2002), Morone et al. (2009), Irving et al. (2014), Himelstein, Saul, Garcia-Romeu and Pinedo (2014), Millon and Halewood (2015), Bohecker, Vereen, Wells and Wathen (2016) and Long, Briggs and Astin (2016).

The literature review showed that mindfulness and the MBSR programme are generally not explored and analysed in the adult education and learning context. Although I discussed mindfulness and the MBSR programme in relation to adult education and learning in Chapter 2, for ease of reference I recap this earlier discussion in this paragraph. An analysis of mindfulness in education from a Stieglerian perspective was conducted by Reveley (2015). Hyland (2009) considers mindfulness in relation to the ‘therapeutic turn’ in education and Yeganeh and Kolb (2009) explore mindfulness in terms of experiential learning theory. Others, such as Shapiro et al. (2011) point to the potential for mindfulness to inform transformative learning theory. Orr (2002), Berila (2014) and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) link mindfulness to critical pedagogy which is rooted in critical theory. Orr (2002, p. 480) states that mindfulness “can be used to address oppressive ideologies and practices in the lives of students”. The literature review showed that although there has been some exploration of mindfulness by educational theorists, the academic literature is very limited and points to the need for further research and theory building.

The literature review also revealed that there is an emerging body of research on developing theoretical perspectives on the process of mindfulness. According to Shapiro et al. (2006, p. 374), researchers seek to answer the question of “how do mindfulness-based interventions actually work?” According to these authors, the focus of this type of research is on mindfulness itself rather than mindfulness-based interventions such as the MBSR programme. Shapiro et al. (2006, p. 375) identify three axioms of mindfulness, namely intention, attention and attitude, to develop a model of mindfulness which they refer to as “mechanisms of mindfulness”. Although the model developed by Shapiro et al. (2006) was supported by Dobkin (2008), Carmody, Baer, Lykens and Olendzki (2009) also tested the model, and reported that their research could not confirm the model.

In a separate development, Brown, Ryan and Creswell (2007a) endeavoured to explore the theoretical foundations of mindfulness. The authors identify characteristics of mindfulness which include clarity of awareness; flexibility of awareness and attention;

non-conceptual and non-discriminatory awareness; empirical stance towards reality; present-oriented consciousness; and stability of continuity of attention and awareness. They acknowledge that these characteristics often overlap but maintain that they are mutually supportive. In another development, Hölzel, Lazar et al. (2011) attempt to incorporate the literature on mindfulness into a theoretical framework that they refer to as “mechanisms of action”. They identify four components of mindfulness in this framework, namely attention regulation, body awareness, emotion regulation and change in the perspective of self.

The literature review demonstrated that the MBSR programme and the broader field of mindfulness is a well-researched area. It also showed that there is a growing body of research although it is very limited in the field of adult education and learning. Furthermore, when reviewing the literature that attempts to develop an understanding of the process of mindfulness, it became clear that awareness is a central feature of mindfulness. Brown et al. (2007a) refer to awareness several times when describing the characteristics of mindfulness, while Hölzel, Lazar et al. (2011) refer to body awareness specifically when describing the four components of mindfulness. Cullen (2011, p. 192) summarises this key aspect well when she states that “one important, distinguishing feature of mindfulness practice is the systematic application of a particular type of awareness to a variety of phenomena”. Therefore, it can be concluded that developing awareness is a fundamental aspect of the MBSR programme and it is also central to the theory building process which creates new knowledge.

5.4. THE MBSR PROGRAMME AS A MINDFULNESS-BASED ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMME

The MBSR programme was developed with an educational orientation and is described by Kabat-Zinn (1996) as a mindfulness-based intervention that is fundamentally based on an educational approach. This view is confirmed by Rosenzweig et al. (2003), Santorelli (2014) and Hyland (2017) who also highlight the educational orientation of the MBSR programme. The eight-week MBSR programme was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues at the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre in the United States (US). This programme was designed as an educational programme, to encourage participants to live life to the fullest. It is important to note that the aim is not to solve problems and remove pain and suffering

from the experience of living. The first MBSR programme started in September 1979 under the name ‘Stress Reduction and Relaxation Programme’, but once established, became the ‘Stress Reduction Clinic’. The change in name was to emphasise that the programme was a clinical service that formed part of the services of the hospital (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 286). Only later, as the programme developed and other programmes emerged, based on this pioneering programme, the name ‘Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction’ was introduced (Cullen, 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 288).

When conducting an academic literature review on mindfulness and, more specifically, on the MBSR programme, one soon becomes aware of what Cullen (2011, p.186) refers to as “the rapidly growing field of mindfulness-based interventions”. This observation is confirmed by Crane et al. (2013, p. 681), who also mention “the rapidly expanding interest in mindfulness-based interventions”. These mindfulness-based interventions, or MBIs, were initiated by the development of the MBSR and these days there are a variety of MBIs “which look to MBSR as their inspiration and original source” (Cullen, 2011, p. 186). As a result of the MBSR programme, several other programmes have been developed for more homogeneous groups. These programmes include the following: the mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) programme for people who suffer from depression; the mindfulness-based relapse prevention (MBRP) programme; the mindfulness-based childbirth and parenting (MBCP) programme; the mindfulness-based art therapy (MBAT) programme; the mindfulness-based eating awareness training (MB-EAT) programme; the mindfulness-based elderly care (MBEC) programme; the mindfulness-based cognitive approach for seniors (MBCAS) programme; and the mindfulness-based mind-fitness-training (MMFT) programme, to mention only a few (McCown, Reibel, Micozzi, 2010; Cullen, 2011; Chiesa, 2013; Keller, Singh & Winton, 2014). Discussing each of these programmes in detail is beyond the scope of this study.

During this study I deemed it appropriate to consider the MBSR programme as an intervention for several reasons. Not only did this topic reflect the overwhelming trend in the academic literature, including the work of Kabat-Zinn (2003), but it was also clear that the programme was developed with the intention to be an intervention³². In his

³² Other academic articles referring to the MBSR programme as an intervention include Bishop (2002); Rosenzweig et al. (2003); Brown et al. (2007a); Nykliček and Kuipers (2008); Chiesa and Serretti (2009);

book *Full Catastrophe Living* on the MBSR programme, Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. xxvi) recounts how the programme was developed to help and heal people who are in crisis. He notes: “It was clear that there is something about the cultivation of mindfulness that is healing, that is transformative, and that can serve to give our lives back to us” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. xxvii). The MBSR programme was not developed for a specific population, but the MBIs that sprouted from it are often developed as an intervention for a specific group facing specific challenges. For instance, the MBCT programme, developed by Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2013) is described as an intervention which was specifically designed to help and support people who suffer from depression (Segal et al., 2013). Other examples include the MBCAS programme, which was developed as an intervention to promote physical health, functional ability and adaptation to aging, and designed to support addicts and prevent relapse (Witkiewitz, Bowen, Douglas, & Hsu, 2013). The literature on mindfulness-based interventions is too extensive to discuss it in detail, but it is safe to say that the MBSR programme can be deemed an intervention and that it was the frontrunner of several other MBIs. Furthermore, it is clear that the intention was that the MBSR programme should adopt an educational approach and therefore can be considered an educational intervention.

As mentioned earlier, throughout this study I refer to the MBSR programme as a ‘mindfulness-based adult learning programme’. Authors such as Cullen (2011), Kabat-Zinn (2011) and Santorelli (2014) point out that the MBSR programme was developed for adults, which prompted this decision. Furthermore, the MBSR programme has a curriculum and specialised content, which further motivated my decision. As highlighted in Chapter 2, Merriam and Brockett (1997, p. xi) observe that many adults who participate in educational activities do not even realise that they are included in the broader field of adult education and learning. This assertion, in my opinion, can be expanded to include the MBSR programme. Consequently, the academic literature on adult education and learning confirms that the MBSR programme can be included in the field of adult education and learning. Prompted by the literature about the MBSR programme and adult education and learning, I consider the participants in the MBSR programme as adult learners. Although this deviates from the norm in the academic

Crane et al. (2013); Lauche, Cramer, Dobos, Langhorst and Schmidt (2013); Chadwick and Gelbar (2016).

literature, where authors usually refer to participants, I decided that it was appropriate in this study with its focus on adult education and learning.

5.5. THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE MBSR PROGRAMME CURRICULUM

When discussing the MBSR programme curriculum it is important to consider the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings that have influenced the development of this fast-growing academic field of study. In this section I consider the development of mindfulness in the Western world, mindfulness in relation to social change and how the theoretical concept of mindfulness has influenced theory building in the academic literature. This discussion provides a theoretical point of departure for theorising, in later chapters, the relationship between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change by means of the empirical data and the critical theoretical framework.

5.5.1. Mindfulness in the Western World

The concept of mindfulness as promoted by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013) is dominant in the academic literature, but it is important to note that there are two schools of thought about mindfulness. The first, which draws on the work of Kabat-Zinn, incorporates Eastern philosophy and traditional Buddhist mindfulness practices, such as meditation and yoga, although all religious aspects are removed from the practice. Kabat-Zinn developed a mindfulness-based stress reduction programme at the University of Massachusetts and the project inspired mindfulness studies in the fields of, among others, psychology, education and business studies. These studies conclude that mindfulness has noteworthy positive psychological, educational and medical effects (Hunter & McCormick, 2008, p. 5).

Kabat-Zinn originally developed the MBSR programme, which is how the concept of mindfulness was introduced to the Western world, based on Buddhist principles. However, the programme is purely secular with no religious connections. Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 282) states that when he developed the MBSR programme, he intended to make the Buddha's teaching available to mainstream Americans. However, he points out that although mindfulness is central to Buddhism, mindfulness in itself cannot be considered Buddhist because the intention of mindfulness is simply "wakefulness, compassion and wisdom" and these are not qualities exclusive to Buddhism but

qualities available to all human beings worldwide, regardless of their religious beliefs or lack thereof (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 283).

The idea was to bring the essence of meditation and yoga practices to mainstream society; to people who would never go to, for example, Zen centres, to learn how to meditate and who would otherwise never be able to hear and incorporate it in the form that it was taught in these centres. The aim was to normalise meditation in Western society and to remove cultural associations with the practice. This was not done to diminish the Buddhist origins of the practice, but to include more people who may have otherwise been hesitant to participate in such a programme and therefore be excluded from the benefits associated with the cultivation of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 288). Therefore, the secular identity of the programme was intentionally developed and ensures its appeal to adult learners from different cultural and religious contexts, thereby removing barriers to participation (McCown et al., 2010).

However, removing mindfulness from its cultural context has been critiqued in the academic literature. One of the criticisms of mindfulness, as made popular by Kabat-Zinn, is that in Western culture, cognitive knowledge is emphasised, whereas mindfulness comes from a culture where subjective experience is regarded as a source of knowledge (Chiesa, 2013). Panaioti (2015) argues that although mindfulness, as associated with MBSR programme and the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, recognises its Eastern roots, literature that acknowledges this notion is scarce and superficial. He believes that the assumption is that the Eastern contemplative wisdom can add some useful practices to modern society, but that scientific theory remains firmly embedded in a Western belief system. Furthermore, he asserts that strong Western ideological roots lead to the tendency to overlook alternative types of knowledge and in this way, the Eastern roots of mindfulness are neglected. Rapgay and Bystrisky (2009, p. 150) validate this view by stating: “In the field of research in mindfulness, there is an increasing attempt to modify the concept of mindfulness to configure with cognitive theories and models”.

The second school of thought on mindfulness comes from the work and research of psychologist Ellen Langer, who specifically distinguishes her work from the way mindfulness is applied from the perspective of Buddhism and does not associate mindfulness with a meditation practice (Hunter & McCormick, 2008, p. 6). Langer

(1997, p. 4 as cited in Mezirow, 2000, p. 7) defines mindfulness as the “continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information, and implicit awareness of more than one perspective”. Similar to Kabat-Zinn, Langer also adjusted her definition of mindfulness, and in 2000 it was simply defined as “the process of drawing novel distinctions” (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000, p. 1). According to Langer and Moldoveanu (2000, p. 2), mindfulness will result in a heightened awareness of the environment and other perspectives, a receptiveness to new information and an adjustment of perceptions. Furthermore, they assert that it will lead to more involvement and increased wakefulness or, in other words, awareness of the present moment.

Weick and Putnam (2006, p. 280) refer to “Western perspectives on mindfulness” to describe the way mindfulness is employed by Langer, and to “Eastern perspectives on mindfulness” to refer to the research initiated by Kabat-Zinn (Weick & Putnam, 2006, p. 276). I have found that although there is a clear distinction between the mindfulness definitions by Kabat-Zinn and Langer, there are similarities in the way the concept is applied in the literature. For example, both “Western perspectives on mindfulness” and “Eastern perspectives on mindfulness” are described as a form of self-learning. They are also both based on the concept that we can learn and grow from mindfully observing our own experiences, thoughts and agendas and gain insight into ourselves and our experiences in the process (Langer, 1993; Miller & Nozawa, 2005). Furthermore, both approaches promote looking at life and experience in a new way, as well as having an awareness of the present moment. An important difference between the two approaches is that ‘Eastern’ mindfulness is focused on cultivating specific attitudes as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, whereas mindfulness as described by Langer does not include the cultivation of a specific attitudinal disposition. Although Langer and Moldoveanu (2000, p. 2) mention that mindfulness “is not a cold cognitive process”, they do not elaborate on this concept.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that there are some tensions in the academic literature on mindfulness and its application in the Western world. These tensions are also apparent when considering the academic literature concerning the theoretical concept of ‘mindfulness and social change’, which is discussed in the following section.

5.5.2. Mindfulness and Social Change

Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. xxix) asserts that mindfulness influences well-being and health, not only on a psychological and biological level, but also on a social level. It is his belief that mindfulness will contribute towards creating a better world for all. Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 282), considers mindfulness as the “vehicle for both individual and societal transformation”. In fact, Kabat-Zinn specifically introduced secular mindfulness to the Western world with the aim to “relieve suffering and catalyse greater compassion and wisdom in our lives and culture” (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 285). Both Orr (2002) and Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. xxix) note that the influence of mindfulness is steadily expanding beyond the medical field to include other fields such as “education, law, business, technology, leadership, sports, economics and even politics, policy and government” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. xxix). Kabat-Zinn (2013) posits that these trends will contribute towards creating a better world for all.

Despite the implicit connection to social change, the focus of the academic literature has mainly remained on the benefits that mindfulness hold for the individual. The literature review revealed hundreds of studies that link mindfulness in the Western world to the physical and mental health of the individual, while only a few mentioned mindfulness in relation to social change. Authors who investigated mindfulness in relation to social change include Orr (2002), Hick (2009), Hyland (2009), Todd (2009), Cho, (2010), Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015), Chari (2016) and Walsh (2016). Therefore, although Kabat-Zinn refers to social aspects related to mindfulness, the academic literature remains focused on the individual.

Rockefeller (1994) observes that the transformation of individuals’ awareness, attitudes and values links mindfulness to the transformation necessary for social change. Furthermore, he proposes that developing mindfulness can instigate beneficial social change in society and support the transformation of social consciousness. Orr (2002, p. 494) also notes the importance of awareness: “Mindfulness is a technique that functions to increase awareness but is not itself a doctrine or ideology. This enlarged awareness enables students to make more informed choices without guiding those choices and thus nurtures radical empowerment”. Hyland (2009, p. 129) asserts: “The world can only be changed by people and often the reflective capacity to change ourselves is precisely what is required before any wider social change is possible”. Orr (2002) verifies this

view adding that self-awareness, self-control and the increased ability to handle stressful situations can support social change. Todd (2009, p. 171) expresses a similar perspective when she refers to “the possibilities for progressive social change that can be enhanced and sustained by an understanding of how our interior lives shape our external worlds and the possibilities that mindfulness practices have for increasing the transformative potential of this interaction”.

The aforementioned approach to social transformation is not without its critics and Thompson (2007, as cited in Hyland, 2009) argues that the goal of individual transformation neglects to attend to the more traditional values of adult education, such as developing active citizenship, and that a contemplative approach to social change does not promote the focus that is needed on the structural causes of inequality. Similar to Thompson, Purser (2015) observes that the secular mindfulness programmes currently focus too much on the internal processes, and only attend to the individual reasons for suffering while ignoring the social, political and economic reasons for suffering.

Other critics of the potential of mindfulness to promote social change are Forbes (2012) and Walsh (2016). Walsh (2016, p. 106) states that mindfulness is often “taught to promote a greater satisfaction and success in one’s current life situation, without encouraging a radical shift in consciousness, that challenges the sources of personal dissatisfaction and their manifestation in culture and society more broadly”. In this way, Walsh continues to argue, the discourse of mindfulness simply maintains the status quo and could actually be a way to maintain the ideological forces that support capitalism, consumerism and individualisation. This view is validated by authors such as Forbes (2012), Purser (2015) and Hyland (2017). Critics of secular mindfulness, such as Purser (2015), Walsh (2016) and Hyland (2017), claim that it does not connect mindfulness with social issues the way it is connected to social change in the traditional Buddhist context.

Yet, Nadeau (1996) asserts that in popular education, which stresses the development of critical analysis as the key to transformation, it is assumed that once the oppressed realise the nature and the structure of oppression they will take action. Conversely, she found that even if people understood their situation, they would not necessarily take action. Nadeau (1996) argues that it is important to incorporate approaches to education

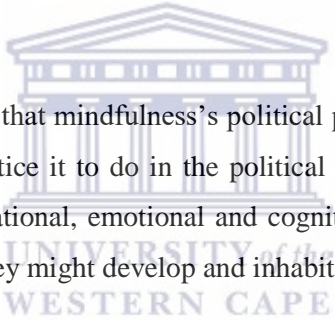
that have been developed for working with individuals, in order to integrate the whole person with the process of transformation. This view is shared by Rockefeller (1994) who proposes that there are two ways to promote social change. The focus of the first is on reshaping the social environment that influences the way that people behave and interact, and the second is on healing the individual and transforming said individual's awareness, attitudes and values. It is important to recognise that both ways are necessary and that they should complement and promote each other.

Purser (2015, p. 43) points to the potential for mindfulness to promote social change by stating: "The heart of mindfulness is a collective practice, that which unites people towards acting for the common good, which in turn provides the basis for human flourishing and social transformation". Oppenheim (2013) agrees with this view when he observes that because of the Buddhist roots of mindfulness, interconnectedness is at the heart of mindfulness. Interconnectedness becomes possible when individuals can view themselves as well as others with compassion. He further claims that there is a misconception in the secular discourse of mindfulness in that mindfulness creates indifference for those around you and the world around you, looking inwards for the solution of problems instead of outwards. Oppenheim (2013) emphasises that the practice of mindfulness is about feeling a connection to all living things on earth, as well as the earth itself. Therefore, mindfulness should foster common humanity, as well as a sense of responsibility towards the earth.

Oppenheim (2013) states that mindfulness must encourage seeing and once there is seeing, there can be action. Mindfulness can encourage the ability to see how the wealth of one society creates poverty for another and this awareness must inspire action. Walsh (2016) posits that in order to address the concerns about the individualisation of mindfulness, the secular discourse of mindfulness should engage critical theory with theoretical and empirical considerations. Similar to the views of Oppenheim (2013) and Walsh (2016), Purser (2015, p. 42) points to the potential of mindfulness to "become a formidable force for a radical transformation of Western capitalist society", however this is only possible when we change what we view as normal. In other words, if the focus could shift from the individual's uncritical acceptance of society to the identification of a need for social change. Oppenheim (2013, p. 62) contends that mindfulness is a way "to tap into our compassionate, spiritual and inter-being side, we

can create a model of globalization that is more inclusive and meets the needs of all humans, better than the current neoliberal approach”.

However, Chari (2016, p. 235) points out that the potential for mindfulness to promote social change is not embedded in the ability to initiate certain actions. Rather, “mindful embodiment, which focuses upon new perceptual, relational, and somatic capacities is much more adequate to grasping the political significance of mindfulness” (Chari, 2016, p. 240). According to Chari (2016), mindfulness literature and even the mindfulness community itself, promotes a perspective that supports a separation of the mind and body, as well as the domination of the mind over the body, which is typical of Western society. This dominance of the mind is evident in political and social practice in the West, but Chari (2016, p. 228) argues that mindfulness has the potential to foster an alternative relationship between the mind and the body. She states: “To understand the political potential of mindfulness, we must be cautious as scholars, in imposing the familiar model of contemplation onto these practices” (Chari, 2016, p. 240). She explains:



It misses the possibility that mindfulness’s political potential may not lie in what it leads citizens who practice it to do in the political arena per se, but rather in the kinds of subjective, relational, emotional and cognitive (in, perhaps, an expanded sense) capacities that they might develop and inhabit (Chari, 2016, p. 235).

Chari (2016) points to a new connection between mindfulness and social change that authors such as Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) do not consider.

It is important to note that when social change is promoted through increased mindfulness in our communities, society and culture, it must be clear that the goal is for individuals to consider becoming more detached, more contented, less greedy, angry, irritated and paranoid. The objective is for the individual to reflect on tolerance, patience, non-violence, compassion and to develop more wisdom and freedom while increasing their capacity for responsibility and creativity (Thurman, 1994). Therefore, Thurman (1994) proposes that for social change aimed at creating a better society for all to be realised, promoting mindfulness is vital and must be considered a necessity, not a luxury. However, in light of the critique of an individual-focused approach to social transformation, it is important to emphasise that a contemplative approach to social change does not take away from other important goals such as knowledge,

understanding and scrutinising structural issues of inequality, bias and social segregation. In line with the arguments of Rockefeller (1994) and Nadeau (1996), it is aimed at complementing these more traditional goals of adult education and learning by recognising that individuals with emotions, needs, identities and values engage with these issues and facilitate social change.

The foregoing discussion of the academic literature informs the theoretical concept of 'mindfulness and social change' and illustrates that there are authors, such as Rockefeller (1994), Thurman (1994), Orr (2002) and Kabat-Zinn (2003, 2011, 2013) who believe that social transformation is preceded by individual transformation. These authors are of the opinion that the individual transformation that accompanies mindfulness can lead to social change. Others such as Forbes (2012), Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) contend that secular mindfulness in the Western world does not connect the practice to traditional goals of social change, although these authors recognise the potential of mindfulness to promote social change. Chari (2016) connects mindfulness and social change through mindful embodiment, which she proposes is the way mindfulness can encourage social and political change.

Responding to these academic debates that shape the theoretical concept of 'mindfulness and social change', it is clear that the extent to which mindfulness can inspire social change warrants further investigation. In addition, the reciprocal and dynamic relationship between the individual and society must also be further explored. Consequently, using a critical theoretical framework and the empirical data, in later chapters, I engage in a process of knowledge creation by means of theory building.

5.6. THE MBSR PROGRAMME CURRICULUM

In order to discuss the MBSR programme curriculum, it is important to understand what a curriculum is. Kelly (2004) notes that it is not always clear what is meant by 'curriculum' and that it is used for many different kinds of programmes of teaching and instruction. Harden (2001) confirms that there are many different ways to define and understand a curriculum. Marsh (2009, p. 5) presents several definitions of curriculum, including, but not limited to the following: "Curriculum is the 'permanent' subjects that embody essential knowledge"; "Curriculum are all planned learnings for which the school is responsible" and "Curriculum is the totality of learning experiences so that students can attain general skills and knowledge at a variety of learning sites".

However, he argues that all these definitions are limiting and can be problematised. In my study, the focus was not on curriculum development or problematising issues related to a curriculum. Therefore, the definition by Kern, Thomas, Howard and Bass (1998) was accepted as an appropriate definition of curriculum for the present study. Kern et al. (1998, p. 2) defines curriculum as “a planned educational experience. This definition encompasses a breadth of educational experiences, from one or more sessions on a specific subject, to a clinical rotation or clerkship, to an entire training program”.

The definition provided by Kern et al. (1998, p. 2) resonates with the MBSR programme, which can be deemed “a planned educational experience”. In the curriculum guide for the MBSR programme, Blacker, Meleo-Meyer, Kabat-Zinn and Santorelli (2009) describe the MBSR as a systematic and intensive training in mindfulness meditation and mindful yoga, which confirms this perspective. Beer (1987) points out that usually a curriculum is associated with formal educational institutions. Yet, Beer notes that it is not necessarily educational institutions only that have educational purposes and curricula to ensure that those aims are achieved. The MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme is an example of this. Although the MBSR programme is not linked to a specific educational institution, it still contains a programme curriculum that includes most of the traditional elements considered as important by curriculum theorists.

When discussing the MBSR programme curriculum, it is necessary to first identify the general elements that must be present in a curriculum. Dillon (2009, p. 345) notes that the elements of a curriculum “are the basic things that must be involved in curriculum”. According to Beer (1987), curriculum theorists typically include four elements in a curriculum. These are: (1) goals, objectives or aims, (2) teaching strategies, (3) learning activities and (4) evaluation. Reid (1999, p. 1) identifies five questions that can be seen as similar to the elements of a curriculum. These are: (1) “What should be taught...” (2) “by what means”, (3) “to whom”, (4) “under what circumstances”, and (5) “with what end in view?” Expanding on these elements, Dillon (2009) identifies seven essential elements of a curriculum. These are: (1) a description of the teacher, (2) a description of the students, (3) a consideration of the subject matter, (4) the site of curriculum delivery, (5) aims and objectives, (6) activities and methods and (7) outcomes. For this study, I used the elements suggested by Dillon (2009) to discuss the MBSR programme

curriculum as they were more comprehensive than those suggested by other authors, and also facilitated a detailed discussion of the curriculum.

5.6.1. The MBSR Programme Facilitator

To address the first element of a curriculum as identified by Dillon (2009), I discuss the requirements for MBSR programme facilitators. According to Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 281) “the quality of MBSR as an intervention is only as good as the MBSR instructor and his or her understanding of what is required to deliver a truly mindfulness-based programme”. This notion highlights the central role of the facilitator during an MBSR programme.

The minimum requirement for people who would like to become an MBSR programme facilitator is a Master’s degree in the social sciences, health sciences, education or in other related fields (McCown et al., 2010, p. 15). Furthermore, Santorelli (2014) suggests that all facilitators should have appropriate training in facilitating the MBSR programme and follow the guidelines as developed by the Oasis Institute for Mindfulness-based Professional Education and Training at the Centre for Mindfulness in Massachusetts in the US. He refers the reader to the Centre for Mindfulness website³³ for further information. On their website they specify that all facilitators must have an experiential understanding of mindfulness and should understand the scientific, medical and educational roots of the MBSR programme. A commitment to continuous personal development and learning about mindfulness is emphasised for all facilitators. In order to achieve this, facilitators must commit to a daily meditation practice and participate in silent retreats to deepen their understanding of mindfulness. Furthermore, they must partake in training that is focused on body awareness, for example, yoga (UMASS Medical School, 2017).

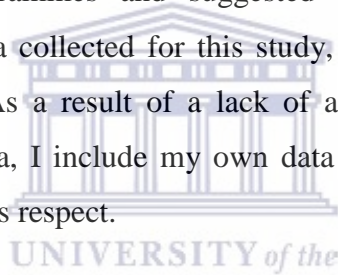
McCown et al. (2010, p. 92) confirm the importance of “the teacher’s own commitment to the practice and life of mindfulness”. They identify four skills that all facilitators of MBIs, including the MBSR programme, should have. These include: (1) “*Stewardship of the group*”, which refers to the co-creation of mindfulness shared by teachers and adult learners; (2) “*Homiletics*, or the delivery of didactic material”, which determines that rather than delivering material in a style similar to lecturing, the focus should be on

³³ <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>

drawing examples from the experience of the group to illustrate teaching points; (3) “*Guidance* of the formal practices and informal group experiences” and (4) “*Inquiry* into participants’ direct experience”, which encourages group dialogue (McCown et al. 2010, p. 103). McCown et al. (2010, p. 92) and Kabat-Zinn (2011) believe that the facilitator, or the person who delivers the curriculum, “is at the core of the pedagogical concepts” related to the curriculum. Yet, they recognise that the presentation of the MBSR programme curriculum will always be unique, and will depend on the facilitators working from their own unique experience and authenticity.

5.6.2. The MBSR Programme Adult Learners

To address the second element as identified by Dillon (2009), I discuss the adult learners in the MBSR programmes in more detail. The programme is based on a group format with between 15-40 adult learners per class (Santorelli, 2014; Santorelli, Meleo-Meyer & Koerbel, 2017). The adult learners are varied, as evident from the research on international MBSR programmes and suggested by Kabat-Zinn (2011). This is confirmed by my own data collected for this study, based on the MBSR programme offered in South Africa. As a result of a lack of academic literature on the MBSR programme in South Africa, I include my own data in this section to describe South African adult learners in this respect.



5.6.2.1. The MBSR Programme: International Adult Learners

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are many studies that focus on the MBSR programme in particular. The adult learners in these studies were varied. Most studies concentrated on specific target groups, while other studies examined adult learners with medical conditions only. For instance, Long et al. (2016, p. 2445) collected data from adult learners “with diverse physical and/or mental health conditions”. Other authors focused on specific conditions. For instance, Bohlmeijer et al. (2010) were only interested in adult learners with a chronic disease, Pradhan et al. (2007) in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, while Kabat-Zinn et al. (1992) and Goldin and Gross (2010) analysed patients who have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. Gayner et al. (2012) recruited gay men living with HIV aids. Witek-Janusek et al. (2008) recruited women with early-stage breast cancer and Dobkin (2008) investigated women who have completed breast cancer treatment. Carlson, Speca, Patel, and Goodey (2003) also recruited women with breast cancer but they included men with prostate cancer, while

Carmody, Crawford and Churchill (2006) investigated women who had hot flashes during menopause.

There were also studies that focused on healthy adult learners, many of them that specifically included health care professionals. For instance, Song and Lindquist (2015) focused on nursing students, Millon and Halewood (2015) on psychological therapists, Shapiro, Astin, Bishop and Cordova (2005) and Irving et al. (2014) on health care professionals, while Rosenzweig et al. (2003) researched second year medical students. However, there were studies that investigated other professionals. Smith, Hopper, Herne, Tansey, Hulland (2010) and Bostic et al. (2015) recruited school teachers, while Klatt, Buckworth and Malarkey (2009) investigated working adults whom they recruited from a faculty and staff at a large university. Adams (2011) also analysed data collected from working adults who were recruited at MBSR classes offered at a community college.

Birnie et al. (2010) recruited members from the public who participated in an MBSR programme offered by the Department of Continuing Education of the University of Calgary in Canada. For their study, adult learners had to be free of chronic diseases. Nykliček and Kuijpers (2008) recruited members of the public who reported symptoms of stress. This MBSR programme was offered at Tilburg University in the Netherlands and the average age of the adult learners were 43.6 years, while 33% were male and 67% were female. Carmody et al. (2009) conducted a study that included adult learners from MBSR programmes offered at the Centre of Mindfulness in Massachusetts. These adult learners participated for a variety of reasons including stress, pain and anxiety. The average age of the adult learners was 49.5 years and the majority (68%) were women. Most were married (60%), 7% were 'cohabitating' or living together, 14% were divorced or widowed, 16% were single and 3% did not reveal their marital status. The adult learners were all professionals although their qualifications were not revealed in the study. This was similar to the demographic information reported by Irving et al. (2014). Although their study focused on health care professionals, the majority of adult learners were also female (81%) and the average age was 51.

From the literature review it was clear that adult learners in the MBSR programme studies came from a variety of backgrounds and that there were various reasons for participation. Badker and Misri (2017) determined that the MBSR programme is

effective for both clinical and non-clinical populations, therefore adult learners can be recruited from both populations.

5.6.2.2. The MBSR Programme: Adult Learners in South Africa

In this section the adult learners participating in the MBSR programme in South Africa are discussed to develop an understanding of who these adult learners are. This is also important for the theory building process and creating new knowledge about mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Brookfield (1992, p. 88) asserts that any adult education theory building process should include a discussion of the sample that was studied to gain insight into the context in which the data were collected. Brookfield (1992, p. 88) notes that “contextual sensitivity” is an essential criterion for a critical adult education theory. To keep to this criterion, my study includes a discussion of the sample studied. Brookfield (1992, p. 88) suggests the discussion of the sample should include information on their gender, their social class, their cultural affiliations, geographical location and position of power in relation to others. In this section I discuss the context of the adult learners, as best I can, with the data that were collected with the pre-course questionnaires.

The research was conducted in the Cape Town area and adult learners were recruited from MBSR programmes offered in Cape Town itself. One MBSR programme was offered in Durbanville, which is located in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. Adult learners were not asked to provide details of their residential address during the data collection process, but based on the fact that adult learners had to attend weekly sessions for eight weeks, it can be concluded that the adult learners were all living in Cape Town and the surrounding areas.

The 55 adult learners who completed a pre-course questionnaire were mostly professional people between the ages of 20 to 84. At age 20, Rudolph was the youngest adult learner in the group, while Stella was the oldest at 84. One adult learner did not want to reveal her age. The majority of the adult learners were between 30 and 50 years old, with 58% falling within this age bracket. The average age was 43, slightly younger than the average age reported in international studies. Table 5.1 gives a breakdown of the age distribution of the adult learners.

Table 5.1: Age Distribution of MBSR Programme Adult Learners

	Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 40-50	Age 50-60	Age 60-70	Age 70-80	Age 80+	Unknown	Total
Number of Adult Learners	7	17	15	8	5	1	1	1	55
% of Adult Learners	13%	31%	27%	15%	9%	2%	2%	2%	100%

The majority (73%) of the adult learners were female, which is similar to international studies where the majority of adult learners are also female. The majority (67%) of the adult learners were married while 18% were single, 7% were living with a partner, 5% were divorced and 2% did not reveal their marital status. The vast majority of 45 (82%) of the 55 adult learners were employed. Of the 10 adult learners who were unemployed, six were married women who were financially supported by their spouses. Another three adult learners were university students and one adult learner did not want to reveal her employment status. In general this was a well-educated group. Table 5.2 gives a breakdown of the qualifications of the adult learners.

Table 5.2: Qualifications of MBSR Programme Adult Learners

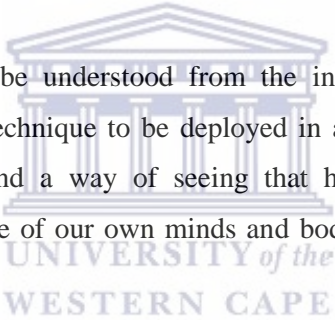
	Grade 12	Post-school Diploma	Under Graduate Degree	Honours Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Not Provided	Total
Number of Adult Learners	7	10	20	3	8	4	3	55
% of Adult Learners	13%	18%	36%	5%	15%	8%	5%	100%

The data revealed that the adult learners were educated and from a middle class, limiting the potential of this study to address the wider field of adult education and learning in South Africa, where many learners cannot afford to participate in the MBSR programme. Although quite a few adult learners selected not to indicate their income, it

can be concluded that they were not having difficulties financially, because they were able to spend between R4 000 – R5 600 on the MBSR programme fees in 2015. Another limitation of this study was the fact that the majority of the participants were white, with only 2 Asian participants. Five participants did not want to indicate their race in the pre-course questionnaire. Therefore, the adult learners in the MBSR programme were not a representative example of the wider South African society.

5.6.3. The Subject Matter: Mindfulness

To address the third element of curriculum as identified by Dillon (2009), I discuss the subject matter, mindfulness, in more detail in this section. Furthermore, as the theoretical concept of ‘mindfulness’ was central to this study, it is important to describe the concept in detail to substantiate the theory building process that is aimed at creating new knowledge. Consequently, a thorough review of the academic literature was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the concept. Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 284) explains:



Mindfulness can only be understood from the inside out. It is not one more cognitive-behavioural technique to be deployed in a behaviour change paradigm, but a way of being and a way of seeing that has profound implications for understanding the nature of our own minds and bodies, and for living life as if it really mattered.

From this description, it is evident that mindfulness is not an easy concept to describe or define. It is best understood by those who are engaged in the practice of mindfulness. This view is confirmed by Nilsson and Kazemi (2016) who reviewed the literature on mindfulness in an attempt to define the concept and found 33 unique definitions of mindfulness.

Over the years there have been several attempts to describe and define mindfulness and even Kabat-Zinn himself has adjusted his definition over the years. In 1994, he defined mindfulness as: “Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, as cited in Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 291). In 2005 he adjusted this definition to: “The awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005e, as cited in Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 291). In his 2005 definition, Kabat-Zinn refers

to the importance of awareness to mindfulness, and many authors echo this in their descriptions and definitions of mindfulness. This is confirmed by Nilsson and Kazemi (2016), who found that awareness is a core element when defining mindfulness.

Most authors have not attempted to define mindfulness but rather just describe it as accurately as possible. Brown and Ryan (2003, p. 822) describe mindfulness as “enhanced attention to and awareness of current experience and present reality”. Authors such as Siegel, Germer and Olendzki (2009) focus on awareness, attention and remembering, to describe mindfulness. Awareness is considered vital, and attention is deemed focused awareness, while remembering refers to remembering to be aware and pay attention. According to these authors, the purpose of mindfulness is to develop insight into the workings of the mind that lead to suffering. However, mindfulness is not the goal, rather it is a way to address thought patterns that cause unhappiness, as well as negative emotions, such as anger, envy and greed and also harmful behaviour towards ourselves and others. Forbes (2012) describes mindfulness as presence and awareness that discourage over-identification with thoughts and emotions which may result in unmindful action. Rather, mindfulness is non-participation which is described as consciously being open, questioning your own desires and needs as well as those of others. It is also non-attachment to a particular world view or identity.

Siegel et al. (2009) point out that it is sometimes easier to understand mindfulness by referring to what it is not. Mindfulness does not refer to a blank mind; the goal when cultivating mindfulness is simply to be aware of the activities of the mind. It does not imply that the person becomes emotionless, rather it cultivates the ability to notice emotions. Mindfulness does not require withdrawing from life, but rather experiencing every moment. It is not the search for bliss either, rather it is the ability to accept experience, whether pleasant or unpleasant, without rejecting the unpleasant or clinging to the pleasant. Lastly, it is not a way to avoid pain. Rather, it cultivates the ability to notice and accept pain, as well as to recognise that it is not painful sensations itself that causes suffering, but rather the resistance and avoidance of pain.

When attempting to grasp the concept of mindfulness, it is often confused with meditation, and although meditation is one way to cultivate mindfulness, it is not the same (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, as cited in Shapiro et al. 2006, p. 374). Meditation can be described as non-doing, it is not aimed at getting a person anywhere but in fact the goal

is the exact opposite, namely noticing where you are at that moment. There are different ways to meditate and meditation will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but the belief is that if a person spends some time on a daily basis simply being where they are, observing thoughts and emotions while not getting involved with these, they are fostering calmness and mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Mindfulness in daily life thus means to notice and experience what we are doing in a given moment, even mundane everyday activities such as walking, eating and driving. Meditation is just one way to cultivate this ability and awareness (Siegel et al., 2009).

Based on the literature review it can be concluded that awareness is significant when considering the concept of mindfulness. Although the way mindfulness is described in the literature varies, most authors refer to the concept of ‘awareness’ when attempting to define and describe mindfulness. Therefore, awareness as a result of mindfulness was identified as another key concept during this study which informed the theory building process.

5.6.4. The MBSR Programme Sites

To address the fourth element of the curriculum as identified by Dillon (2009), I include a detailed discussion of the different sites where the MBSR programme is offered.

5.6.4.1. The International MBSR Programme Sites

When my interest in mindfulness was triggered in 2009, I searched for courses that offered mindfulness training. The MBSR programme was without a doubt the most well-known programme as an internet search revealed many links to courses offered worldwide including in the US, Australia and South Africa. Furthermore, the programme is offered online. According to Cullen (2011, p. 189), there are many countries that have institutes and national associations for mindfulness facilitators, implying that the MBSR programme is offered in these countries. These specific countries include Norway, Sweden, Holland, France, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. An internet search added to this list Spain, Belgium, Finland, Portugal and the Czech Republic. My own experience was confirmed in the academic literature with Carmody et al. (2009, p. 614) stating that “mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is one of the most widely known clinical programs designed to give instruction and experience in mindfulness practice”.

Although it is difficult to gather accurate, or even approximate numbers of MBSR programmes offered worldwide, the Centre of Mindfulness in the United States states on their website that since 1979, 23 000 people have completed the MBSR programme at that centre alone (Stress Reduction, 2016). In 2003, Carlson et al. reported that there were 240 MBSR programmes being offered across North-America (Carlson et al., 2003, p. 571) and in 2009, Hick (2009) claimed that there were 250 medical centres throughout the United States offering MBSR programmes. In 2011, Cullen (2011, p. 188) revealed that there were already 500 MBSR clinics worldwide.

5.6.4.2. The South African MBSR Programme Sites

In South Africa, the Institute for Mindfulness believes that approximately 1005 graduates have completed the Institute's MBSR programmes offered in Cape Town since 1999 (Gordon, personal communication, 8 November 2017). However, these numbers do not include the adult learners from MBSR programmes offered by other facilitators in South Africa and the numbers provided are therefore not an accurate representation of the number of MBSR graduates throughout South Africa.

The MBSR programme was offered in Cape Town, South Africa for the first time in January 1999 (Zaacs, personal communication, 9 October 2016). The co-founders of the programme in South Africa were trained at the Massachusetts Centre for Mindfulness in the US as MBSR facilitators because at the time there was no training available in South Africa (Zaacs, personal communication, 9 October 2016). Since 1999, the programme has grown and expanded in South Africa. It is now possible to enrol for an MBSR programme, not only in Cape Town, but also in other towns like Durbanville, Stellenbosch, Paarl, George, Knysna, and cities like East London, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg. At the time when this study was conducted, the MBSR programme was the only mindfulness-based programme in South Africa that was offered on a regular basis and therefore presented the best opportunity to collect data.

5.6.5. The MBSR Programme Aims and Objectives

To address the curriculum element pertaining to the aims and objectives, as identified by Dillon (2009), I consider the aims and objectives of the MBSR programme as discussed in the literature. I start this discussion on the attitudinal aims which Kabat-

Zinn (2013) considers the foundation of mindfulness and the aims of the MBSR programme. In the literature, awareness as an overall objective of mindfulness and the MBSR programme also becomes apparent. As a result, I also include a discussion of awareness as an objective of the MBSR programme.

5.6.5.1. Attitudinal Aims

When cultivating mindfulness, Kabat-Zinn (2013) argues that an adult learner's attitude is central to the level of change experienced. Therefore, attitude can be connected to the aims of the MBSR programme. There are seven attitudinal aims, that are identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013) as central to mindfulness, which are developed during an MBSR programme. Santorelli (2014) asserts that these attitudes are central to the educational approach of MBSR. However, what is important to note is that during an MBSR programme, these attitudinal aims are facilitated in a non-authoritarian way (Kabat-Zinn, 2011).

The first attitudinal aim is to be “non-judging” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 21), which requires a person to accept one's own experience, whatever it may be. For example, during a meditation session, one's mind can often wander. During mindfulness training, students are encouraged to notice when they lose attention and then to bring their attention back to the object of meditation, with kindness and without judgement. This approach cultivates the ability to notice judgement and to observe experience. The second attitudinal aim is “patience” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 23) and the individual is trained to be patient with themselves when they are agitated, frustrated or struggling during meditations. The third attitudinal aim is the “beginners mind” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 24), which refers to the ability to look at something as though you are seeing it for the first time and not to rely on past experiences and judgements. The fourth is to develop “trust” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 25) in yourself and your own ability to make decisions without guidance from outside yourself. The fifth is an attitude of “non-striving” (Kabat-Zinn 2013, p. 26), because when a person is striving towards something the implication is that where they are is not good enough.

The sixth attitudinal aim is “acceptance” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 27), and during a meditation session students are encouraged to accept where they are, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant. The reason for this is that it is believed that once there is acceptance, change transpires. Often, in daily life, considerable energy is wasted on

trying to change things, but the first step towards change is accepting oneself the way you are. It is important to note that acceptance does not mean passivism; it simply means that if you want to change things, the first step is to see and accept things the way they really are. The seventh and the final attitudinal aim is “letting go” (Kabat-Zinn, 2013, p. 29). It is the ability to recognise thoughts and judgements and then choosing not to pursue them any further. During meditation and yoga sessions, individuals are developing, practising and strengthening these seven attitudes associated with mindfulness, with the goal that these attitudes will then spill over into their daily lives.

The attitudinal aims that are central to the teaching approach in MBSR is focused on cultivating awareness and changing the adult learner’s relationship with experience. Therefore, awareness, which can also be considered a central objective of the MBSR programme, will be examined next.

5.6.5.2. *Awareness*

According to Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 292), an MBSR programme emphasises “... non-doing, non-striving, not-knowing, non-attachment to outcomes ...”, which can be difficult for novice practitioners to comprehend, especially because MBSR programme outcomes are usually the motivation for participation. Cultivating awareness is facilitated in a non-authoritarian way with an emphasis on interchanges between the facilitator and adult learners to cultivate “... clarity, understanding and wisdom ...” (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 292). Kabat-Zinn describes the MBSR programme as a non-fixing approach to healing which he defines as “a coming to terms with things as they are in full awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 292). As mentioned earlier when discussing the academic literature about the MBSR programme, one of the main features of mindfulness is awareness. It was also confirmed in the literature on the MBSR programme curriculum that cultivating awareness was indeed one of the main objectives of the MBSR programme. The importance of awareness during this study, as highlighted by the academic literature and the data analysis, prompted me to find a definition of awareness in the academic literature on mindfulness. Brown et al. (2007a, p. 212) define awareness as “the conscious registration of stimuli, including the five physical senses, the kinaesthetic senses, and the activities of the mind. Awareness is our direct, most immediate contact with reality”.

When developing awareness of reality, the challenge of the programme is for adult learners to cultivate a weekly mindfulness practice and to accept reality as it is unfolding, rather than to strive for a more desirable future outcome (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 290). It is considering the current experience without any motivation other than awareness itself and without interpreting it in terms of likes and dislikes or opinions that usually influence the experience itself. This translates into “non-judgemental awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 291), however, it is not meant to imply that there is a point where judgements do not arise. The intent is to recognise judgements and opinions as they arise, but to realise that it is not necessary to use them to interpret experience. Judgements and opinions can simply be noted and they will open up the possibility of choosing how one relates to an experience, which in itself is liberating (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, pp. 291-292).

In the curriculum of the MBSR programme, a distinct focus is on awareness of the body and emotions. According to Cullen (2011, p. 192), “a hallmark of MBSR is embodiment”. She explains that during the MBSR programme, adult learners are invited to “re-inhabit” the body. In other words, adult learners are encouraged to observe their bodies and the sensations that arise in their bodies, which cultivate body awareness. Practices such as the body scan and mindful yoga is specifically designed to support and encourage body awareness. During the eight weeks, adult learners are encouraged to continuously return their attention to the body and the experiences of the body (McCown et al. 2010). Acknowledging bodily experiences, according to Didonna (2009), paves the way for new possibilities in experiencing emotions.

5.6.6. The MBSR Programme Curriculum Content and Teaching Methods

In this section I address the sixth element of a curriculum, as identified by Dillon (2009), by focusing on the curriculum content of the MBSR programme as well as the teaching methods.

5.6.6.1. The Curriculum Content of the MBSR Programme

The MBSR programme is an attempt to develop mindfulness formally and informally and consists of an eight-week programme comprising nine sessions. Once a week, adult learners attend a session of about two-and-half to three hours, and between the sixth and the seventh session there is a full-day seven-hour class on a Saturday (Kabat-Zinn,

2013). During sessions, the facilitator will make a few short presentations, but most of the time is spent on formal mindfulness practice which includes the body scan, sitting and walking meditations as well as mindful yoga. Adult learners are also encouraged to develop informal mindfulness by incorporating mindfulness in their daily activities. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for adult learners to discuss their experience of formal and informal mindfulness during group discussions (McCown et al. 2010, p. 8; Santorelli, 2014). Adult learners are required to commit to home practice, supported by audio recordings, for at least six days of the week (McCown et al. 2010, p. 8; Santorelli, 2014). The audio recordings include a guided body scan, yoga and sitting meditation.

The eight-week MBSR programme is based on a different theme each week. Table 5.3 provides a brief outline of the MBSR sessions.

Table 5.3: Outline of the MBSR Programme Sessions

Session One:	There is more right with you than wrong with you.
Learning focus:	Awareness of body sensations, thoughts and emotions.
Practices:	Body scan and short sitting meditation.
Session Two:	Perception and Creative Responding.
Learning focus:	How you see things will determine how you respond and the effects on the body and the mind.
Practices:	Body scan and sitting meditation.
Session Three:	The pleasure and power of being present.
Learning focus:	We miss many pleasant moments because we are not aware of the present moment.
Practices:	Mindful yoga, body scan, sitting meditation and walking meditation.
Session Four:	The Shadow of Stress.
Learning focus:	Reducing the effects of stress and finding more positive and pro-active ways to respond to stress.
Practices:	Body scan and sitting meditation.
Session Five:	Find the space for making choices.
Learning focus:	Observing thoughts as events, you are not your thoughts.
Practices:	Sitting meditation and mindful yoga.
Session Six:	Working with difficult situations.
Learning focus:	Looking at habitual patterns of relating to experience and communication patterns.

Practices:	Mindful yoga and sitting meditation.
All-day Session:	Dive in!
Learning focus:	Deepening mindfulness by cultivating it over an extended period of time. Fostering insight into the impermanence of both pleasant and unpleasant experiences.
Practices:	Body scan, sitting meditation, mindful movement, walking meditation, mountain meditation, lake meditation and loving-kindness meditation.
Session Seven:	Integrating Mindfulness into daily life.
Learning focus:	Attitudes and practices that promote the development of generosity in formal meditation practice as well as in daily life.
Practices:	Sitting and loving kindness, mountain meditation, lake meditation.
Session Eight:	The eighth week is the rest of your life.
Learning focus:	How to maintain your mindfulness practice.
Practices:	Body scan, mindful yoga and sitting meditation.

(Adapted from Blacker et al. 2009; McCown et. al 2010 & Santorelli et al. 2017)

As can be seen in Table 5.3, the first session will typically start with introductions and a brief overview of the MBSR programme. This is followed by an opening meditation with an opportunity for adult learners to respond afterwards. The guidelines for participation is discussed and the adult learners have an opportunity to share the reasons why they are participating in the MBSR programme. A raisin-eating exercise will follow this conversation to introduce mindfulness meditation. During this exercise adult learners will eat a raisin mindfully. First observing the raisin and then, with guidance from the facilitator, they will slowly eat the raisin. The body scan meditation will follow this and finally the home practice for the week will be discussed. The home practice assignment will be to do the body scan meditation (45 minutes) at least six times during the week as well as a short sitting meditation of 10 minutes focusing on breathing (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The second session starts with a guided body scan, followed by a group discussion of the home practice. The theme of the second week is introduced and discussed, followed by a sitting meditation focused on awareness of breathing. The home practice is clarified which will include the body scan for six days as well as a short sitting meditation. Adult learners are encouraged to keep a pleasant events calendar for the week, noting one pleasant event per day. Awareness of every day activities, like brushing teeth, is also encouraged (Blacker et al. 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The third session commences with a sitting meditation followed by a discussion of the home practice. The walking meditation can be introduced at this point, but it is optional. Mindful yoga is introduced, followed by a group discussion of the experience of doing yoga as well as the pleasant events calendar. The session is concluded with the homework assignment, which will be alternating the body scan with the mindful yoga (45 minutes) for six days as well as a short sitting meditation of 10 minutes. During this week, adult learners are asked to keep a calendar of unpleasant events on a daily basis (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The fourth session typically starts with mindful yoga followed by a group discussion of the homework practices. A presentation about stress is the focus of this session, followed by a sitting meditation and the assignment of home practices. The body scan and mindful yoga is alternated again for six days complemented by a 20-minute sitting meditation. Adult learners are encouraged to notice stress reactions during this week (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The fifth session is opened with mindful yoga followed by a sitting meditation. This is followed by a group discussion focusing on the home practice of the previous week. Alternative responses to stress are explored as well and the academic literature pertaining to stress is mentioned. The session is concluded with the home practice assignment which is alternating a sitting meditation (45 minutes) with the body scan or mindful yoga for six days. Adult learners are also encouraged to complete a ‘difficult-communications’ calendar, which focuses on challenging encounters with others during the week (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The sixth session starts with mindful yoga, followed by a sitting meditation. A discussion of the home practice as well as the upcoming full-day session will be introduced, followed by a presentation about communication. Exercises about communication skills and a sitting meditation conclude the session. The home practice assignment for the week will be alternating a sitting meditation with the body scan or mindful yoga practice on a daily basis (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The duration of the all-day class on a Saturday between the sixth and the seventh session is usually seven hours and consists of intensive practice. The session will usually start with a sitting meditation followed by instructions for the day. Adult

learners are requested to spend the day in silence. The course of the day can vary but will include all the main practices. Facilitators may also choose to introduce other practices such as the loving-kindness, mountain and lake meditation. There is a break for lunchtime, but the silence is not broken. At the conclusion of the day, the silence ends with a group discussion about adult learner experiences during the day (Blacker et al, 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

The seventh session commences with a changing seats exercise, where adult learners are each invited to take a new seat. The intention is to notice habitual patterns and explore the possibility of changing these. This is followed by mindful yoga, a sitting meditation and a discussion of the home practice of the previous week. This is followed by the loving-kindness meditation, lake or mountain meditation. The session is concluded with the assignment of the home practice which is the body scan, mindful yoga, sitting meditation or walking meditation, but without the recording (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al, 2017).

The eighth session includes a body scan, mindful yoga and a sitting meditation. Resources that can aid adult learners in continuing the practice is shared and the session is concluded with a group discussion of the experience of the participants during the MBSR programme (Blacker et al., 2009; Santorelli et al., 2017).

5.6.6.2. *Methods of Teaching*

Mindfulness is developed through meditation practices that encourage the adult learner to focus on a particular object or sensation (Malinowski, 2009). The practices may differ, but there are four main practices that can be used to cultivate mindfulness. These practices include the sitting meditation, the body scan meditation, mindful yoga and the walking meditation. There are other practices, such as the loving-kindness, lake and mountain meditation, that usually receive less attention during the MBSR programme. I briefly discuss each of these practices in more detail in the following sections.

The sitting meditation

When learning how to meditate, awareness of breath is often the first step. Focusing the mind on one activity develops concentration but it also promotes relaxation because the mind is allowed to rest by focusing on one, simple activity. Typically, the adult learner will sit in an upright position while attempting to remain focused on the sensation of

breathing (Malinowski, 2009). Kabat-Zinn (2013) describes mindfulness as simple, but not easy, and a novice meditator will quickly understand why. When one is focused on the physical sensations of breathing, the mind will perpetually shift attention to another object, such as thoughts, emotions or physical sensations, which means mindfulness is lost. However, during mindfulness training, the individual is encouraged to simply recognise that this has happened and then to bring back their attention to awareness of the breath. This will happen repeatedly and bringing the mind back to the object of attention is considered part of the practice. With continued practice, concentration will improve. However, even people who have been meditating for a long time will still experience loss of concentration. Through this practice, the ability to observe the body, emotions and mind is cultivated (Malinowski, 2009; Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012).

During a sitting meditation there is also the option not to focus the mind on anything in specific and the person will simply watch as different internal and external objects come to the mind's attention, how the mind engages with them and how these eventually fade away. These objects of attention can include thoughts, memories, feelings, bodily sensations, sounds or just about anything that attracts the attention of the mind. During the meditation, it can be witnessed how all these objects are impermanent and how the mind judges the experience as positive or negative. It can also be witnessed how the mind tries to hold on to experiences that are judged as positive for longer while trying to avoid or escape negative experiences (Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012). The thought patterns, habits, themes and behavioural urges which are revealed during meditation is a reflection of the thought patterns, habits, themes and urges that are part of daily life. Noticing these factors in meditation can assist individuals in also noticing them in daily life and free themselves from the need to act on these thought patterns, habits, themes and urges, or to experience all their thoughts as reality (Brown et al. 2007a, p. 212; Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012, p. 103).

The body scan meditation

The body scan was designed to cultivate awareness of the body and is aimed at re-establishing contact with the body and improving concentration as well as flexibility. The meditation can be done sitting, standing or lying down but is most commonly done lying flat on the back. Starting with the toes of the left foot, each part of the body is

explored and brought to awareness separately while simultaneously paying attention to the breath. The idea is to focus on each part of the body for a while before moving on to the next, holding it in awareness in a way that one would not usually do. The goal is not to achieve or attain anything but rather to be aware of and accept all experiences, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant (Cullen, 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 2013).

Although it may seem similar to other relaxation techniques, the body scan differs from relaxation techniques, which usually require that the muscles are tensed and relaxed. In the case of a body scan, the only aim is awareness, of both the body and emotions, not relaxation (Cullen, 2011). Cullen (2011) believes that this awareness is more powerful than relaxation techniques.

Mindful yoga

Kabat-Zinn (2013) points out that yoga is also a form of meditation which incorporates gentle balancing, stretching and strengthening exercises, done very slowly, while maintaining an awareness of the breath and body. It is quite different from mainstream yoga exercise classes where the goal is to push the body and to make progress. In this case, the goal is simply to get to know and to understand the body, to realise where the limits are and to respect them. It is important to accept the body the way it is, to be patient and not to strive towards anything (Kabat-Zinn, 2013).

The walking meditation

Another way to cultivate mindfulness is by being mindfully aware of the activity of walking, or in other words, a walking meditation. It means being aware of the act of walking, step by step, starting with the act of lifting the foot, moving it forward, balancing, and shifting the weight. It is often easier to be aware of this movement when walking slowly, therefore this meditation is often done by walking very slowly. However, it is also possible to do it when walking faster by simply being aware of the general movement of the body. Once again, the aim is not to attain anything or strive towards anything, therefore the walking meditation is often done by walking in circles or up and down. It helps to settle the mind because there is literally no place to go and nothing to attain and therefore easier to just linger in awareness of the present moment. As is the case with all the other mindfulness techniques mentioned previously, it is important to stay aware of the act of walking and to simply bring back the mind, kindly and gently, when attention is lost (Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012).

Loving-kindness meditation

This meditation is aimed at fostering positive emotions towards oneself and others. This practice has strong roots in the Buddhist tradition, but can also be used as a secular practice. The phrase ‘loving-kindness’ does not refer to romantic love, but can be described as a feeling of unconditional friendliness, kindness, compassion and goodwill towards oneself and others (Kearney, et al., 2013). Usually, the loving-kindness meditation will begin in the same way as a sitting meditation by simply bringing awareness to the breath. During a loving-kindness meditation, meaningful phrases of what is wished for oneself and then for others will be repeated (Salzberg, 2005). Classically there are four phrases:

“May I be free from danger”

“May I have mental happiness”

“May I have physical happiness”

“May I have ease of well-being”

(Salzberg, 2005, p. 30)

These phrases can be altered but the intention is that the phrases should be meaningful and enduring (Salzberg, 2005).

The mountain and lake meditation

These meditations are based on the visualisation of a mountain or a lake. The intention is that these images will assist adult learners in understanding mindfulness on a deeper level. The lake and the mountain are metaphors used to connect adult learners to aspects of mindfulness practice such as stability, strength and flexibility (Blacker et al., 2009).

The practices above are aimed at enabling a person to observe the body, emotions and their own thoughts (Malinowski, 2009; Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012). Adult learners learn to observe experience and also how to recognise habitual patterns of relating to experience. Once this is recognised, it becomes possible to relate to this experience in a new way (Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012). The observation of the body in particular is central, with practices like the body scan, mindful yoga and the walking meditation that encourage body awareness. Emotional awareness is also encouraged. While meditating, in whatever form, adult learners become aware of their own emotions and thought patterns. These practices can bring clarity and insight which can be applied in daily living (Lampe & Engleman-Lampe, 2012).

5.6.7. The MBSR Programme Curriculum Outcomes

The seventh and final element of the curriculum, as identified by Dillon (2009), focuses on outcomes, or what is learned. The MBSR programme does not include a formal evaluation of learning outcomes, but the academic literature provides an overview of the outcomes that can be expected.

The goal of mindfulness, as associated with the work of Kabat-Zinn, is the ability to pay attention to any aspect of the human experience with calm attention (Kahane, 2009). It is proposed in the literature that if a person cultivates the ability to observe negative thoughts and emotions, it will be possible to make a choice whether or not they would like to focus and act on that experience. In this way, mindfulness discourages an individual to react impulsively and destructively (Brady, 2008, p. 94) and it enables the individual to hold painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 209). Furthermore, mindfulness studies have shown that mindfulness can be associated with increased clarity, creativity, inner-calm, well-being and compassion (Sarath, 2003, p. 215). According to Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan and Orsillo (2007, p. 509), mindfulness is, among other things, aimed at fostering acceptance of what one is experiencing and therefore it is an important stepping stone towards the development of empathy for others. It is argued that if an individual becomes aware of their emotions, they may learn to anticipate the experiences that give rise to these feelings and emotions. This awareness, in turn, will then cultivate the ability to understand the experience of others.

In addition to improved control in behaviour and positive personal change, as described in the preceding sections, mindfulness may also improve an individual's ability to recognise their own perspectives, biases and beliefs and lessen the personal association and connection with them through observation. Mindfulness practices can help an individual to perceive issues and events in a new way, or in other words, promote insight. If an individual can observe and be aware of their own biases, beliefs and preferences it has the potential to free them from the limitations of such a viewpoint and such individuals may cease to be defined by it (Shapiro, et al. 2011).

5.7. SUMMARY

In this chapter I presented the case description of the case study, providing a short overview of the academic and theoretical work on the MBSR programme and mindfulness. The MBSR programme, its philosophical underpinnings and its development in the Western world were discussed in detail. The chapter also considered the different descriptions and definitions of the concept 'mindfulness' and how it can relate to social change. I show what a typical MBSR programme looks like, and give a short overview of the profile of the adult learners who participate in the South African MBSR programme. In the concluding sections of the chapter, I examined the aims and objectives of the MBSR Programme, paying particular attention to attitudinal aims and awareness as an objective of the MBSR programme. This is followed by a discussion of the methods of teaching and finally, the expected MBSR programme curriculum outcomes.

In Chapter 6, by means of the thematic data analysis and the theorising process, I explore the potential of the MBSR programme, as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme, to provide a foundation for transformative and emancipatory learning.



CHAPTER 6

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: EXPLORING MINDFULNESS AND MINDFUL LEARNING AS TRANSFORMATIVE AND EMANCIPATORY LEARNING

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 I provided a case description of the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning intervention. Data were collected from adult learners who participated in the programme. This chapter provides a description of the thematic data analysis process and how this process revealed the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Using the critical theoretical framework as a guide, the potential of mindfulness and the MBSR programme as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme to support transformative and emancipatory learning is explored. The empirical evidence is described, interpreted and analysed to substantiate the theoretical arguments and new knowledge related to the critical theoretical framework. The themes identified in the data are compared to the theoretical framework in order to theorise the data and create new knowledge as suggested by Brookfield (1992), Lynham (2002) and Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012).

In the first section of this chapter the adult learners' reasons for participating in the MBSR programme are analysed, identifying stress and anxiety as the foremost reasons for their participation. An organising theme of an 'emancipatory interest in learning' emerged when the basic themes associated with participation were combined. This 'emancipatory interest in learning' can be deemed a critique of the life situations of the adult learners at the time of the study, because of the need to be emancipated from their personal circumstances. This need which prompted their participation in the MBSR programme, can be compared to what Brookfield (2001, p. 12) describes as a desire for a "more authentic way to live", and informs the construction of the theoretical building-blocks related to mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

In the subsequent sections, the organising themes of 'mindfulness of the body in mindful learning' followed by 'mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning' are identified and discussed. These themes illustrate that through mindfulness, adult

learners who were previously unaware of their body and emotions, were able to observe embodied experiences, including embodied emotions. Observing embodied experiences, indicates a new awareness and learning. There was also evidence in the data that learning about the body and emotions could be linked to new actions, which point to transformative and emancipatory learning. This in turn, informs the theoretical concepts that are related to critical theory and transformative learning theory.

In the final section of this chapter, combining the three organising themes of an ‘emancipatory interest in mindful learning’, ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ and ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’, the global theme of ‘mindfulness and emancipatory mindful learning’, is discussed. This global theme illustrates that adult learners were moved towards emancipation from a shared meaning perspective through mindfulness training.

6.2. AN EMANCIPATORY INTEREST IN LEARNING: REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN AN MBSR PROGRAMME

In this section the reasons for participating in an MBSR programme aimed at cultivating mindfulness is explored in a South African context. The literature revealed a variety of reasons for participation. Panaioti (2015) asserts that mindfulness is used to address a variety of mental disorders, including stress, anxiety, depression and eating disorders. Similarly, Machado and Costa (2015) found a wide range of motivations for practising mindfulness which included stress, anxiety and sadness. The data collected during this study confirmed that South Africans had similar reasons for participation as the international adult learners described in the academic literature. Adult learners in this study often revealed multiple reasons for participation and during the semi-structured and narrative interviews they revealed more complex reasons. Therefore, data from the pre-course questionnaires, the semi-structured interviews and the narrative interviews were all incorporated to corroborate the findings and illustrate the reasons for participation.

Using a thematic data analysis method, the basic themes associated with the reasons for participation were identified. These themes, that say the least about the data according to Attride-Stirling (2001), were then combined into an organising theme that summarised the main assumptions of the basic themes. The data revealed how experiences of discomfort, such as stress and anxiety, addiction and depression resulted

in the adult learners' participation in the MBSR programme. These experiences can be likened to what Mezirow (1981, 2000) identifies as a 'disorientating dilemma'. A disorientating dilemma is a difficult experience which triggers learning. The adult learners' experiences of discomfort, or what I interpreted as a disorientating dilemma, highlight the need of adult learners to gain new knowledge to improve their experience of living. According to Brookfield (2001, p. 12) this desire for a "more authentic way to live" can be seen as a critique of society, although unintentionally, and links the reasons for participation described by adult learners to critical theory. The experiences that adult learners described revealed a need for emancipation from their personal circumstances by means of emancipatory learning. This they hoped to achieve through an MBSR programme aimed at cultivating mindfulness.

6.2.1. Basic Theme One: Stress and Anxiety

From the data, it emerged that stress and anxiety were the two foremost reasons given for participation with 43 of the 55 adult learners, who completed a pre-course questionnaire, mentioning stress or anxiety as a reason for their participation. This need to manage stress and anxiety, came as no surprise if one considers that the name of the MBSR programme includes the words 'stress reduction' and mindfulness is presented as a way to deal with stress. A number of these adult learners did not elaborate on the reason why they were feeling stressed. For instance, Garth simply stated that his reason for participation was to "assist with managing stress" (Garth, self-completion questionnaire)³⁴. Christo said that for him it was "to reduce stress. To improve my enjoyment of life" (Christo, self-completion questionnaire). PJ and Lionel wrote: "I was told it might help reduce my levels of stress" (PJ, self-completion questionnaire) and "Concentration problems. Not Present. Stress and Worry Problems" (Lionel, self-completion questionnaire).

Similar to the males, Susan, Cecilia and Jacqui all remarked: "to reduce my stress" (Susan, self-completion questionnaire); "[to] reduce stress and learn to meditate" (Cecilia, self-completion questionnaire) and "to assist with stress reduction" (Jacqui, self-completion questionnaire). Marli's answer was more elaborate: "I believe that

³⁴ Dates were not included with the data from the self-completion questionnaires as the dates reveal the specific MBSR programme that the adult learner participated in. Therefore, to protect the identity of the adult learners, I omitted the dates of the self-completion questionnaires.

mindfulness will enable me to deal better with stress/change my relationship with stress. To calm my mind.” (Marli, self-completion questionnaire). Joan did not identify stress, but referred to anxiety as a reason for her participation, without elaborating further. She wrote: “Self-development. Can get depressed and anxious” (Joan, self-completion questionnaire). Derick, Jade and Mike also mentioned anxiety: “Sometimes anxious, easily distracted, find it difficult to focus” (Derick, self-completion questionnaire); “I suffer from anxiety and I have heard that 'being mindful' was a way to manage this” (Jade, self-completion interview); and “to try and control anxiety and nervousness and learn more about myself” (Robert, self-completion questionnaire). Julia also revealed anxiety as a reason for participation, but her answer was more detailed: “To be able to deal with my emotions and anxiety with the tools I will be learning provided in this course. To be able to live a more content life and to establish inner peace” (Julia, self-completion questionnaire).

Many adult learners pointed out that the reason for their stress and anxiety was work-related. There were 24 adult learners who mentioned work-related stress or anxiety as a reason for their participation. For example, Ella wrote: “I get quite anxious about work and I over think my actions and words - I would love tools to take control of that, so that I can more confidently approach my work, myself and others” (Ella, self-completion questionnaire).

It appeared that for Ella, work-related anxiety resulted in a lack of confidence which she wanted to overcome. Similarly, Irene also referred to feelings of stress and anxiety which resulted in a lack of energy and feeling burnt out. It seemed that she also believed that if she stressed less she would enjoy her life more: “My work takes a lot of energy and causes me to feel anxious and burnt out. I want to learn how to handle my stress and enjoy life more” (Irene, self-completion questionnaire).

As with Ella and Irene, Willem also mentioned work-related stress as a reason for participation, saying: “I did the course to help me cope with work stress. There are just too many things and I struggle to cope” (Willem, semi-structured interview, 8 August 2015). Anne mentioned illness as a reason for participation but also elaborated to include work-related stress and feeling overwhelmed. She stated: “I was totally overworked and last year I was diagnosed with cancer. I am better now but work is like a horse, a wild horse, I have to hold it all the time” (Anne, semi-structured interview, 6

May 2015). Monique had a similar problem and like Anne, she felt that she struggled to manage her life:

I need to manage my life better. I flip-flop from one thing to the next, going where my e-mails demand rather than what I actually planned for the day. My life feels messy and I want to improve my own discipline and control over my day (Monique, self-completion questionnaire).

Later, during an interview she elaborated on this and clearly indicated a need to better manage work-related stress:

We bought a business and it was actually just too much for me to handle. It was a huge, huge task and turned out as too much for me to handle and it was very, very stressful. I had a fear of phoning people. Which is not my personality but I had such a fear of phoning people back. I was worried about what they were going to say. I was afraid of checking my email in the morning. Wondering what disaster was going to come through now and . . . , the fear of checking my voicemail. Total fear. And that was a total disaster (Monique, semi-structured interview, 16 June 2015).

Although Sharon was a student at the time of the MBSR programme and not working yet, she also participated in the MBSR programme to help her with anxiety pertaining to her studies. Sharon was studying through Unisa. Previously she was studying at Stellenbosch University but had to interrupt her studies because of a drinking problem. She said: “I am very anxious, especially with my studies being so difficult and different from Stellenbosch. My exams at Unisa are very difficult and very frustrating” (Sharon, semi-structured interview, 16 August 2015).

Work-related stress, as described by Sharon, was not the only reason why adult learners wanted to effectively manage their stress and anxiety. There were six adult learners who mentioned how the diagnosis of a serious illness highlighted the need to improve their ability to overcome stress and anxiety. This prompted them to participate in the MBSR programme. Anne was one of the adult learners who mentioned work-related stress, but she also revealed being diagnosed with a life-threatening illness as her reason for participation. She wrote:

I need to find a better way to manage my life stresses. Mind too busy and too much in my head. Also recently diagnosed with cancer so want to get to a better space and get the most out of life. Learn to not sweat the small stuff (Anne, self-completion questionnaire).

Anne was not the only adult learner who was battling cancer as Nadia was also diagnosed with cancer the previous year. Nadia revealed that she was participating for similar reasons. Both Bart and his wife, Sandra, participated because he was recently diagnosed with a chronic illness, Multiple Sclerosis. Bart explained his reason for participation as follows: “General interest in new approach to stress relief. Recent diagnosis of a severe illness. More focus in life” (Bart, self-completion questionnaire). Sandra was not diagnosed with an illness herself, but she wanted to participate to support her husband: “I would like to learn more about meditation and being present and dealing with anxiety and stress. My husband also has a condition that benefits from MBSR so I am also here to support him” (Sandra, self-completion questionnaire).

Gerard had Type 1 diabetes and felt that he could benefit from the MBSR programme. Ida wanted to learn to manage her stress in order to cope better with her illness, Fibromyalgia. In her words: “Dealing with fibromyalgia, relax, de-stress and being able to carry this through in everyday living” (Ida, self-completion questionnaire). This was similar to the reasons that Malika mentioned, who was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis in 2011, which she believed could be controlled through stress management. She stated: “I need to decrease my stress levels in order to reduce the effect of my stress-induced illness” (Malika, self-completion questionnaire).

Apart from stress and anxiety, there were also other reasons mentioned. They are discussed in the following sections.

6.2.2. Basic Theme Two: Addiction

Four adult learners, Delia, Deborah, Rochelle and Sharon spoke about turning to the MBSR programme to help them overcome their respective addictions. All four of them classified themselves as addicts and hoped that participation in the MBSR programme would help them to manage their addictions. Rochelle was a bulimic with a food addiction, Deborah was addicted to pain killers and Sharon as well as Delia had a drinking problem. Delia started drinking after her divorce almost 20 years ago and said:

“I have a drinking problem. I drink every night and I drink until I pass out” (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015). Deborah talked about intense migraines which resulted in her addiction to pain killers. She turned to mindfulness to help her to deal with her problem: “It is just too much for me. When it gets too much then the drugs were there for me but I can’t do that anymore. I have to find another way” (Deborah, semi-structured interview, 12 May 2015).

Sharon’s problem started at a young age, while she was studying and after a traumatic event:

I was in Stellenbosch for three years. In my third year I dropped out due to a very traumatic experience with my grandma passing (*pause*) not naturally. I had a bit of problems before but that kind of spiked things. I never really cried. I never really went through it. I kind of (*pause*) I can’t experience my emotions. I blocked it. So (*pause*) and then I landed up drinking. Because that was kind of the only way I could get my emotions out. My drinking got to a point where I pushed my friends away (*pause*) I pushed everyone away. And I actually embarrassed myself to a point that the people I were drunk around I actually didn't want to see because I made a fool of myself. And that was kind of the starting point. I didn't have the mindfulness in mind but it helped me” (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

Rochelle’s addiction started at an even younger age and she tried many options to deal with her addiction until she eventually enrolled for the MBSR programme. She told me:

I have been an addict since I have been a young girl. Since the age of twelve, maybe even younger. A food addiction. As a child I did not realise that this was an addiction that I chose to cope with this world. As a teenager I realised that this was a destructive way of coping. Tried many, I have tried many a route to recovery and I can honestly say that mindfulness was the first tool where a real shift happened (Rochelle, narrative interview, 5 June 2015).

6.2.3. Basic Theme Three: Depression

Delia and Deborah identified an addiction as well as depression as a reason for participation. Delia revealed a life-long struggle with depression: “In the past I was very depressed and I thought a lot about horrible things that happened in the past and then I felt depressed and I don't want to go outside and life is horrible” (Delia, semi-structured

interview, 30 August 2015). Similarly, Deborah said that she was not only addicted to pain killers but she was also depressed: “I am terribly depressed, my husband lies, I have had electric shock therapy, many operations, addiction” (Deborah, interview, 12 May 2015).

In total there were five adult learners who participated because they were struggling with depression. Lizelle also said that she was battling with depression. She declared: “I battle depression and anxiety and I need to lower my stress levels. I want to experience more and worry less” (Lizelle, pre-course questionnaire). Similarly, Joan also referred to both depression and anxiety as a reason for participation in the self-completion questionnaire. During the semi-structured interview she referred to depression again, saying: “I went on this course really, partly because I was curious. And I was a bit going through where do I go from here, what do I do with my life, depression” (Joan, semi-structured interview, 28 January 2016).

As was the case with other adult learners, Lizelle and Joan revealed that they had more than one reason for participation and depression was just one of those reasons. Rudolph, however, only revealed one reason for participation and that was his depression. He wrote: “Recently I was diagnosed with major depression and my therapist said MBSR is a good tool to supplement my therapy” (Rudolph, self-completion questionnaire).

6.2.4. Basic Theme Four: Professional Development

Although most adult learners cited some kind of personal crisis as the reason for participation, there were six adult learners who also mentioned professional development as a reason for participation. Maura and Abe, who were married, both wanted to become mindfulness facilitators. Maura said: “I am interested to become a certified teacher in this method. I facilitate silent retreats and teach creative writing. I want to be able to offer basic instruction on mindfulness” (Maura, self-completion questionnaire). This was similar to the reason for participation that her husband, Abe, mentioned: “To introduce mindfulness meditation into my life and in my workshops” (Abe, self-completion questionnaire).

Unlike Maura, who seemed to be there purely for professional development reasons, Abe also mentioned personal reasons for participation in the MBSR programme, namely to introduce the practice into his own life. It seemed that most adult learners

who identified professional development as a reason for participation were there for both professional and personal reasons. For instance, Michaela is a psychologist and this is what she said: “Improve work-life balance. More effective at work. Personal interest and professional development” (Michaela, self-completion questionnaire). Similarly, Tracey, a physiotherapist, said: “To become more mindful and to be able to pass it on to my patients” (Tracey, self-completion questionnaire). Kerisha, an acupuncturist, wrote: “I would like to utilise the practice to enhance my practice in Chinese medicine. I am a lapsed meditator and I would like to jumpstart my daily meditation practice. Stress reduction” (Kerisha, self-completion questionnaire).

6.2.5. Organising Theme One: An Emancipatory Interest in Learning

The data revealed how experiences of discomfort, such as stress and anxiety, addiction and depression resulted in participation in the MBSR programme. Although professional development was identified as a basic theme, there was only one adult learner, Maura, who attended the MBSR programme purely for professional development reasons. Therefore, this theme presented a less significant reason for participation. From the other three basic themes identified, one organising theme, namely, an ‘emancipatory interest in learning’, emerged that summarised the main assumption of the basic themes. The experiences that adult learners described earlier revealed a need for emancipation from an unpleasant experience, by means of transformative and emancipatory learning, which they hoped would be the result of learning to cultivate mindfulness. More specifically, the adult learners wanted to be emancipated from stress and anxiety, caused by various reasons, as well as addiction and depression. This need seems to represent ‘an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation’ as identified by Habermas (1972), with the potential to initiate emancipatory learning.

Emancipatory learning implies that those who are engaged in this process are oppressed. Although the adult learners in this study were from a middle class income, well-educated, employed, and did not seem oppressed, they were all aware of certain dissatisfactions with their lives, such as stress, anxiety, addiction and depression, which they found oppressive and wanted to change. It seems that by participating in the MBSR programme, they hoped to be emancipated from oppression. Therefore, the data suggest that an emancipatory interest was the driving force for participation, which Habermas

(1972) argues is the starting point for critical theory. Adult learners perceived their oppression as an individual problem, but 54 of the 55 adult learners mentioned what I interpreted as an emancipatory interest in learning as the reason for their participation, which may point to a broader social problem as a result of the society they live in.

Habermas did not elaborate on the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, therefore it was necessary to draw on transformative learning theory as developed by Mezirow (1978). Mezirow (1981, 2000) argues that the process of transformation, which he likens to emancipatory learning, starts with the experience of a disorientating dilemma. A 'disorientating dilemma' refers to a life situation where previous meaning perspectives are not effective in interpreting experience anymore. It requires change and learning and is often a very difficult experience (Mezirow, 1981). Morrice (2014) confirms this view that learning often occur when people are faced with situations that they do not know how to cope with. Similarly, Jarvis (2006) posits that learning takes place when a person is aware of discomfort in relation to a particular experience and is no longer able to cope with a situation based on previous experience. In this study, adult learners wanted to learn how to deal with the experience of stress and anxiety, depression and addiction. In terms of transformative learning theory, it is the disorientating dilemma that motivates an individual to pursue a path of learning. Therefore, the data in this study confirmed Mezirow's theory that engaging in a process of learning often starts by means of a disorientating dilemma.

As a result of the links identified in the critical theoretical framework between emancipatory learning and the process of perspective transformation, it can be concluded that a disorientating dilemma represents an emancipatory interest in learning that motivates an individual to participate in emancipatory learning. The data verified this conclusion, informing the theoretical concepts on critical theory and the theory of transformative learning, by revealing an emancipatory interest as a reason for participation in a MBSR programme aimed at cultivating mindfulness.

6.3. MINDFUL LEARNING AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN AN MBSR PROGRAMME

The data in this study illustrated that adult learners were previously unaware of their body and their embodied emotions. Cultivating mindfulness created awareness and enabled them to observe the body and emotions. Awareness was identified in Chapter 5

as one of the primary objectives of the MBSR programme curriculum. According to McCown, Reibel and Micozzi (2010), Hölzel, Lazar et al. (2011) and Cebolla et al. (2016), body awareness is central to cultivating mindfulness and the MBSR programme. These authors describe body awareness as the ability to notice sensations in the body, such as breathing and sensory experiences associated with emotions.

As I will show later, the data confirmed the notion that body awareness is central to mindfulness and mindful learning. It seemed suitable, for the purposes of this study, that mindful learning is interpreted as the learning that is the result of cultivating a meditation practice during a mindfulness training programme, such as the MBSR programme. Although authors in the academic literature refer to ‘mindful learning’, I could not find a consistent definition of the term. For instance, Langer (2000, p. 220) describes mindful learning as follows:

Being mindful is the simple act of drawing novel distinctions. It leads us to greater sensitivity to context and perspective, and ultimately greater control over our lives.

When we engage in mindful learning, we avoid forming mind-sets that unnecessarily limit us.

When Campbell and Campbell (2009) refer to mindful learning they simply mean strategies that have been proven successful in the classroom, acknowledging diversity and previous knowledge in the classroom as well as selecting meaningful assessment methods. To Hassed and Chambers (2014), who unlike Langer (2000) and Campbell and Campbell (2009), highlight a relationship between mindful learning and meditation, mindful learning is “to pay attention to the teacher and the subject matter” (Hassed & Chambers, 2014, p. 9). Therefore, as a result of the inconsistent use of the term in the academic literature and the lack of a uniform definition, I decided to use the term ‘mindful learning’ during the data analysis process to describe learning and a new awareness that originated from the experience of mindfulness.

Furthermore, I have decided to formulate the terms ‘mindful reflection’ and ‘mindful actions’ to refer to reflection and new actions pertaining to ‘mindful learning’. This promoted the process of theorising the data in terms of a critical theoretical framework. Habermas (1972) refers to the importance of self-reflection in terms of creating emancipatory knowledge while Mezirow (1981) believes critical reflection is central to transformation. Reflection as a result of ‘mindful learning’ was labeled ‘mindful

reflection’ to create a more general term and to highlight reflections related to mindfulness without specifically connecting it to self-reflection as described by Habermas (1972), or critical reflection as described by Mezirow (1981). The term ‘mindful actions’ was formulated to refer to new actions that emanated from ‘mindful learning’. Scholars such as Ewert (1991), Cranton and Roy (2003) and Callahan (2004) point out that acquiring new knowledge is critical to indicate emancipation. Similarly, Mezirow (1990a, p. 146) and Cranton and Kasl (2012) claim that new actions must be present for transformation to be realised. The term ‘mindful actions’ highlighted new actions associated with ‘mindful learning’ which could then be theorised in terms of Habermas’s (1972) critical theory and Mezirow’s (1978, 1981) transformative learning theory.

6.3.1. The Body in Mindful Learning

During the initial phases of data analysis I read through the text several times. In this way I familiarised myself with the data before commencing the coding process. While reading the data it became apparent that adult learners often referred to the ‘body’ or specific parts of the body, for instance the shoulders, during interviews. Furthermore, they also used words to describe bodily experiences such as “pain” and “tightness”. Words, phrases and passages relating to the body or bodily experiences were coded during this phase. The data showed that 21 of the 30 adult learners (70%) who were interviewed, referred to the body, and learning a new awareness of the experience of the physical body, after participation in the MBSR programme.

Once the coding process was completed, I identified basic themes about the body and the experience of the body. Independently these themes were not particularly revealing, but when these basic themes were combined in an organising theme, it became more useful for the process of knowledge generation. The two basic themes related to the body that were identified included ‘awareness of the body’ and ‘the body, mindful reflection and mindful actions’. These basic themes are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

6.3.1.1. Basic Theme Five: Awareness of the Body

The data revealed that the adult learners were not aware of their bodies prior to the MBSR programme. This lack of awareness suggests that adult learners did not notice

the body before attending the MBSR programme, or did not know how to pay attention to their bodies. It verifies the view expressed by McCown et al. (2010), Kabat-Zinn (2011) and Freiler (2008, p. 38) that “most humans, in general, have become inattentive to the potentiality of learning through the body”. One of the participants, Werner, echoed this observation, saying: “What I did find is that we are so conditioned not to pay attention to our bodies, but when I do a meditation I become more aware, physically, of strains on my body” (Werner, semi-structured interview, 27 April 2015). Werner continued: “I realised I don’t pay enough attention to my body. I learned to pay attention to my body” (Werner, semi-structured interview, 27 April 2015). Rochelle described this process of paying attention to the body as “coming back to my body”, stating: “For me (*pause*) what I took from the eight weeks and that I keep bringing into my life and reminding myself of in my day-to-day moments, was definitely the sense of coming back to my body” (Rochelle, semi-structured interview, 23 May 2015).

Three adult learners, Garth, Michaela and Ida, did not elaborate on their newly found body awareness. Garth simply commented: “I would say I am more aware of my body” (Garth, semi-structured interview, 27 January 2016). Michaela noticed: “There was this massive shift back to the body” (Michaela, narrative interview, 22 October 2015). Ida said: “I now notice what is going on in my body. I am aware of my body now, especially the mind-body connection” (Ida, semi-structured interview, 8 June 2015). Nadia realised that although she thought she was aware of her body prior to the MBSR programme, she actually learned during the MBSR programme what body awareness really entailed. In her words: “I was not very aware of my body before (*pause*). After mindfulness I just realised I thought I was in touch with my body but I wasn't at all” (Nadia, semi-structured interview, 30 April 2015). Benjamin pointed out that he realised that his muscles were very tight: “I think I am more aware of my body. I was like an ironing board before this course. Every muscle was tight” (Benjamin, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015).

Gerard gave a more detailed description of how he became more aware of his body: “I think the course made me more aware of the body. Especially doing the body scan. How often do you spend 45 minutes concentrating on what your body is feeling?” (Gerard, semi-structured interview, 15 June 2015). Gerard added that the body scan helped him

to develop body awareness while Irene mentioned the yoga practice. This is what Irene said:

When I am driving my car I will remind myself to take a deep breath and become aware of myself while I am driving. I (*pause*), what was amazing for me was the yoga. Those parts in-between the poses, when the blood is rushing through your veins and when you feel a little bit tired, that feeling. I am just more aware of my body” (Irene, semi-structured interview, 7 July 2015).

Similar to Irene, Kerisha also noticed a new body awareness during everyday activities, but she became aware of her body while swimming, declaring that she enjoyed this new awareness:

While doing the course I became aware of my body when I’m swimming. When swimming I tried to bring it back and that was a really great experience. And the physical aspect of it I really enjoyed. I was finding the physical aspect of mindfulness the most beneficial and enjoyable (Kerisha, semi-structured interview, 21 January 2016).

Yet, not everybody was enjoying this new awareness. Sharon, for instance, was so disconnected from her body that she did not even realise that she experienced pain. This is what she said: “During the body scan I realised that I have lower back pain. I never noticed it before” (Sharon, semi-structured interview, 16 August 2015). Ciska had a similar experience: “I realised that my body hurt a lot. I realised that after the first session. I became aware of the pain but I continued I just continued” (Ciska, semi-structured interview, 19 September 2015).

Whether the experience was pleasant or unpleasant, the importance of ‘awareness of the body’ in terms of mindful learning was evident in the data. But, because my theoretical framework only referred to cognitive processes as learning, I wondered whether this new ‘awareness of the body’ can be considered learning. To answer this question, I consulted the literature and found that Freiler (2008, p. 40) refers to “embodied learning” as “being attentive to the body and its experiences as a way of knowing”. The basic theme of ‘awareness of the body’ reflects this attentiveness to the body, and therefore can be deemed learning, or more specifically, embodied learning.

6.3.1.2. Basic Theme Six: The Body, Mindful Reflection and Mindful Actions

Habermas (1972) and Mezirow (1981, 1995, 1998a) refer to the cognitive processes of self-reflection and critical reflection as central to the process of knowledge creation and learning. Therefore, it was important to investigate how the experience of awareness of the body influenced the cognitive processes related to the mind. As a result of mindfulness training, adult learners realised that there was a connection between the body and the mind. Ida pointed this out very clearly: “Whatever takes place in your body. You must look at that. There is a mind-body connection” (Ida, semi-structured interview, 8 June 2015).

Lydia made a similar remark: “I realised you have to be very conscious of what is happening in your body. And through awareness, you will have physical symptoms, which will trigger this conversation within you” (Lydia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015). Marli noted: “So it is really about getting in touch with your body and seeing the places that you are also neglecting. But not just seeing it as a body part, it is seeing where can I make the connections” (Marli, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015). Michaela related: “The other thing that I think is very (*pause*) what started to grow within me is to see and to start feeling what I am feeling in my own body. And to pause then and to figure out” (Michaela, semi-structured interview, 29 August 2015). Although these adult learners were the only adult learners who acknowledged the need to reflect on bodily experiences so pointedly, others expressed similar views in a less apparent way, especially when referring to the experience of pain. From the data it became clear that pain was an issue for some adult learners. They described that, as a result of mindfulness, they were not only more aware of the bodily experience of pain, but they also engaged with it cognitively. These adult learners realised that it was important, once there is awareness of the body, to consider the knowledge that may be available by paying attention to the body.

Monique was one of the adult learners who became more aware of the pain she experienced in her back as a result of mindfulness. Although she was aware of her back pain before the MBSR programme, she referred to it as being “vaguely aware”, indicating that the MBSR programme activated an awareness of the experience of the body. This is what she said:

Definitely ja, for sure. . . . (pause), I realised how skew I hold myself and how much less pain I will have in my back if I just think about it and adjust my posture. That was quite useful. You just learn to ground yourself and that was quite amazing to me that I could get rid of my back pain by just noticing that I was holding myself very strangely. I was always vaguely aware of my back pain but I didn't do anything about it (Monique, semi-structured interview, 16 June 2015).

In this extract, Monique describes how unaware she was of her body prior to the MBSR programme, holding herself in a way that caused her pain without even realising it. Learning to be aware of the physical body and its experiences, stimulated a process of mindful reflection pertaining to the pain and discovering the reason why she was in pain. Once she discovered the reason for the pain, she was able to adjust her posture, indicating that she took mindful action to ease the pain.

Willem's experience was comparable to Monique's. He said:

I realised that because of the way I sit at work my back is in spasm all the time. And just by doing that little bit of yoga I realised in what a terrible state my body is. At work I actually got a new chair so that I don't sit that way anymore and now my back feels better. So I actually started listening to my body. I actually knew that my back has been aching for a long time but I just didn't do anything about it, but this course made me aware of it and your body also tells you when something isn't right (Willem, semi-structured interview, 8 August 2015).

As can be deduced from this deposition, Willem acknowledged that he was aware of the bodily experience of pain, yet he simply did not pay attention to it before the MBSR programme. Similar to Monique, he cognitively investigated the reason for his pain and discovered that it was his chair at work that caused the problem. Once he identified the reason for the pain, through mindful reflection, he was able to take mindful action by changing his chair at work. Monique and Willem's comments pointed to awareness of experience, followed by reflection and then new actions. This testimony once again confirm that mindfulness triggers awareness of the body followed by considering the needs of the body.

It was not only Willem and Monique who responded differently to physical pain and discomfort. Nadia and Derick had similar experiences. Derick noted:

I am more sensitised to how my body (*pause*) and I notice if I have pain somewhere. Just to be able to check in with myself. The thoughts, feelings and body sensations. I am doing that now and I try to respond (Derick semi-structured interview, 15 May 2015).

Nadia described her experiences with pain in this way:

What I learned was to acknowledge the pain, something I did not do before. Now I am aware that it is there but I can decide what to do with it. Whereas before I just ignored it, I pretended it wasn't there and I just continued. Mindfulness taught me that it is okay. I wasn't aware that I handled pain that way before I did mindfulness. In my everyday life I am aware of what is going on. So I will notice what is going on, for example, I don't feel well but it doesn't continue for long so I can let it go. So I am more aware (Nadia, semi-structured interview, 30 April 2015).

She continued:

And I have this challenge in my life, to really challenge myself, for example you feel pain; you experience pain. It is not nice but you have to pay attention to it (Nadia, semi-structured interview, 30 April 2015).

Derick and Nadia, as well as Willem and Monique, were afterwards more aware when they were in pain, responding to it differently. Although it may not be a pleasant experience, as Nadia pointed out, they were both willing to cognitively explore the experience further. This acknowledgement points to mindful reflection, that is, to identify a suitable action related to the experience of pain, which in turn, implies mindful action. In other words, the couple were aware of and considered the needs of the body which would guide their actions. Gerard, who also responded differently to pain as a result of mindful learning, described it in this way:

I think the course made me more aware of the body. Especially, doing the body scan. How often do you spend 45 minutes concentrating on what your body is feeling? Except when you are in pain, but then it is localised at one point. Now when you are in pain, you look at the body as a whole and you realise the pain is just in one part of my body. The pain is there but I can relax other parts of my body. Okay, I still feel something in my hip (*pause*) but focus on the other parts. The pain is small in relation to the rest of the body. Somebody whose whole body

is in pain, now they have a problem (Gerard, semi-structured interview, 15 June 2015).

For Gerard, mindful learning started a cognitive process of mindful reflection on the bodily experience of pain. This made him realise that there were parts of his body that were not in pain, giving him a new perspective on the experience of pain, or what is referred to as “a beginners mind” by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 24). It is one of the attitudinal aims of mindfulness that is identified in the MBSR programme curriculum. He realised he could relax parts of the body that were not in pain, indicating that he was now taking new, mindful actions when he was in pain.

Delia described the process of becoming aware of the body in more detail:

My body awareness (*pause*) so there is that awareness of breathing and ensuring that I don't hold my breath when I am stressed. And also, I will say I am more aware of my heart beat and also (*pause*) I smoke. Oh dear, I am full of problems. So once every hour I have to get up because we are not allowed to smoke inside, we have to smoke outside. And then while I am walking to the lift, I will give myself a once-over. How is your head? Okay your head is fine. Breathing is okay, my shoulders are tight. Relax your shoulders. Your heart beat is a bit fast, maybe I am a bit hungry. There is pain in my hip, the other hip is fine. My legs and feet are fine, that way. So yes, I give myself a once-over every now and then throughout the day. So I check in with myself and then I try to respond. If I am hungry I will eat something or if my hip is causing problems I will take medicine (Delia, semi-structured interview, 30 August 2015).

As can be seen from this transcription, Delia gave herself “a once-over” every hour, ensuring that she stayed aware of her body. If she discovered a problem, for example, that her shoulders were tense, she would take action to relax it. If she felt hungry, she would eat something. If she experienced pain, she would take pain medication. In this case Delia did not think cognitively about the reasons why her shoulders were tight; she simply took action to solve the problem. Although she did not engage in a process of mindful reflection, it is clear that Delia was more aware of the needs of her body as a result of mindfulness and started to take mindful action in response.

For Deborah, who was addicted to pain killers, the bodily experience of pain was more complicated. She had a realisation during the MBSR programme: “It is like my body is

like, totally on its own track. I realised that my body will throw out some weird pain thing because it wants drugs” (Deborah, semi-structured interview, 12 May 2015). She continued:

You know these doctors have nothing else to offer than drugs. That is how I got hooked. I had these terrible migraines and the doctor put me on very strong pain medication. I was hooked immediately. Now I have to find another way. So I try to breathe, and just focus on my breathing” (Deborah, semi-structured interview, 12 May 2015).

In this excerpt from the interview with Deborah, she explained how she realised, by means of body awareness and mindful reflection, that when her body craved drugs it would create the experience of pain in order to be given the drugs. In the past she responded to this craving by taking drugs but now she wanted to respond differently. Attending the MBSR programme was not the reason that she wanted to break the habit, but mindful learning provided her with a different way of coping with the pain by focusing on her breath instead of the pain. This change pointed to mindful action. She mentioned that it was the first time in her life that she had an alternative way to respond to pain, as previously she could only resort to pain medication. Deborah connected her experience of pain with a cognitive insight, namely that her body created pain when it craved drugs, but she was able to respond differently as a result of mindfulness.

As was the case with Deborah, Rochelle was also an addict, referring to herself as a food addict who suffered from bulimia. During the interview, Rochelle described how for many years she tried to ignore her body. One of the ways she did this was by participating in endurance races. This is what she said:

I was almost an extreme endurance athlete before mindfulness. Extreme, extreme and completely disconnected from my body and I did not realise it. I just pushed on, I would run through the pain. For me (*pause*) what I took from the eight weeks and that I keep bringing into my life and reminding myself of in my day to day moments was definitely the sense of coming back to my body” (Rochelle, semi-structured interview, 23 May 2015).

Rochelle described her new awareness of the body as “coming back to the body”, indicating that she had previously ignored the body and had to learn how to be aware of

her body again. She realised that as an endurance athlete she believed that it was best to ignore the pain or “run through the pain”. She elaborated:

But I didn't realise that I can create that same (*pause*) I don't have to be so extreme. I can sit, and I almost take more in, of this magnificent mountain if I don't run past it over it crisscross it go around it and over it again. And saying that I also think it is, it is the same as the food. It is that (*pause*) I was bulimic and that is in a certain sense getting rid of all the uneasiness that you sense within yourself. And so, with mindfulness and patience I could see the connection and I could see how I chose to do that over and over. Slowly and surely, rather sitting with whatever is fuelling the need to run around or eat everything (Rochelle, semi-structured interview, 23 May 2015).

Rochelle's remark that she became more patient with herself can be seen as the achievement of one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme curriculum. It also demonstrates an objective of the MBSR programme curriculum, which is creating awareness (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). She described how mindful learning, or an awareness of the body, incited a process of mindful reflection and how she cognitively engaged with the experience of the body saying that “with mindfulness and patience I could see the connection”. She realised that her running and her addiction followed similar patterns. She engaged in new, mindful actions by “rather sitting with whatever is fuelling the need to run around or eat everything”, instead of reverting to unhealthy behaviour. Rochelle demonstrated a new awareness of her body which initiated mindful reflection and resulted in new mindful actions that were healthier and less destructive.

Although most adult learners were not addicts and did not speak of the extreme self-destructive behaviour that Deborah and Rochelle mentioned, there were others who needed to take better care of themselves. In Anne's words:

I am much more body aware now. So I have known for years that I was carrying too much weight you know but it didn't really matter. It kind of brought all of those things up and it has been easier just to stick to my new diet and make sure I get all the right food in because there is a real reason why I am doing it (Anne, semi-structured interview, 6 May 2015).

Anne knew that she was overweight before the MBSR programme, but she never considered the reasons why she should lose weight. Mindful learning made her more

aware of her body which prompted her to engage in mindful reflection and consider the reasons that she needed to lose weight. Once she was more aware of the reasons why she should lose weight, she was able to stay committed to her diet, which indicated new, mindful actions to take care of herself.

Irene also had issues with being overweight. However, unlike Anne, this made her feel self-conscious. This is what she said:

I was always very negative about my body. You know I can't lose weight and I can't stop eating and blah blah blah. Always putting myself down, but I am slowly starting to feel grateful for the things that I can do. So yes, awareness of that (Irene, semi-structured interview, 7 July 2015).

Awareness of the body made Irene realise that, although she was overweight, there were other things that she could do with her body. As a result of mindfulness that stimulated body awareness and mindful reflection, it appeared that Irene was able to appreciate her own body more, saying that she was “slowly starting to feel grateful for the things that I can do”. In my opinion, it indicates looking at herself in a new way, or with a “beginner’s mind”, which is one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme curriculum as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 24). This appreciation for herself seemed to inspire new, mindful actions. She added:

I am just more aware of my body. I realised during the course that I just want to sit up straighter and I just want to carry myself in a more dignified manner. That little bit (*pause*) of dignity. I just want to carry myself in a better way. During the day I will catch myself that I am slumping and then I will adjust my posture. You know when I am in a slumped position. I feel better about myself if I sit up straight (Irene, semi-structured interview, 7 July 2015).

For Irene, body awareness through mindfulness helped her to notice negative assumptions about herself. Furthermore, through body awareness and mindful reflection she was able to act in a new, mindful way. For instance, being grateful for the things that her body was able to do and adjusting her posture. Changing her posture helped Irene to feel more positive about herself, pointing to the influence that the body has on one’s emotions.

Gerard was another adult learner who, similar to Irene, realised, that he had to appreciate his body and take care of his health. He explained:

So this course came at the right time. I am more aware of my health, I am more aware of my body and I am more aware that I should take things easy. But not bring everything to a grinding halt. I just have to take care of myself (Gerard, semi-structured interview, 15 June 2015).

Similarly, Julia stated:

I realised that I have to take care of my body and its needs. I always want a ‘quick fix’. It has (*pause*) it made me aware, it has been quite a tough pregnancy and I haven’t been able to do anything about it yet but it has made me aware of what I am going through, especially the body scan (Julia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015).

Both Julia and Gerard realised, as a result of body awareness that was stimulated by mindfulness, they should change their actions and take better care of themselves. Like the others, they learned that it is important to pay attention to the body and its needs, or to consider the body, and that it is a source of knowledge that can provide them with valuable information about themselves.

Considering the body as a source of knowledge, as these adult learners seemed to do, indicates that the body often registers a problem before the mind. Clark (2001) states that often our cognitive processes, or our mind, need to catch up with what the body already knows. The data confirmed this notion. Adult learners were not aware of the experiences of the body, many of them not even realising that they were in pain. The data included several similar examples of how adult learners learned to be aware of the experience of their physical bodies, which is referred to as ‘embodied learning’ in the academic literature (Merriam et al. 2007, p 190; Freiler, 2008, p. 40). This enabled adult learners to respond differently, or act in a new, mindful way. Sometimes these new, mindful actions were preceded by mindful reflection. At other times, adult learners merely responded to the needs of the body that they became aware of, without thinking about it. However, whether they simply acted on the new awareness or carefully reflected on the experience, adult learners indicated that as a result of a new awareness of the body, they now considered the needs of the body and acted in a new way.

6.3.2. Organising Theme Two: Mindfulness of the Body in Mindful Learning

In this organising theme, namely ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’, the basic themes in the data were combined to summarise the main assumptions identified in the basic themes, as suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001). In other words, these basic themes, namely the ‘awareness of the body’ and ‘the body, mindful reflection and mindful actions’ were combined into the organising theme of ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’. The organising theme is then related to theoretical concepts that address the research questions as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is at this time that the data analysis process goes beyond the description of the data to the interpretation of the data.

Norris (2001, p. 112) proposes that, knowledge available through the body, is in itself valuable, and that it is not necessary to subject this kind of knowledge to cognitive processes to be deemed knowledge. The data confirmed this perspective as it was clear that mindful learning related to an awareness of the body, or embodied learning, and even if it was not linked to rational, cognitive processes, it was still valuable to adult learners and enabled them to change those actions that were not in their best interests. The new awareness of the body, or embodied learning, that the data revealed, suggests ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’. The concept of knowledge and learning concerning the body is also considered in feminist and anti-racist theories which I discovered at an advanced stage of this study. Michelson (1996, 1998), for instance, discusses learning through the body and suggests that the moment of learning is located in the bodily and emotional experience, not in the cognitive processes pertaining to experience which is reflected in adult education and learning theories. Although exploring a feminist perspective on learning in detail was beyond the scope of this study, I kept this critique of the adult education and learning theory in mind as I further explored ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ in terms of my critical theoretical framework.

Following the identification of the theoretical concept of ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’, the organising theme of ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ was then linked to my critical theoretical framework. Habermas (1972) refers to learning that is associated with an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation as knowledge that results from self-reflection. Authors such as

Ewert (1991), Cranton and Roy (2003) and Callahan (2004) contend that new knowledge alone is not enough to indicate emancipation. These authors reason that evidence of new actions as a result of new knowledge must be present for emancipation to be realised. The data of this study show that new knowledge about the body was created as a result of mindfulness which motivated new, mindful actions. Although evidence of mindful reflection was limited, new knowledge and new actions were present in the data which point to emancipatory learning. Habermas (1972) does not recognise the experience of the body as part of the emancipatory learning process; he exclusively refers to cognitive functions of the mind which includes psychoanalysis and critique of ideology within this domain of learning. Therefore, the data of this study illustrated a new dimension in the domain of emancipatory learning, namely ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’.

The theory of knowledge-constitutive interests as developed by Habermas (1972) provided very limited insights on how the organising theme ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ could impact the theoretical concepts related to critical theory and emancipation. Therefore, Mezirow’s transformative learning theory was incorporated to further explore the concept of ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ within a critical theoretical framework. Mezirow (1981, p. 6) developed the process of emancipation to include perspective transformation which he describes as:

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becoming aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstructing this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting on these new understandings.

The data analysis revealed the assumption that prior to the MBSR programme, adult learners believed that it was not necessary to pay attention to the body and that the body was not a source of knowledge. By including the body in their field of experience after participating in the MBSR programme and the cultivation of mindfulness, it indicated that for many adult learners “a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience” (Mezirow, 1981, p. 6) became possible.

According to Mezirow (1995), experience is the first step towards transformation. Experience represents the first theme in transformative learning, as identified in the theoretical framework, but Mezirow does not consider experience learning. Mezirow

(1994, pp. 222-223) defines learning as “the social process of construing and appropriating new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action”. This shows, as Michelson (1996, p. 188) proposes, that the moment of learning is located in cognitive processes in transformative learning theory. Furthermore, Mezirow (1991a, 1995, 1997a) does not include the experience of the body when he refers to experience in the academic literature, suggesting that the theme of ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ represents a new way to include experience pertaining to the body in transformative learning theory. Mezirow (1998a) asserts that critical reflection based on experience will challenge assumptions. The data provided some evidence of mindful reflection based on an ‘awareness of the body’ in mindful learning, but most of it cannot be considered critical reflection that challenged assumptions. Sometimes adult learners simply realised that it was a chair or a certain posture that was causing them pain and they made an adjustment based on that realisation. Therefore, it seems that the second theme of transformative learning, critical reflection based on experience, was not very prominent. The third theme, rational discourse that included other people, did not emerge at all.

Despite the fact that two of the prominent themes in transformative learning theory were under-represented, or not present at all, adult learners still revealed new actions related to the body. Similar to emancipation in the emancipatory domain of learning, Mezirow (1990a, p. 146) argues that transformation is only fully realised when there is evidence of new actions that emanated from learning. Mezirow (1990a, p. 146) summarises: “Transformative learning requires that one act[s] upon new insights gained”. Most adult learners acted differently once they became aware of the body, or when the body was included in their awareness, and they considered the needs of their bodies. According to Cranton and Kasl (2012), new actions combined with new consciousness represent perspective transformation. Therefore, it can be argued that there was evidence in the data of emancipatory learning through perspective transformation, but the learning process was located in the body and not in the cognitive processes that are associated with the mind.

This view, namely that evidence of emancipatory learning was present in the data through perspective transformation, can be substantiated when meaning perspectives are further explored in terms of transformative learning theory. A meaning perspective,

according to Mezirow (1990a) is similar to a belief system. Mezirow (1990a, p. 141) explains: “They become our frames of reference or ‘meaning perspectives’, and they profoundly affect how, what and why we learn”. The data of this study showed that the adult learners shared a meaning perspective, prior to the MBSR programme, namely that the experiences of the body should be ignored and would not present an opportunity for knowledge creation, or embodied learning. Mezirow (1990a, p. 143) claims that meaning perspectives can limit the comprehension of new data and that we often avoid considering data that do not fit within this meaning perspective. Therefore, prior to attending the MBSR programme, it was easy for the adult learners to avoid considering information concerning the experiences of the body. As a result, incorporating information about the body and embodied learning, as described by the MBSR adult learners, indicates perspective transformation, as defined in transformative learning theory. In other words, it denotes emancipatory learning through perspective transformation.

Mezirow (1990a, p. 143) states that “in perception, we tend to trade off diminished attention to avoid the anxiety attendant upon encountering events which do not comfortably fit our habits of expectation. This often leads to self-deception and shared illusions”. A meaning perspective which determines that the experience of the body is not a site for learning and knowledge creation, can be interpreted as such an illusion. Mezirow (1991a) further argues that transformative learning changes habitual expectations which are the result of a meaning perspective. The data revealed that adult learners were in the habit of ignoring their bodies, however, ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ as a result of mindfulness training, changed this habit, indicating emancipation through the transformation of a shared meaning perspective. It was found that ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’, encouraged by mindfulness training, did not necessarily promote critical reflection and rational discourse, which are central themes in transformative learning theory. Yet, the data suggested that cultivating mindfulness resulted in perspective transformation because the consciousness was adjusted and new actions were present.

The body, and learning that is located in the body, is not taken into account in Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning. Scholars such as Schlattner (1994), Amann (2003) and Cohen (2003) refer to the importance of the body in the

transformative learning process, but the body in relation to transformative learning theory remains largely unrecognised and unexplored. The data prompted the theoretical exploration of the body within a critical theoretical perspective. By including ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ in the process of transformative learning, a more holistic approach to transformation and emancipation becomes possible. Scholars such as Taylor (2007) and Dirkx (2008) propose that emotions should be included in a more holistic approach towards education, but they do not recognise the role of the body. The data of this study provided evidence that a holistic educational approach, aimed at transformation and emancipation, should include both the body and embodied learning in the process of learning and that mindfulness can support such an approach.

6.3.3. Emotions in Mindful Learning

During the data analysis process it was evident that adult learners often referred to their emotions during interviews. Dirkx (2008) noted that in education the term ‘feelings’, ‘emotions’ and ‘affect’ are used interchangeably and that no attempt is made to differentiate between these terms. In the data a similar trend was evident, with a number of adult learners referring to their emotions while others spoke of their feelings. During this phase of the data analysis process I coded words, phrases or passages that referred to ‘emotion’, ‘emotions’, ‘feeling’ and ‘feelings’. I also searched for words, phrases and passages that referred to specific emotions. I discovered that words such as ‘stress’, ‘anxiety’, ‘frustration’ and ‘tensing’ that referred to specific emotions also emerged frequently in the data. The data revealed that 23 of the 30 (77%) adult learners who were interviewed, reported an increased awareness of their emotions. This new awareness indicated that the central objective of the MBSR programme curriculum as identified in Chapter 5 was achieved.

Once the coding process was completed, I identified basic themes, namely ‘awareness of emotions’ and ‘emotions, mindful reflection and mindful actions’. These basic themes were then combined in an organising theme called ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’, which was useful for the process of theory building and the creation of new knowledge pertaining to the research questions.

6.3.3.1. *Basic Theme Seven: Awareness of Emotions*

As pointed out earlier, the body often has knowledge that the mind has not even registered yet (Clark, 2001). Clark (2001) uses the example of pain in the shoulders, indicating that the body has already registered that one is struggling to cope with stress, while the mind is not even aware of the problem yet. Clark (2001) connects awareness of the body to awareness of emotions, which is similar to the view of Merriam et al. (2007, p. 195), who argue that emotions is a component of embodied learning. The data revealed many similar examples of how adult learners in the MBSR programme learned to be aware of the experience of their bodies, or in other words embodied learning, and as such realised that they were experiencing stress, anxiety or other emotions. The data also revealed that these adult learners then connected bodily sensations to their emotions; learning about themselves because previously they were unaware of these emotions. For instance, Benjamin, Delia and Werner became aware that they experienced stress and anxiety in their shoulders. This is what Benjamin pointed out: “Well, I feel it in my shoulders when I get anxious or stressed. So I find I can then consciously relax it” (Benjamin, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015). Similarly, Delia said: “I also realised I have a lot of stress in my shoulders” (Delia, semi-structured interview, 30 August 2015), while Werner stated: “When I am stressed I feel it here, in my shoulders, and I would become aware of that” (Werner, semi-structured interview, 27 April 2015).

The remarks in these extracts concur with the finding of Clark (2001) that the body was already aware of a pain or problem before, in this case, Benjamin, Delia or Werner cognitively became aware that they were feeling stressed and that they needed to do something about it. Mindful learning, which includes learning awareness of the experience of the physical body, enabled these adult learners to identify their embodied emotions. Other adult learners also noticed that they could feel emotions such as stress and anxiety in their bodies, yet they did not feel it specifically in their shoulders. Lizelle, for instance, felt anxiety in her stomach. She commented: “I am a bit more aware of how emotions manifest in my body. I wouldn't say on any other level. But for example, anxiety I can feel in my stomach” (Lizelle, semi-structured interview, 21 January 2016).

Kerisha associated feeling stressed with heart palpitations, stating: “Like physiological you can feel stress coming. I found myself quite stressed and experiencing heart palpitations” (Kerisha, semi-structured interview, 21 January 2016). During the interview she realised that she reacted physically when she saw or read something that she found distressing. She described it in this way:

I would notice that I see or read something distressing and then I feel the pain in my back. I haven't actually linked it before but there is certainly an increase in awareness and there is an increase of pain. Without a change for the worse in what I actually do with my body (Kerisha, semi-structured interview, 21 January 2016).

Like Kerisha, Lydia linked emotions to the body, saying: “When I get into a heightened emotional state, I can see what is happening with the sensations in my body” (Lydia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015). Similarly, Rochelle noted: “I am more aware of the influence of my thoughts and emotions in my body than I were before” (Rochelle, semi-structured interview, 23 May 2015).

As was the case with these adult learners, Nadia also noticed a physical reaction to her emotions. She not only realised that she was not particularly aware of her emotions before starting the MBSR programme, but she also realised that she was ignoring her body and her emotions. She explained it in this way:

I realised that I am not in touch with my body. I will experience frustration and I will just tell myself to get over it. That body scan was a reality check and I realised I wasn't in touch with my body. What I also learned is that I do not allow myself to experience pain, not physically or emotionally (Nadia, semi-structured interview, 30 April 2015).

In this extract of the interview, Nadia acknowledges that she used to ignore her body and emotions, especially when she was experiencing pain. Participating in the MBSR programme prompted mindful learning and Nadia realised that simply ignoring the body was not beneficial and that it was time to become more aware of the experience of the body and the knowledge that is located in the body. Nadia was not the only adult learner who ignored her body and her emotions prior to the MBSR programme.

Marli made a similar statement and related that she had learned to be aware of the experience of the physical body as well as embodied emotions. In her words:

And you can't ignore it anymore because I could feel it in my body as well and that is why mindfulness is important because you cannot just deal with stress cognitively. I embody my stress so I have to deal with the body (Marli, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015).

Similar to what Marli learned, other adult learners also realised that they could not simply ignore their bodies and their emotions. In the earlier extracts from the interviews, the adult learners described how they learned to recognise the physical effect of emotions in the body as a result of mindful learning. There were many other adult learners who also referred to a new awareness of their emotions that was not previously present, although they did not necessarily refer to the physical sensations associated with the emotion.

For instance, Anne noticed that after participation in the MBSR programme she felt appreciation towards herself, where previously she was very critical. She concluded: "I think it is so easy to be critical with yourself rather than appreciative. I realised that before I was more critical of myself but I am more appreciative now" (Anne, semi-structured interview, 6 May 2015). Deborah also became aware of more positive emotions, and she noticed the emotion of joy. This is how she described it: "During one meditation I became aware of joy. I just wanted to burst out smiling. I felt joy. I can feel joy" (Deborah, semi-structured interview, 12 May 2015). Deborah, who was battling to overcome her addiction to pain killers, seemed surprised that she could feel a positive emotion like joy. This was similar to Julia's experience, who commented: "In general I noticed more negative emotions but sometimes there were positive emotions. It helped me to see there can be positive emotions. Not everything is bad. There can be good things as well" (Julia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015).

Like Julia, Ella did notice positive new feelings as a result of mindfulness, but for her, it was mostly a matter of a new awareness of unpleasant emotions. She explained:

I would say negative emotions like anxiety and guilt. There were also positive things like feeling a sense of empowerment. Not sure if that is an emotion. Calmness at certain points but noticing the dominant unhealthy emotions (Ella, semi-structured interview, 2 May 2015).

Christine noticed the same pattern when asked about her emotional awareness. She described it in this way:

Ja (*pause*) and that is interesting to me because when you asked the question I immediately thought of negative emotions. It is,... I think definitely there are positive ones that come up and what is interesting is I don't really seriously log them it is the negative ones. I don't even remember the positive ones (Christine, semi-structured interview, 11 May 2015).

The adult learners mentioned above all indicated a new awareness of emotions. Although some noticed positive emotions, it seemed that most were more aware of unpleasant emotions as a result of mindfulness. However, be it positive or negative, a new awareness of emotions is an indication that mindful learning has occurred.

Another adult learner that became aware of challenging emotions was Derick. He described his experience as follows: "These days, when I'm sad I notice that and I accept that. I try not to get frustrated and worked up about it" (Derick, 15 May 2015). Based on this statement, it seemed that when Derick became aware of his sadness, he could deal with it in a constructive way. He found that by accepting his sadness it did not lead to another emotion such as frustration. This indicates that one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme curriculum, as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 27), namely 'acceptance', was achieved. Ciska also noticed sadness, commenting: "I felt like crying (*pause*) and then I thought I cannot cry in front of all these people. And in my daily life I also became aware of these emotions" (Ciska, semi-structured interview, 19 September 2015). Jade realised that she was aware of new emotions that she previously misinterpreted. She said:

Only one time I noticed that I am actually angry. And I am a little anxious sometimes but mostly I felt irritated and agitated and I realised that I may just be angry and not anxious. So I recognised an emotion that I thought was something else (Jade, semi-structured interview, 19 April 2015).

Rochelle experienced similar emotions. She noted: "I became aware of anger. Lots of anger and irritation" (Rochelle, semi-structured interview, 23 May 2015). Monique also noticed anger, but her anger was family-related. She explained: "So I realised I had some anger issues related to a particular family member" (Monique, semi-structured interview, 16 June 2015). Although Irene did not mention anger, she also became aware

of unpleasant emotions. She linked these to her past, saying: “Negative emotions. There were things (*pause*) when we got to the third class it just started feeling that things are just getting too much. I started thinking a lot about things that happened in the past” (Irene, semi-structure interview, 7 July 2015). This was similar to Ida’s experience, who remembered: “I became aware of deep and difficult emotions from the past” (Ida, semi-structured interview, 8 June 2015). Gerard also noticed emotions as a result of past experiences, noting:

I know there are a couple of things that I have been involved with and seen and done over the years that have come up now. I am coping with it. I have found that I have become quite emotional (Gerard, semi-structured interview, 15 June 2015).

Based on the data it was clear that adult learners had a new awareness of their emotions as a result of mindful learning. As Merriam et al. (2007) recognise emotions as a component of embodied learning, this new awareness of emotions can be considered embodied learning. Yet, adult learners did not limit mindful learning to a new awareness of emotions. The next theme that emerged from the data connected a new awareness of emotions to cognitive functions, or mindful reflection. This new awareness also provided evidence of new actions, or what is known as ‘mindful actions’. This theme is explained in more detail in the following section.

6.3.3.2. *Basic Theme Eight: Emotions, Mindful Reflection and Mindful Actions*

The data showed that in line with the views of Merriam (2008a, p. 96) “the body has become more visible as a source of knowledge and a site for learning. But it is not that the body is merely a vehicle for learning; it is what the body feels, the affective dimension of learning, that combines with the intellect in significant learning”. A mindful reflection on emotions is in line with what Merriam and Kim (2008, p. 76) describe as the “construction of knowledge as a process of mentally reflecting on experience”. Within a critical theoretical framework, Ewert (1991), Cranton and Roy (2003) and Callahan (2004) posit that self-reflection combined with new actions indicate emancipation. Similarly, Mezirow (1990a) claims that the cognitive process of critical reflection needs to be combined with new actions to indicate perspective transformation, which he compares to emancipation. Therefore, in this study, the combination of mindful reflection that created new knowledge and new, mindful actions

was deemed evidence of perspective transformation which has the potential to emancipate.

The data revealed that many adult learners engaged in mindful reflection as a result of a new awareness of emotions. Ella became aware of anxiety first and then realised that her anxiety was related to feelings of guilt. . This is how she explained it:

I was very aware of anxiety and there were points during the long meditation day where we had lots of time to meditate. But something about that day made me feel guilty. I would think in the past I wouldn't have connected that and wouldn't have given it a lot of thought. So part of that day was acknowledging that and that I need to work on it (Ella, semi-structured interview, 2 May 2015).

She elaborated:

What was the guilt about? I think it was about not, like I am not, ... I don't know. It is like I am not doing enough. It is not enough. I have a tendency to over think. Have I hurt someone's feelings? Have I said something bad? Which is hard. Being involved with groups and people a lot. One says many things and you can't always, at some point you have to move on. But I have always had that feeling since I was young, you know like almost over sensitive. And then translating that into guilt for myself (Ella, semi-structured interview, 2 May 2015).

In this extract, Ella explains how she became aware of her anxiety and feelings of guilt. She questioned why she felt guilty. This illustrates mindful reflection associated with emotional awareness. Although Ella engaged with her emotions cognitively, she did not introduce any new actions following her newly acquired insights. Most of the adult learners who described mindful reflection pertaining to a new emotional awareness, did indicate new actions.

Willem was one of the adult learners who was able to take new action as a result of mindful reflection on emotional experiences. He said:

..., mostly, yes, mostly anxiety. Yes, I would say I became aware of anxiety. I would get lost in thoughts and then I realise there I go again and then my heart starts beating faster and then I have to bring myself back. It was work-related anxiety (Willem, semi-structured interview, 8 August 2015).

He continued:

I need to do something about this anxiety. I do realise that I am at a point where I have to do something otherwise things are not going to work. I have an appointment with my boss tomorrow and I am going to tell her, listen, I am exhausted. I have nothing more to offer. It made me aware of these things that are going on. Instead of just droning on and on and on I realise that if I don't do something now something is seriously going to go wrong (Willem, semi-structured interview, 8 August 2015).

In this extract from the interview, Willem explains that he was able to feel his heart beating faster and then linked it to anxiety. This statement of Willem indicates body awareness followed by emotional awareness. He explored the reason for his anxiety through mindful reflection and identified work-related anxiety. It seemed that Willem engaged with his emotions through reflection, creating insights and new knowledge. This is what Merriam (2008a, p. 96) refers to as “significant learning”. In my view, Willem could consider the body as a source of knowledge and a site for learning. He was able to identify what his body was experiencing, which was the emotion of anxiety. Then he combined this awareness with cognitive thinking by identifying the reason for his anxiety followed by the realisation that he could no longer continue in this way. He identified the actions that he needed to take to cope with the anxiety, which was to talk to his boss. The data suggested that Willem created new knowledge, which is in line with Dirkx's (2001) belief that emotions provide us with a means to create self-knowledge. This new knowledge also enabled Willem to take new, mindful actions.

Similar to Willem, Benjamin also became aware of his embodied experience of anxiety during the MBSR programme. Benjamin realised that his anxiety was work-related but he also mentioned strategies that he could use to be less anxious. This is what he said:

I needed to face it. And I have turned away from it before. You know, some measure of anxiety will always be present but to not let it overpower you. I realised I need to be less critical, more relaxed, less on my case. It is what it is you know, work will cause anxiety but I can deal with it differently (Benjamin, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015).

For Benjamin, recognising anxiety meant that he acknowledged that he needed to deal with the emotion. In my opinion, this indicated ‘acceptance’, one of the attitudinal aims

of the MBSR curriculum as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 27). In Benjamin's case, he realised, through mindful reflection, that he had to be less critical of himself, more relaxed, and less on his own case. Benjamin told me that he started with yoga classes and meditated at least twice a week to help him stay relaxed, indicating new, mindful actions as a result of mindful reflection. He said:

Ja, so I am more relaxed because of the meditation and the yoga. I have now started taking yoga classes in Constantia. This has brought it on. It kind [of] fits in, it helps with the relaxation, so that kind of worked out. And the other thing that I am doing is I am meditating fairly regularly. At least twice a week (Benjamin, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015).

In line with the suggestions by Freiler (2008) and Merriam (2008a), Benjamin combined the awareness of his emotions with other types of learning, in this case the cognitive function of mindful reflection. This combination highlighted to him the new, mindful actions that he needed to take to cope with his anxiety. Another adult learner, Werner, also learned to deal with his anxiety in a new way as a result of mindful learning. He described it this way:

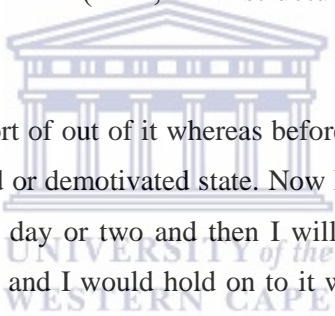
I became aware of tension (*pause*) becoming aware of certain areas in my life that I need to work on. Almost a sense of tidying myself. Recognising areas that I want to work on, that I need to work on. Areas that I need to focus on in terms of (*pause*) to a certain extent priorities (Werner, semi-structured interview, 27 April 2015).

When asked to elaborate, he said: "I have always been very busy. Now I can do nothing. I can do that" (Werner, semi-structured interview, 27 April 2015). Werner explained that because of mindful learning and awareness of his tension, he realised that there were certain areas in his life that he needed to improve. This realisation indicated that embodied knowledge of emotions started a process of mindful reflection which created additional new knowledge. He specified that prior to the MBSR programme he was very busy, which caused the tension, and after the MBSR programme he could take time to do nothing, which in my view, pointed to new, mindful actions.

While Werner talked about tension in his life, Julia referred to anxiety. As was the case with Werner, an awareness of her emotions triggered a process of mindful reflection after she attended the MBSR programme. She noted:

I found it helpful in terms of my anxiety. I am definitely, it has helped it. Whereas before I would get myself worked up into a flurry of panic. I will still worry about things but you know I am sort of (*pause*) or I manage to be more calm and rational of worries. I will ask the question why am I feeling this way? What am I so worried about? I am the type of person who expected a quick fix but I have realised it is something that you have to work at. You know it is something that you have to make an effort and consciously work on in daily life to strengthen that aspect. You have to work at it (Julia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015).

In this extract, Julia describes how she engaged cognitively with her emotions through a process of mindful reflection. Once she was aware of anxiety, she questioned the reason for the anxiety, creating the possibility of additional new knowledge about the emotion. She recognised that she had to stay conscious of her emotions and deliberately engage with emotions in a different way than before the MBSR programme, which seemed to work for her. She explained: “By acknowledging it and by naming your emotions you are kind of giving it less power” (Julia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015). She continued:



I can now get myself sort of out of it whereas before I would harp on the emotion and fall into a depressed or demotivated state. Now I will get angry or irritated but it will last for maybe a day or two and then I will get over it whereas before it would last much longer and I would hold on to it without letting go (Julia, semi-structured interview, 22 July 2015).

Julia admitted that she used to stay angry or irritated for days on end, however, it seemed that the awareness of emotions and the mindful reflection that followed, helped her to let go of these emotions. This enabled her to distance herself of a negative emotional condition at a faster rate than before the MBSR programme, which suggested that she took new, mindful actions.

As is clear from the data discussed in the preceding sections, many adult learners referred to anxiety, but three adult learners, Ida, Irene and Marli mentioned the word ‘stress’ specifically. These adult learners also referred to the breath as a way to deal with stress. In Ida’s words:

Well, let me put it to you this way. If I am in a stressful situation I am able to do the breathing you know. Sort of a breathing exercise and also think carefully before

I react to a situation. I needed that. You know I don't just respond straight away to whatever the stressor is. I always think carefully before making any decisions (Ida, semi-structured interview, 8 June 2015).

In this extract, Ida describes how she used the breath to calm herself in a stressful situation, which indicated new actions, but she also pointed out that she thought carefully before she made any decisions. Therefore, the data indicated that Ida used mindful reflection to create additional new knowledge which then determined her decisions and actions.

Irene revealed a similar process, saying:

I should breathe in deeply. It helps me to think clearly about what is going on. I realise now that if I am in a stressful situation I will tell myself, take a deep breath. And it works! It really works! That is something that I definitely learned (Irene, semi-structured interview, 7 July 2015).

Marli illustrated the process in more detail. She worked at a well-known university where she was in charge of the debt collecting department, a position that created considerable stress for her. She gave a detailed description of the new way that she worked with embodied emotions:

I found that initially it wasn't such a pleasant experience but later on I could feel, okay here I feel my stress, and just be curious about that and what can I do about it. So ja, it definitely helped with the stress. I got more in touch with my body and my breath and what I did was, if parents came to me, they would schedule a meeting, like every half an hour especially during registration time. So it was hectic. And then I would, before they walk into my office, I would take a breath. Just that type of thing to make sure that I will be present in a way. And when they are talking to me, listening to what they say. Not thinking I can't help you I can't help you. So this is how the mindfulness has helped me with my stress. And I found that helped me to get through the day in those stressful times (Marli, semi-structured interview, 7 April 2015).

Once Marli allowed herself to be aware of the unpleasant experience of stress, she could reflect on the experience and find new strategies to deal with stressful situations.

Another adult learner who provided a detailed description of the process of mindful learning, was Sharon. She became aware of her heart beat quickening when she felt stressed and realised that her body's reaction was connected to her emotions. She said:

Because of the mindfulness I can physically feel, I can physically feel when my heart starts racing, when I am tensing. My body is making me aware of the emotions. Whereas before I would just think . . . I am getting sick or something like that. So you don't notice it really whereas now my body reactions are there before I actually realise that I am emotional. So when I feel something physically I can say okay, this I can identify with anxiety. I have felt like this before and so it is just kind of finding out what is going on (Sharon, semi-structured interview, 16 August 2015).

In this extract of her interview, Sharon describes how mindfulness enabled her to identify her emotions. In my opinion, she looked at her body and emotions in a new way, indicating “a beginner's mind”, one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 24). She realised how the body seemed to register her emotions before the mind did. The data suggested that awareness of emotions created new knowledge which allowed Sharon to further explore the reasons for the emotion through mindful reflection. Or in Sharon's words, “just kind of finding out what is going on”. She elaborated:

So I kind of, when I am angry at a friend I say to myself, okay, am I judging that person? And if so why? Does it relate to the past? What is happening? And then I am able to say okay and it really does help me. I am a very impulsive person so it helps me to almost . . . not to be so impulsive (Sharon, semi-structured interview, 16 August 2015).

Sharon clearly described the process of mindful reflection on emotions that helped her to create additional new knowledge. She reflected on the source of the emotion, questioning and considering her own response, which helped her to gain understanding. It appeared that this new understanding also helped Sharon not to act so impulsively, indicating new, more mindful actions.

Monique also noticed new actions as a result of mindful reflection on emotions. She particularly noticed this when dealing with her children. She said:

I am able to sort of notice how I am with them. Instead of getting cross. So instead of just being impatient and saying that they are being naughty I am just trying to notice what is really going on and not be impatient. I am definitely calmer with them and you need to deal with the person and notice what the problem is. Like they are just hungry they are not actually being naughty. If you notice you are generally irritable you can start figuring out the reason why. So separating the thought and going to the body feeling kind of help you to figure out what is important and what is not important. So in lots of situations I feel like I am noticing a lot about what I am thinking about a situation (Monique, semi-structured interview, 16 June 2015).

In this extract, Monique refers to her awareness of an emotion, irritability, which prompted her to find out what the reason for this irritability is. This process demonstrates mindful reflection. Monique realised if she could determine the reason why a person, including herself, was behaving in a certain way, it would change her actions. For instance, she became less impatient with her children when she started to investigate the reason for their behaviour, realising that they might only be hungry and not naughty. Monique acknowledged that the body can provide her with new knowledge by stating “going to the body feeling kind of help you to figure out what is important and what is not important”.

Like Monique, Christine also noticed new actions toward her children but she also became aware of new actions concerning her husband. She stated: “I don’t raise my voice to my children nearly as much as I used to, only occasionally. I haven’t had a rip roaring fight with my husband in at least a few months” (Christine, semi-structured interview, 11 May 2015). She elaborated:

Being able to feel emotions and not kind [of] draw away from them and discovering that they are less overwhelming that way. With mindfulness I worked with emotion and I can see that there is always something behind the emotion that you need to deal with (Christine, semi-structured interview, 11 May 2015).

The data indicated that as a result of mindfulness and mindful learning, Christine was able to feel her emotions. When she was able to stay with the awareness of the emotion, she realised that she had to cognitively engage with the emotion to work with the reasons for the emotion. She noted that “there is always something behind the emotion that you need to deal with”, suggesting that she was now dealing with whatever reason

that was causing the emotion, whereas previously, she did not. The data indicated an awareness of emotions that was prompted by mindfulness, and led to mindful reflection for Christine. Engaging with her emotions in this way changed her actions toward her children and husband.

Barbara also became aware of an emotional reaction towards other people. She noticed irritation and concluded:

I think (*pause*) what I realised is that if I see something that irritates me it says more about me than anything else. It is the shadow that you work with. The presenter she sort of pushed my buttons. I knew her from before and I was really judgemental and then in week five the penny just dropped. When I looked at her I just saw her quietness and calmness, actually no pretences. Actually, I started realising I was actually jealous of the fact that she is living in the now. I couldn't work it out at first, all I knew is that she irritated me. But after four weeks I realised what was going on. I am also very critical and I just realised that she is mindful in everything she does. Or the little bit that I see. That was an 'aha' moment for me. That was an insight (Barbara, semi-structured interview, 1 August 2015).

In this interview extract, Barbara explains how she was at first only aware of the emotion of irritation, but how she later realised the reason for the emotion through mindful reflection. Furthermore, she also discovered that what she thought was irritation at first was, in fact, jealousy.

Unlike Barbara, who noticed judgement and irritation towards others, Jade always felt judged by people. During the semi-structured interview, Jade revealed that prior to the MBSR programme she was very suspicious of the motives of other people. She expressed herself as follows:

Somebody says something to me or smile at me in a particular way and then I make up a story about it in my mind and I stress about it. So I respond to that differently. I consider that there may be other reasons for a person's behaviour that has nothing to do with me (Jade, semi-structured interview, 19 April 2015).

Mindful reflection on her emotional experience enabled Jade to identify the reason why she did not trust other people. Jade explained:

Because I think I have this issue, I was bullied a lot at school so I have trust issues. So after a long time of experiencing being bullied I just didn't like people. I tend to see the worse in people, but nowadays I'm not so sure (Jade, semi-structured interview, 19 April 2015).

Jade's description in this extract refers to mindful reflection on emotional experiences which were initiated by mindfulness. Mindful reflection created new knowledge for Jade, which was the realisation that the behaviour of others usually had nothing to do with her. This enabled her to respond differently, indicating new, mindful actions.

For Rochelle, responding differently to her emotions, meant writing about it in her journal and composing poetry. In Rochelle's words:

I write in my journal and I use poetry to get my emotions out. But I guess most of it was trying to just watch it. Which is just a skill that I would like to cultivate more and more in my life. To be able to watch it and not wanting to make it go away or to become calm or make it into something positive. That is a big one I learned is the need to make everything positive. Just to maybe create space for that part of me, to allow it as it is. Maybe I am allowed to be angry. How I still want to do something with it. Make it something positive. I really really struggle with it. I guess culturally there is a certain sense that you need to overcome stuff. That you need to make it better and more beautiful, positive. So it is quite . . . (*pause*) a new space. That is a big thing. In a way it is a bit of a relief. It is quite exhausting to always make things positive and to fix things (Rochelle, semi-structured interview, 23 May 2015).

As a result of mindful reflection, Rochelle became aware of her need to avoid negative emotions or to turn it into something positive. Yet, for the first time she was allowing herself to 'feel' these emotions, which points to the notion of 'acceptance', one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme curriculum as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 27). Rochelle also recognised that it might be as a result of cultural influences that she dealt with her emotions in the way she did. However, after participating in the MBSR programme, she related to her emotions differently. She started writing in her journal and composed poetry to deal effectively with her emotions, indicating new, mindful actions concerning the emotion.

The adult learners clearly demonstrated that there is a relationship between awareness of emotions prompted by mindfulness and cognitive functions of the mind. This is what Merriam (2008a, p. 96) refers to as “significant learning”. The cognitive processes illustrated in this section, referred to as ‘mindful reflection’, can be associated with self-reflection, which is central to the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation as identified by Habermas (1972). Furthermore, it can also be linked to critical reflection which is one of the main themes of transformative learning theory as developed by Mezirow. Mezirow (1990a) refers to the importance of new actions to indicate transformative learning and emancipation. Therefore, it was important that new actions pertaining to mindful reflection were also considered. The data revealed that adult learners, who engaged in mindful reflection as a result of awareness of an emotional experience, reported new knowledge and actions, indicating transformation and emancipation.

6.3.4. Organising Theme Three: Mindfulness of Emotions in Mindful Learning

The analysis process revealed that emotion was a prominent element of mindful learning.

Combining the basic themes of ‘awareness of emotions’ and ‘emotions, mindful reflection and mindful actions’ resulted in the development of the organising theme of ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’.

It was found that mindfulness prompted awareness of embodied emotions, which enabled adult learners to identify emotions that they were previously unaware of, which in turn, indicated new knowledge and embodied learning. Furthermore, this new knowledge initiated mindful reflection, which created additional new knowledge. Therefore, learning included both experiences of emotion located in the body and cognitive processes. The data showed that awareness of emotional experiences often motivated learning through mindful reflection, as adult learners wanted to understand their emotional experiences. Habermas (1972), Mezirow (1981), Ewert (1991) and Cranton and Roy (2003) argue that the desire to grow and develop, or the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, motivates the creation of knowledge within the domain of emancipatory learning. However, these authors do not consider how awareness of emotions can be deemed as learning, as well as to motivate the creation of new knowledge by means of cognitive processes, as suggested in the data. Therefore,

awareness of emotions is not included as learning or as a trigger that can drive the process of knowledge creation within the emancipatory domain of learning. Yet, as will be discussed later, the findings of this study suggest that awareness of emotions, or in other words, embodied learning can encourage an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation and can also shape theoretical concepts pertaining to critical theory and transformative learning theory.

Habermas (1972) recognises self-reflection, as described by the adult learners and referred to as ‘mindful reflection’ during the data analysis process, as rational behaviour associated with an emancipatory-cognitive interest in learning. Therefore, mindful reflection creates a theoretical point of departure, which links the data to the emancipatory learning process. Yet, Habermas did not elaborate on the emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, therefore it was helpful to draw on Mezirow’s (1978, 1981) transformative learning theory at this point. The data analysis revealed that mindful learning often included a cognitive process of mindful reflection. Most of the adult learners who became aware of an emotional experience proceeded to mindful reflection on the experience. The data of this study confirms the view of authors such as Dirkx (2001, 2008), Merriam (2008a), Taylor (2008), Mälkki (2010) and Mälkki and Green (2014), who recognise the important role of emotions in adult education and learning and specifically in relation to Mezirow’s (1978, 1981) transformative learning theory. Mälkki (2010) and Mälkki and Green (2014) argue that emotions indicate assumptions that require reflection. It is believed that if a person can accept and acknowledge their emotions, it can be the starting point for critical reflection which may result in perspective transformation with the potential for emancipation. This view was confirmed by the data because emotional awareness, or embodied learning, encouraged mindful reflection among many adult learners.

There was evidence of two of the central themes of transformative learning theory, namely a new awareness of experience and critical reflection on experience. However, there was little evidence in the data to substantiate another prominent theme associated with transformative learning theory ‘rational discourse’, which refers to discussions with other people. In transformative learning theory, it is suggested that all three themes should be present to inspire new action, which according to Mezirow (1990a, 2000), is an indication of perspective transformation. Yet, the data indicated that adult learners

acted differently as a result of awareness of emotions and cognitive processes of mindful reflection. As a result, I concluded that a combination of an awareness of emotions and mindful reflection was sufficient to inspire new actions.

Authors such as Mälkki (2010) and Mälkki and Green (2014) do not suggest an approach to adult learning and education that could encourage awareness of emotions and potentially inspire critical reflection, new actions and perspective transformation. However, the data in my study signalled that mindfulness may epitomise such an approach. Mindful learning often includes the acknowledgement of emotions, and it was found that adult learners, who participated in the MBSR programme, were previously unaware of emotions or ignored them. This notion points to the belief that learning is located in the body. Once adult learners were able to recognise these emotions, it initiated the process of critical reflection which can be deemed cognitive processes of learning. Therefore, the data indicated that an educational approach, aimed at emancipatory learning through perspective transformation, should include methods that promote emotional awareness, such as mindfulness, with the potential to support learning located in both the body and the mind.

6.4. GLOBAL THEME: MINDFULNESS AND EMANCIPATORY MINDFUL LEARNING

During the data analysis process the global theme, or the most significant theme that illustrated the primary argument in the data, was ‘mindfulness and emancipatory mindful learning’. This global theme emerged as a result of the combination of the three organising themes of an ‘emancipatory interest in mindful learning’, ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ and ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’.

The organising theme ‘an emancipatory interest in mindful learning’ showed that adult learners had an emancipatory-cognitive interest in learning. People participated in the MBSR programme because they wanted to be emancipated from stress, anxiety, depression and addiction. During the data analysis process, a disorientating dilemma, as identified by Mezirow (1981), was seen as similar to an emancipatory-cognitive interest in learning. In the data, stress, anxiety, depression and addiction represented disorientating dilemmas that motivated mindful learning. According to transformative learning theory, a disorientating dilemma often prompts learning and the data in this study confirmed this theoretical assumption. Although adult learners viewed their need

for emancipation from their disorientating dilemmas as an individual problem, the data indicated that especially stress and anxiety, was potentially a broader social problem, because the majority of adult learners listed these two factors as the reason for their participation. According to Delanty (2011) and Brookfield (2005b), a critical theoretical perspective can investigate issues on a macro level, which relates to social and ideological issues, but it can also consider issues on a micro level, which looks at the individual in relation to these issues. The organising theme an ‘emancipatory interest in mindful learning’, takes into account individual problems in relation to social and ideological issues. In this way, it creates a theoretical point of departure to analyse mindful learning, using a critical theoretical perspective and identifying social and ideological issues that may have an impact on the individual. However, investigating the broader social and ideological issues that prompt the emancipatory-cognitive interest in mindful learning, was beyond the scope of this study.

The data showed that experience was central to the process of learning. Transformative learning theory acknowledges the value of experience, but the experience that may lead to transformation is considered to be a disorientating dilemma. The data illustrated that, although the experience of a disorientating dilemma represented the motivation for participation, the transformation itself was not based on this experience. Rather, transformation and learning stemmed from the awareness of new experiences that were initiated by mindfulness and mindful learning, such as ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ and ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’.

The organising themes of ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ and ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’ showed that in mindful learning, the body and emotions are prominent in the process of knowledge creation. An academic literature search revealed that learning through awareness of the body and emotions is referred to as embodied learning (Merriam et al., 2007; Freiler, 2008). The data in my study showed that the adult learners often ignored the body and emotions, but mindfulness enabled them to recognise the knowledge available through the body and emotions, or in other words, it brought about embodied learning. This tendency to ignore the body and emotions points to a previous meaning perspective that did not include the body and emotions in the knowledge creation process. This meaning perspective is typical in Western society, where cognitive learning is dominant and

other types of learning, related to the body and emotions, are mostly ignored. This Western perspective on learning is highlighted by Beckett and Morris (2001), Todd (2001), Kerka (2002), Horst (2008), Van Woerkom (2010), Berila (2014) and Shahjahan (2015), amongst others. In feminist theory, this cultural prejudice, reflected in a Western perspective on learning, is discussed by authors such as Michelson (1998, p. 218), Brickhouse (2001), Jordi (2011) and Sodhi and Cohen (2012). These authors also linked a Western perspective on learning to the masculine dominating the feminine. I recognised how a feminist theoretical perspective could influence the data analysis and interpretation, yet during this study I did not use a feminist theoretical framework. I decided not to explore this phenomenon in detail and rather to focus on the cultural prejudice associated with a Western perspective on learning.

Mezirow (1990a, p. 143) posits that meaning perspectives, such as a Western perspective on learning, can limit the comprehension of new data and that we often avoid considering data that do not fit in this meaning perspective. By including the body and emotions in the knowledge-creation process, which is known as embodied learning, the data indicated that a meaning perspective has been adjusted. This meaning perspective, which was shared among adult learners, points to social and ideological influences that create the meaning perspective. By identifying a shared meaning perspective, such as a Western perspective on learning that was transformed through mindful learning, mindfulness can be linked to social change. It points to a theoretical opening for exploring the social and ideological influences that create the meaning perspective.

The data showed that when the body is included in the process of knowledge creation and learning, emotions are often central. This outcome signals a theoretical gap, as neither Habermas nor Mezirow, explored the role of the body and emotions in the knowledge-creation and learning process. Furthermore, it highlights social and ideological influences, in the form of a Western perspective on learning, which determine that the body and emotions are ignored in adult education and learning. Yet, as a result of mindful learning, the adult learners included the body and emotions in the knowledge-creation process. This change indicated that potentially a meaning perspective – in this case a Western perspective on learning – was adjusted. As a result of the link of this meaning perspective to social or ideological influences, it can be

argued that the adult learners were emancipated from ideological influences, albeit unconsciously. Adult learners did not recognise how social and ideological forces determined what they considered to be knowledge, yet mindful learning changed their meaning perspective and they proceeded towards emancipation from this perspective. This prompted the identification of the concept of ‘emancipatory mindful learning’.

The inclusion of emotions in the process of learning, as suggested by the data, highlights the focus on rationality, which excludes emotions, within a critical theoretical framework. Callahan (2004, p. 75) declares that emotion is “an essential component of critical thought”. Yet, critical theory and transformative learning theory focus on transformation and emancipation, be it on a social or individual level. Furthermore, these theories do not recognise the importance of emotions in the transformative and emancipatory learning process and they rely on rationality to achieve emancipation. The data suggest that the body and emotions should be included in a critical approach to transformative and emancipatory learning and that mindful learning, which include the body and emotions in learning, may represent a new dimension of emancipatory learning that was not recognised by Mezirow.

Mindful learning brings awareness to the experience of the body and emotions and creates new knowledge for the adult learner. This new awareness has the potential to stimulate mindful reflection, especially an awareness of emotions that create more new knowledge. Therefore, learning is located in both the body and the mind. This mindful learning has the potential to generate mindful actions based on new knowledge. Habermas (1972; 1984), Mezirow (1990a) and Ewert (1991) argue that perspective transformation and emancipation are only truly realised when an individual is acting in a new way. These authors link the rational, cognitive processes of self-reflection or critical reflection, to the motivation to act differently. Conversely, the data suggest that evidence of mindful reflection was not always present, even if there was evidence of new, mindful actions. Mindful learning, which includes an awareness of the experience of the body and emotions, is thus sufficient to motivate new actions. Mindful learning prompts a new theoretical insight, that ‘emancipatory mindful learning’ is a way to support transformative and emancipatory learning. This was not recognised by Habermas or Mezirow within a critical theoretical framework. The data also highlight that the body and emotions are central to a critical approach to emancipatory learning

and that mindful learning should be included in the emancipatory learning process to complement cognitive processes of learning.

6.5. SUMMARY

In this chapter I described the emergence of three organising themes, when the identified basic themes pertaining to participation in the MBSR programme are combined. Merging the three organising themes, namely an ‘emancipatory interest in learning’, ‘mindfulness of the body in mindful learning’ and ‘mindfulness of emotions in mindful learning’ resulted in the global theme of ‘mindfulness and emancipatory mindful learning’. This theme illustrates that adult learners in this study were moved towards emancipation, from a shared meaning perspective, through mindfulness training.

The data suggest that mindful learning is motivated by an emancipatory-cognitive interest in learning and that the body and emotions, or embodied learning, should be included in the process of emancipatory learning, whether it is focused on individual or social emancipation. The findings converge with the view of authors such as Callahan (2004) and Dirkx (2012) that emotions is an important aspect of critical theory, transformation and emancipation. However, it was pointed out that there is very little evidence of the body or emotions being included in the academic literature that is related to a critical theoretical perspective on learning. This lack of consideration of the body and emotions, in terms of learning, is typical of a Western perspective on learning and suggests that social and ideological forces determine this meaning perspective. Adult learners progressed towards emancipation, although unconsciously, from these social and ideological forces, or a Western perspective on learning, through mindful learning. This movement towards emancipation suggests ‘emancipatory mindful learning’.

The data validate arguments by authors such as Langer (1993); Taylor (1997, 1998, 2001), Baumgartner, (2001)³⁵; Orr (2002); Duerr, Zajonc and Dana (2003), Callahan (2004) and Dirkx (2012) that other forms of learning should be explored to encourage emancipatory learning. The data analysis process of this study suggests that mindful learning is such an approach. The findings create new theoretical knowledge, that

³⁵ Baumgartner cite authors such as Clark and Wilson, 1991; Lucas, 1994 and McDonald, Cervero and Courtenay, 1999

supports emerging theoretical trends, which point to the importance of the body and emotions within a critical theoretical framework. Furthermore, it reveals the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change and implies the possibility that mindfulness could provide a foundation for transformative and emancipatory learning in the field of adult education and learning. In Chapter 7, I use narrative analysis to illustrate how ‘emancipatory mindful learning’, as identified during the thematic analysis process, influenced the lives of six adult learners.



CHAPTER 7

STORIES OF MINDFUL LEARNING THAT SUPPORTS TRANSFORMATIVE AND EMANCIPATORY LEARNING

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Following on the thematic analysis discussed in Chapter 6 and the identification of the global theme ‘emancipatory mindful learning’, in this chapter I explore, in more detail, how emancipatory mindful learning as a result of the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme, as a mindfulness-based adult learning programme, influenced the lives of adult learners. I use narrative analysis to analyse the experience of six adult learners in order to support the process of theory building and the creation of new knowledge about mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. I explore, through the stories of the six adult learners, the possibility of mindfulness as a foundation for transformative and emancipatory learning. Based on the data analysis and theorising processes, I present my findings, recommendations and conclusions in Chapter 8.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the narrative analysis used in this study is rooted in a four-step process, which was developed from the academic literature, and enabled me to develop a story map to analyse each story of the adult learners. The first step was to establish the essence of the story, in other words, the summary or abstract. This was followed by the second step during which I examined ‘temporality’, which refers to the adult learner’s past, present and future. The third step focused on ‘sociality’, or interactions with others and the environment. Finally, in the fourth step I analysed the dimension of ‘place’, which denotes the influence of the environment and the situation of the story teller (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Elliot, 2005; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor, Orr, 2007; Wang & Geale, 2015). Similar to the approach of Richmond (2002), I found it useful to develop a story map for each adult learner, based on the four steps in the narrative analysis process.

Stories of mindful learning that generate transformation and emancipation were included in this chapter to illustrate how emancipatory mindful learning, as identified during the thematic data analysis, influenced the lives of the adult learners. The narrative analysis follows on the thematic data analysis in Chapter 6 and is a deeper and

more elaborate exploration of the data in terms of the global theme ‘mindfulness and emancipatory mindful learning’. The stories illustrate how, prior to the MBSR programme, adult learners’ awareness and learning were limited to the cognitive and rational, and how it suppressed the body and emotions as a source for learning and knowledge production. Through emancipatory mindful learning, they progressed towards being emancipated from a typically Western perspective on learning. Emancipatory mindful learning also enabled them to embrace the body and embodied emotions as a source of knowledge and learning. The data also show that learning and a new awareness of the body and emotions, rather than cognitive, rational knowledge, motivates new actions.

7.2. THE STORIES OF SIX ADULT LEARNERS

In the following section I provide a detailed analysis of the stories of six adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme. These stories illustrate how mindful learning influenced the lives of these adult learners.

7.2.1. Derick: Mindful Learning and the Value of Non-Cognitive Learning

Table 7.1: Story map: Derick

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE Story map of adult learner
1. Abstract	Mindfulness enabled Derick to include the body and emotions in the process of knowledge creation and learning, prompting the identification of embodied learning and the first step towards emancipation from a Western perspective on learning.
2. Sociality: Interactions with others Social and cultural influences	Derick referred to conversations he had with his ex-girlfriend’s brother. He made an appointment with anthropologists at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to discuss their research. He had interactions with his colleagues. Derick referred to his colleagues, who would not consider “soft nonsense”, like anthropology, as science. His colleagues valued cognitive and scientific knowledge, indicating a specific meaning perspective on what was deemed useful and valuable knowledge.

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
3. Temporality Past Present Future	<p>Derick remembered how he became interested in science.</p> <p>He indicated that he did not consider his body and emotions before participating in the MBSR programme, which points to a Western perspective on learning on what is considered useful and valuable knowledge.</p> <p>He considered other types of knowledge, pertaining to the body and emotions for the first time after attending the MBSR programme.</p> <p>He considered others' research in anthropology instead of dismissing it.</p> <p>He implied that he would in future consider other types of knowledge, both personally and professionally.</p>
4. Place Background Information	<p>The meeting took place in a coffee shop chosen by Derick.</p> <p>Derick is a medical doctor from Germany who came to South Africa to specialise in tuberculosis research.</p>

Derick's story illustrates how he valued cognitive knowledge, while disregarding any other type of knowledge, before attending the MBSR programme. It seems that mindfulness, which initiated emancipatory mindful learning, enabled him to look at the body and emotions as a source of knowledge, with the potential to influence his actions. This signifies the first steps towards emancipating him from a Western perspective on learning that determines that only cognitive information has value and that rational, cognitive knowledge is the only way to justify actions. As a result, it appears that he became more open to new ways to learn and generate knowledge, both professionally and personally.

Derick wanted to be interviewed at a coffee shop close to his office. The interview was conducted after he had finished work for the day because he did not want to feel rushed to return to work. Although the coffee shop was busy, I believe we were both comfortable in the environment and that Derick was able to speak freely. Derick was a 38-year old medical doctor originally from Germany. He came to South Africa in 2008 to work with a well-known South African pulmonologist. Derick stayed in the country because there were more research opportunities in tuberculosis, his specific field of

interest, in South Africa than in Germany. At the time of the interview, Derick worked at a private medical research company based in South Africa, with his research focused on tuberculosis. He referred to himself as a scientist, saying that he was always attracted to the scientific side of being a doctor:

Well I think when I was in my final years of high school and my girlfriend at the time, her brother was in medical school. And he often told me about medicine and how it is to study medicine and it kind of fascinated me. And people ask me oh it must be great to be helping people all the time but that was never my main driver to become a doctor. I always found the scientific side of it more interesting. I think of myself as a scientist (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

From this transcription, it is evident that Derick was more interested in the scientific side of being a doctor and had very limited connection to any emotional aspects of his profession. He expressed his fascination with Western science, demonstrating how he valued cognitive knowledge and how this motivated him to become a doctor. He did not indicate any emotional reasons for becoming a doctor, referring to himself as a scientist. It creates the impression that he distanced himself from the emotional aspects that may be part of a doctor's work, preferring to think of himself as a scientist rather than a doctor. He continued:

I am interested in research and how things work and function. I still enjoy being a doctor, making a diagnosis and helping people get better but it was never really that altruistic reason. I enjoy looking at the developments in the medical world and it just fascinates me" (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

This fascination was clear from the enthusiastic way he talked about his work and new developments in scientific knowledge:

If I look back at when I started specialising six years ago, the drugs we have now to treat lung disease compared to what we had six years ago. And some diseases, some infectious diseases that used to be incurable a couple years ago, you can cure now. I find that, it is still after almost 20 years in the field, I still find it interesting and challenging (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

He once again emphasised that emotional, altruistic reasons were not the motivating factors for him to pursue his research:

I met my current boss at Tygerberg, while I was still specialising. We did a research project together and he got me interested in this side of things. So I thought clinical trials why not? But I never have any contact with clinical studies. The people who participate in the studies. I am interested in the science (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

Derick confirms the centrality of cognitive, scientific knowledge as the reason why he enjoyed his work. In this extract he clearly illustrates that there was no emotional interest in clinical study participants. He referred to them as “clinical studies” which appeared to distance him even further from these clinical study participants and, in my opinion, allows him to think of them from a scientific perspective. It was obvious that Derick valued scientific knowledge, which reflects a Western perspective on learning. However, during the narrative interview he described how, as a result of mindfulness and emancipatory mindful learning, he became more aware of the possibility of knowledge related to his body and emotions:

What I learned is to listen to my body and to listen to my feelings more than I used to. So if I have to make a decision, do I go, do I attend this function or not, then previously I would probably just say yes of course because it is expected of me. But I wouldn't really listen to myself, how do I really feel about it? You know, not that it always changes my decisions but I look into me a lot more. What are my thoughts about this? What are my feelings . . . I am a bit more sensitised to how my body feels (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

It seemed as though Derick had become more open to alternative types of learning and knowledge creation. In the preceding extract, he describes a new awareness of the body and emotions, which points to ‘emancipatory mindful learning’. As a result, when making decisions and taking actions, he did not rely on cognitive knowledge exclusively, as he did before. Derick no longer believed or assumed that his mind was the only reliable source of information, he now included awareness of the body as well as his emotions when making a decision. Furthermore, Derick describes how he engaged in a process of mindful reflection pertaining to his new awareness of the body and emotions. By asking himself what his thoughts were about a particular issue, he combined the awareness of his body and emotions with cognitive processes, and the knowledge that was created in this way influenced his actions. Cultivating mindfulness and mindful learning enabled Derick to consider alternative sources of knowledge

before making a decision and points to the acknowledgement of the body as a source of learning and knowledge. This realisation refers to the concept ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’.

Derick not only revealed a new approach and openness to other types of knowledge in his personal life, he also revealed a new approach to producing work-related knowledge. Derick explained how he previously focused exclusively on the medical science related to his research. However, after the MBSR programme he was willing, for the first time, to include information from the social sciences in his research. This is what he said:

The whole course made me a lot more open. I will give you an example. I had a meeting a week ago with two ladies from UCT, they are anthropologists and for us, our studies are based on old school medicine. That is like most of my colleagues would probably not consider that science. You know all of that soft, soft nonsense... (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

With these statements, Derick associated with what he referred to as “old school medicine” and, similar to his colleagues, previously would not have deemed anthropology a science. Therefore, the knowledge that is produced through anthropological research, was referred to as “soft, soft nonsense” and can be easily dismissed. Yet, mindful learning created the possibility that this Western meaning perspective may not necessarily be true. He continued:

...but that research group at UCT they have a lot of research on tuberculosis from a social science and social science anthropology point of view and that was very interesting. And I heard their talk and afterwards made an appointment with them. And if I have not done the course I don't think if I would have contacted them. I think it made me a lot more open to other things besides, you know, sort of real hard core medical-based science (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

In this extract, Derick admits that he previously believed that the social sciences had no contribution to make to the field of medical research, yet, mindful learning made him more open to considering other possibilities than the medical research field. In my opinion, this can also be associated with a ‘beginner’s mind’, one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 24) which refers to looking at things in a new way. Derick explored the possibility that other types of knowledge

may be able to make a contribution to his research on tuberculosis and took new actions to explore this possibility further by making an appointment with the anthropologists. While he used to agree with the idea that anthropological research had no real value, he was now more open to accepting knowledge created in this way. In his words:

A couple of months ago I wouldn't have taken them seriously and now I realise there is value to that. Before I thought of this as sort of airy fairy stuff. I have now experienced myself that there is value to that (Derick, narrative interview, 10 June 2015).

These statements give the impression that Derick learned to value alternative types of knowledge and that he was incorporating new types of knowledge-creation processes in his personal as well as his professional life. Derick's story illustrates how he progressed towards emancipation from a Western perspective on learning, which denotes cognitive knowledge and excludes other types of knowledge. Emancipatory mindful learning enabled him to recognise and incorporate other types of knowledge, both in his personal and professional life, which he previously disregarded. Habermas (1972, p. 314) compares emancipation to "autonomy and responsibility" and Derick's story reveals movement towards independence from a Western perspective on learning. Furthermore, it seems that by including knowledge that he previously disregarded, he is taking responsibility for his own learning.

Derick's story illuminates the theoretical concepts pertaining to critical theory and transformative learning theory. Critical theory and Habermas's theoretical concept of an emancipatory-cognitive interest in knowledge creation, rely on rationality and the ability to be self-reflective to create new knowledge. Cranton and Roy (2003) refer to this notion as "the capacity to be aware and critical of ourselves and our social and cultural context". Self-reflection promotes the possibility to recognise the cultural as well as social standards and values that were inflicted on us and influenced our knowledge. Derick demonstrated awareness of both himself and his social context when he talked about his work environment. He referred to his colleagues who only believed in "hard core medical-based science" as knowledge, which pointed to a recognition of his own social context. He also admitted that he had shared this belief, saying that he previously regarded the work of anthropologists as "airy fairy stuff". Derick recognised ideological and social influences without any prompts from the MBSR programme

curriculum, suggesting the potential for mindfulness to encourage critical thinking with the potential to challenge ideological beliefs. Brookfield (2001, 2012) suggests that critical thinking must focus on ideology to prompt emancipation, which seems to explain Derick's critical thinking. It is important to note that the process of critical thinking was unconscious and Derick did not consciously engage in ideological critique aimed at emancipation. Yet, it demonstrates that mindfulness and mindful learning has the potential to inspire this type of critical thinking and ideological critique.

Demonstrating emancipatory mindful learning, after participation in the MBSR programme, Derick did not rely on rational, cognitive processes exclusively any more to make decisions and guide his actions. As a consequence of emancipatory mindful learning, he started to include 'the body as a site of knowledge production and learning'. Derick described how he started to act differently as a result of emancipatory mindful learning. For instance, he made an appointment with the anthropologists after listening to their presentation. This willingness to act differently is central to transformative and emancipatory learning. If a person is not willing to act in a new way, based on learning and new knowledge, transformation is not fully realised. In Derick's case, his new behaviour indicates that his perspective about what can be considered valuable information was transformed. His new awareness, combined with new actions, resembles perspective transformation with the potential to transform and emancipate. The data suggest that Derick progressed towards emancipation from ideological and social influences reflected in a Western perspective on learning that excludes the body and emotions from the knowledge-creation process.

Derick confirmed this epistemological shift by stating: "I have now experienced myself that there is value to that", indicating that his own experience of emancipatory mindful learning was a crucial element that initiated a new awareness of the body and emotions, social awareness and new actions as described in the earlier transcript. This confirms Mezirow's (1995) view that awareness of experience is central to transformative learning and not only to stimulate cognitive processes of learning. Awareness of the experience of the body and emotion in itself can represent learning. Furthermore, Derick mentioned how he used cognitive processes of mindful reflection to create new knowledge by asking himself: "What are my thoughts about this?" This hints at another important theme of perspective transformation, namely critical reflection. Yet, there is

no evidence of rational discourse with others, which is the third theme of transformative learning theory. Derick did not indicate any discussions with colleagues about his new views on what can be deemed knowledge, he simply relied on his own experience and acted differently. Therefore, Derick’s story indicates that awareness of the experience of the body and emotions, or embodied learning, and cognitive processes of mindful reflection alone, without rational discourse, can result in perspective transformation. Perspective transformation, in turn, supports emancipatory learning and emancipation. However, this process of perspective transformation was an internal process and did not rely on externally communicating with others.

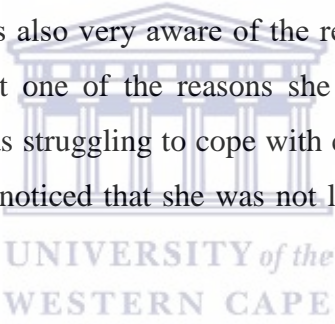
7.2.2. Lydia: Learning to Listen to the Experience of the Body and Emotions due to Mindful Learning

Table 7.2: Story map: Lydia

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
1. Abstract	Lydia, who relied on cognitive and theoretical knowledge, typical of a Western perspective on learning, learned to pay attention to the experience of her body and her emotions and opened herself to new types of knowledge available through the body and emotions, or embodied learning. Lydia also returned to listening to her colleagues, opening herself to new knowledge that may come from others.
2. Sociality: Interactions with others Social and cultural influences	Lydia mentioned interactions with colleagues. The environment at work influenced Lydia. She enrolled for the MBSR programme because of conflict at work. Lydia lived alone, and she emphasised the importance of the work environment to her.
3. Temporality Past Present Future	Lydia experienced a conflict situation at work. She focused on cognitive knowledge only. She was open to the experience of the body and emotions. She listened to others at work. She would continue to listen to colleagues rather than domineering them.
4. Place Background Information	The interview was conducted at Lydia’s house. Lydia had a senior position at work and she was very aware of her responsibilities.

Lydia struggled to listen prior to her exposure to the MBSR programme and mindful learning. This included having difficulty listening to her own body, emotions and others. She found that during the MBSR programme, through mindful learning, she learned how to listen to her body, emotions and others again. In this way, Lydia opened herself to new knowledge and learning that becomes available by engaging with the body, emotions and other people.

Lydia invited me to her house for the interview. This ensured that the interview was conducted in an environment where she felt comfortable. She lived on her own, therefore there were no interruptions during the interview. I observed that Lydia seemed comfortable and confident in the environment she chose. During the interview, Lydia often spoke about her work, indicating that it was very important to her and was a prominent part of her life. She was 60 years old and held a key position at an investment firm as the head of their fund and tax accounting division. Lydia shared that she had a lot of responsibility at work. Not only did she feel responsible for the people who worked for her, but she was also very aware of the responsibility of managing clients' money. She mentioned that one of the reasons she decided to enrol for the MBSR programme was that she was struggling to cope with conflict at work. However, during the MBSR programme she noticed that she was not listening to her own body. This is what she said:


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So prior to that I was just operating in a way that I would call completely unconsciously. Things were just happening. But during the course, a part of it was to (*pause*), kind of just listening to that, it is that you have to be very conscious of what is happening in your body (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

However, it wasn't easy for Lydia to embrace the knowledge that was available through the body. It appeared that she only valued knowledge associated with cognitive processes and the mind: "I got very confused in the beginning because the course says it teaches you to deal with stress and then we started with all these meditation practices. And I was like, okay, when does it get to the theory?" (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

The data show how Lydia expected cognitive processes pertaining to theory which would constitute learning during the MBSR programme. This is evident from her confusion in the beginning when she expected theoretical training and wondered when

the theoretical part would follow. It seemed as though she did not believe that she was learning if she was not learning cognitively, suggesting a Western perspective on learning. She continued:

So in the beginning I had quite a lot of, well, and that is maybe why the body scan is something I am not completely comfortable with because I was in resistance when we were doing it. I was like, where is the logic? Where is the logic? Over time I got to realise my resistance was because I was too much in my head (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

In this interview extract, Lydia describes how she was not only unaware of the knowledge available through awareness of the body, or embodied learning, but she also resisted learning in a non-cognitive way. Lydia's resistance illustrates that it can be a difficult process to change a meaning perspective, such as a Western perspective on learning. Furthermore, mindful learning that challenges a previous meaning perspective may also be met with resistance. Lawrence (2012), however, points out that resistance to embodied learning may be the result of internalised cultural norms, in Lydia's case, an internalised Western perspective on learning. Investigating the resistance to non-cognitive learning was beyond the scope of this study.

However, despite her resistance, Lydia did learn to listen to her body. She explained:

I wasn't always aware of this physical reaction but I became aware of it. When I am rushing around and I am doing doing doing and I am not in that mindful space, then if something happens I can get emotional about it. But when I say emotional it is not emotional towards other people, it is within myself. So my voice will go up (*pause*) and my jaw will clench and I will know that I am tense. So the emotional reaction is also very physical (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

In the preceding extract, Lydia describes how mindfulness and mindful learning enabled her to be more aware of her body and her emotions, one of the main objectives of the MBSR programme as described in Chapter 5, and stimulated embodied learning. She realised that she avoided her emotions:

I am feeling something that I don't want to feel or that I don't want to investigate. I have cop-out techniques like sleeping. Like suddenly having this imperative thought that requires solution immediately. It is not going to wait (*pause*) it is very

important to think about it now. So distracting myself. Ja (*pause*) and zoning out (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

Lydia related that she not only became more aware of her emotions, through physical sensations, but that she also engaged with her emotions cognitively:

“I just noticed it (*pause*) and obviously sometimes it took a little bit longer to notice but then I became very aware that I am using my cop-out techniques. I asked myself what are you avoiding now?” (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

Lydia described how she engaged in mindful reflection as a result of emotional awareness. She asked herself questions such as “what are you avoiding now?” which created the possibility for further learning through cognitive engagement with emotional experiences. Furthermore, it appeared that she also learned to manage herself better in emotional situations. She realised that if she simply allowed her emotions, it had less of an effect on her:

Actually, this interesting thing happened for me. When I mindfully allowed my feelings (*pause*) so when I was feeling (*pause*) like after the mindful walking I was feeling a bit silly (*pause*) and I allowed myself to feel quite silly and then it passed quite quickly (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

She continued:

So I allow more feelings within my general life now. If I am mindful. If I am feeling scared I will allow myself to feel scared and not just push it down and ignore the feeling and get busy. So just allow the feeling and let’s see what comes up after that (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

Based on these statements of Lydia, it seems as though she became less resistant to her emotions, which in my opinion indicates ‘acceptance’, which is one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 27). She now “allowed” her feelings, which point to new, mindful actions. These mindful actions resulted in the emotions passing quickly.

Lydia, through mindful learning, not only learned how to listen to her own body and her emotions, she found that this helped her to also listen to others. She said:

There were some challenging moments for me on the course and yes, I think it was just silly things like *(pause)* that would normally I wouldn't *(pause)* like tone *(pause)* is something. You know when somebody's voice just hits your ear and I would normally just stop listening but actually staying there. Listening *(pause)*, thinking this is not the end of the world. This is just a voice that irritates you. So there were lots of moments like that. That I caught myself not listening and I could notice it *(pause)* and it was fine (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

Learning to listen was specifically useful to her at work. She continued:

Ja *(pause)* I think the biggest thing is that I am back in that space where . . . I am back to listening. Whereas *(pause)* I have a tendency naturally to be very domineering. So I was in that domineering so I have gone back to listening. I prefer that as a management style *(pause)* it works for me and I got my best results from it. When I got into this domineering thing I started domineering for results. And now I am back to listening. And I am more comfortable with that. And the team are more comfortable now because they are feeling me in my old way. They were also struggling in the environment and with me and my domineering (Lydia, narrative interview, 13 August 2015).

Listening to her body, her emotions and others seemed to be at the heart of what Lydia learned during the MBSR programme. For Lydia, mindful learning was about listening to the body and the emotions. And in doing so, Lydia was also able to listen to others again. The data indicate that Lydia, like Derick, learned to appreciate the possibility of new knowledge, that is available through awareness of the body and emotions, or embodied learning. At the beginning of the MBSR programme, she struggled to embrace this new awareness but eventually she learned to pay attention to her body and emotions. This implied that Lydia no longer believed in a Western perspective on learning that exclusively focuses on cognitive knowledge. This change in perspective points to emancipatory mindful learning.

An aspect that was highlighted by Lydia's story, was the new awareness of alternative sources of learning and knowledge that was previously not available to Lydia. She revealed that she was formerly not aware of her body, but through mindfulness and mindful learning she became aware of her body. In this way, the unconscious was brought to the conscious, but this new awareness did not happen as a result of cognitive processes of self-reflection. Dirkx (2012) explains that the development of

consciousness is specific to transformative learning theory, where the development of consciousness is linked to cognitive, rational processes. Yet, Lydia's story illustrates that the unconscious was brought to the conscious through non-cognitive processes and that mindful learning may bring the unconscious to the conscious in a way that was not considered before.

Yet, there was also evidence of cognitive processes such as mindful reflection in the data when Lydia referred to her resistance to body awareness saying "I was in resistance when we were doing it. I was like, where is the logic? Where is the logic?" She also related that she was confused at the beginning of the MBSR programme because there was very little focus on cognitive knowledge, an approach that she did not expect. She asked herself when the theoretical part of the MBSR programme would follow.

This expectation can be linked to a Western meaning perspective on what constitutes learning, which creates the expectation that learning and knowledge creation is an exclusively cognitive process. She eventually came to the conclusion that her resistance to mindful learning, which included awareness of the body and emotions, was because "I was too much in my head". This shows that she became aware of a tendency to focus on cognitive knowledge and it appears that she no longer believed that this was the only source of knowledge. This acknowledgement indicates a transformation in a belief system, or a meaning perspective, that challenged her previous perspective on knowledge. Therefore, transformation was achieved through a new awareness of experience, the emotional experience of resistance, and mindful reflection, with no reference to rational discourse with others. Like Derick, transformation was a personal, internal process for Lydia.

It is important to mention that Lydia indicated that she was more open to listening to her colleagues as a result of mindful learning. Although there is no suggestion in the data that rational discourse influenced her personal transformation process, the openness to listen may advance a process of rational discourse as discussed in the theoretical framework. Therefore, Lydia's story suggests that mindfulness and mindful learning may support rational discourse by encouraging a new willingness to listen.

7.2.3. Sharon: Learning to Acknowledge Emotions due to Mindful Learning

Table 7.3: Story map: Sharon

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
1. Abstract	Sharon previously ignored her emotional experience. Yet, as a result of mindfulness and participation in the MBSR programme, which activated a new awareness of her emotions and embodied learning, she started to reflect on these emotions, thereby creating new knowledge.
2. Sociality: Interactions with others Social and cultural influences	Sharon referred to her relationship with her friends during the interview. Sharon described her mother as “hard”, someone who was “withdrawn from the world” and not in touch with her emotions. Sharon revealed a complicated and difficult relationship with her mother during the interview.
3. Temporality Past Present Future	Sharon’s father was not part of her life when growing up and he was not interested in a relationship with her. Her grandmother passed away and although she admitted to already having a drinking problem, this event made the drinking worse. Working through her emotions “coming up in waves” because she had never dealt with it previously. Continuing to work through her emotions in this way although it was difficult for her.
4. Place Background Information	The meeting took place at a coffee shop of Sharon’s choice. Sharon grew up without a father and a mother who was emotionally unavailable. She also referred to her time at university and events that aggravated her drinking problem.

Sharon was another adult learner who was unable to acknowledge and express her emotions, prior to the MBSR programme, which consequently led to a drinking problem and drop-out of university. The suppression of her emotions resulted in disaster for Sharon, but mindfulness and mindful learning enabled her to be more aware and acknowledge her emotions and learn from them. She learned how to deal with her

emotions in a more constructive way, directing her towards emancipation and away from a Western perspective on learning.

Sharon selected to meet me in a coffee shop for her interview. Sharon was 24 years old at the time and living with her mother. She told me during the interview that she felt more comfortable meeting at a coffee shop where we were able to talk privately. Sharon grew up as an only child with a single mother, as her father left when she was young. She revealed that her father was not involved in her upbringing and although she tried to reconnect with him, he wasn't interested in a relationship with her. Sharon was studying accountancy through Unisa. The year before, she left Stellenbosch University without completing the same course because of a drinking problem. She explained:

I was in Stellenbosch for three years and in my third year I dropped out due to a very traumatic experience with my grandma passing (*pause*) not naturally. I had problems before (*pause*) but that kind of spiked things. I never really cried, I never really went through it. I kind of, I mean if I see someone who I don't know going through a hard time I will experience their emotions but my own I can't. I blocked it so (*pause*) and then I landed up drinking. Because that was kind of the only way I could get my emotions out. My drinking got to a point where I pushed my friends away. I pushed everyone away. And I actually embarrassed myself to a point that the people I were drunk around I actually didn't want to see because I made a fool of myself (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

During the MBSR programme Sharon learned how to work with her emotions in a more constructive manner, although she acknowledged that this was not an easy process. During the interview Sharon clearly described how previously she was unaware of her body and emotions, but mindfulness, which stimulated mindful learning, encouraged awareness of both her body and emotions. She described it in this way:

I actually find it does help me to be aware of it (*pause*) because then I can almost (*pause*) I take a step back and then I say in this situation I feel like physically I want to run away. Or I want to lash out at someone. I want to do something. And then I take a step back because I have identified anxiety. And then once I have done that I can say why am I feeling anxious? So I am pinpointing. So for me that process helps me to deal with it. Understanding what is going on (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

In this extract, Sharon clearly describes how bodily and emotional awareness starts the process of mindful reflection.

Once Sharon became aware of how she previously ignored her emotions, she explored the reasons why she developed this habit. She discovered that this was as a result of childhood experiences. She explained:

I linked this to childhood experiences because I grew up without a father and then I met him and then he didn't want to see me again. I have got a very hard mother, a very difficult mother who doesn't experience emotions so she is very withdrawn from the world and stuff (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

In the preceding extract, Sharon recognises how her lifeworld, as described by Habermas (1987), influenced her beliefs on how the world works. Her mother set an example for her that emotions should not be acknowledged or dealt with, and she assumed that this was the correct way to deal with her emotions, which created a meaning perspective. It is clear from the data that mindful learning as a result of mindfulness, including mindful reflection on her emotions, changed these assumptions.

However, she also mentioned that the experience was not always easy:

But I am still aware of how I am feeling (*pause*) which recently hasn't been that (*pause*) it is not nice. It is obviously good for you but it is difficult. Just to kind of be aware and now you are feeling something. And it might just be something silly but you are aware of it and you have to work through it. It is a lot more effort than not being aware. Which is obviously good (*pause*), I mean I needed that but (*pause*) it is something you can't unlearn. I mean once you are aware you are aware (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

She continued:

So it has helped . . . but like I said it is difficult. It is more difficult to deal with my emotions now. I was someone who kind of blocked my emotions. I never dealt with it which then caused a lot of other issues. So this was perfect for me but I am 24 now and I haven't dealt with emotions properly. So now it is coming in waves. And it is just sitting down and trying to identify them and try to understand them. And (*pause*) because my first reaction will always be anger and then realising the anger is hiding something else. So I am getting there but it is a long process

because I have never felt emotions before (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

In the preceding extract, Sharon explains how mindful learning and the process of mindful reflection as a result of her new awareness of emotions was often a challenging process for her. Although authors such as Mezirow (2000), Mälkki (2010) and Mälkki and Green (2014) recognise that transformative learning can be a difficult and an emotional experience, they do not explore how this may influence learning.

During the narrative interview Sharon also highlighted how mindful learning and her new emotional awareness triggered unpleasant realisations about herself: “I also learned that I am a very insecure person . . . I think the biggest thing I learned is that I am not who I think I was” (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

She elaborated:

If you have to tell somebody how you would describe yourself (*pause*) but the biggest thing for me was that I am actually not as compassionate and all those other personality traits that I thought I had I am actually not. Like I will tell you I am insecure but I didn't really believe it. But during that course I really learned how in depth I am. How, how (*pause*) possessive and jealous. I didn't want to see this but I am. When I walked out of the course I realised I wasn't who I thought [I was when] I was walking in (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

It appears from the data that mindful learning, with the potential to trigger transformation and emancipatory learning, can be a difficult and challenging process that may be met with resistance. Furthermore, the realisation described by Sharon that “I wasn't who I thought [I was when] I was walking in”, especially becoming aware of negative personality traits as described earlier, cannot be easy.

Yet, it seems that mindful learning itself may have helped Sharon through this challenging process and she demonstrated ‘acceptance’, one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme as suggested by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 27). She said:

I have changed but I must admit one thing (*pause*) I don't have (*pause*). I had a lot of guilt when I went into this course because of what I have done in the past and it has helped me to accept myself. So I know I have a lot of faults but . . . accepting yourself and just saying you know what, this is who I am. And just getting rid of

the shame, the guilt. That was a very big thing for me to let go of. So I have learned some stuff but at the same time I have also learned to accept that. If I am a jealous person I am a jealous person. And work on that. Instead of trying to completely ignore it. And embrace who I am (*pause*) so this is who I am (Sharon, narrative interview, 1 September 2015).

As can be seen from this extract, Sharon remarks that she learned that she was a jealous and a possessive person. Yet, it seems that she also learned to accept these aspects of her personality but at the same time she was willing to improve herself in this respect. She also speaks of “getting rid of” and “to let go of” the unpleasant emotions of shame and guilt, indicating another one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme, namely ‘letting go’, as suggested by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 29). Investigating how mindful learning can present certain challenges, as described by Sharon, but also assist one in overcoming these challenges was beyond the scope of this study.

Sharon’s story highlights that although it was difficult and challenging, through mindfulness and mindful learning, she learned how to acknowledge her emotions and to create new knowledge as a result of this new awareness, which is the primary objective of the MBSR programme. In this way, mindful learning created the possibility of emancipation from a Western meaning perspective on learning that she formed as child, when she was taught to ignore her emotions, also in the knowledge-creation process. This can be considered ‘emancipatory mindful learning’ as described in Chapter 6. Furthermore, this new awareness of emotions, or embodied learning, represents a new consciousness which can be linked to transformative learning (Dirkx, 2012). Similar to Lydia’s story, Sharon’s story also reveals the notion that mindful learning, which activates embodied learning, is an aspect of emancipatory learning and the transformation process that has not been considered before. Furthermore, embodied learning paves the way to bring the unconscious to the conscious.

As with most adult learners, Sharon did not engage in a process of rational discourse with others, signalling that this may not be central to the process of transformation as a result of mindfulness. However, she acknowledged the context pertaining to her old habit of ignoring her emotions, when she explained how the environment in which she grew up determined the pattern of ignoring her emotions. She recognised social influences that shaped her meaning perspective and by challenging and adjusting these

she unconsciously engaged in a critique of these influences. Similar to Derick, who also recognised social influences that shaped his previous meaning perspectives, Sharon’s story points to the potential of mindfulness and mindful learning to promote critical thinking that engages in ideological and social critique.

7.2.4. Irene: Facing the Past due to Mindful Learning

Table 7.4: Story map: Irene

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
1. Abstract	Irene spent many years ignoring her own emotions. As a result of mindful learning, which initiated embodied learning, she was now learning to acknowledge her emotions for the first time.
2. Sociality: Interactions with others Social and cultural influences	Irene referred to interactions with her new husband, talking to him about her past. Irene’s ex-husband was an alcoholic and abusive. She was married to him for 18 years and did not divorce him because she believed that it would be best for her children to stay in the marriage. During her first marriage she learned to suppress her own emotions in order to survive.
3. Temporality Past Present Future	Irene was in an abusive marriage and made the difficult decision of leaving her husband. Irene was ignoring her emotions. Irene started to face her emotions for the first time and was finding ways to deal with these emotions such as talking to her new husband or writing about her emotions. Irene realised that there were things that happened in the past that were still causing her to be anxious and that she needed to deal with these in the future.
4. Place Background Information	The interview took place at a coffee shop. Irene grew up in a small mining town, and later moved to Cape Town. She qualified as a nurse and married at a young age.

Irene told a story of ignoring her own emotions in order to survive an abusive marriage. She divorced her abusive husband and remarried at a later stage, but she still had to deal

with the trauma of her previous marriage. Ignoring her emotions was in line with a Western meaning perspective on learning that discourages awareness of emotions. However, during the MBSR programme, through mindful learning and embodied learning, Irene learned that she had to acknowledge and deal with her emotions if she wanted to let go of her past.

Irene was 45 years old at the time of the interview and worked as an occupational nurse at a manufacturing company. She preferred meeting me at a coffee shop after work for the interview and seemed comfortable and at ease in the environment. She told me that she grew up in a small mining town and completed most of her schooling there before the family moved to Cape Town during her final years of high school. After school she continued her studies in Cape Town and qualified as a nurse. At the age of nineteen, she met and fell in love with her first husband and by the time she was twenty years old they were married. A year later she fell pregnant with her first daughter, and a second daughter followed two years later. Unfortunately, it was an unhappy marriage as Irene's husband was an alcoholic and later became physically abusive. She explained:

My ex-husband was an alcoholic, he had a split personality. He was the nicest guy when he was sober but it happened less and less in the 18 years that we were married. But my thing was, you know, we are married for better and for worse (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

Irene related that she stayed in the marriage not only because of the commitment she had made to her ex-husband, but also for the sake of her children. She was concerned for their safety should she get a divorce:

I was aware that I was being abused but I just pushed it down and tried to push on. If I think back now I realise I should have left when the kids were three and five years old. It would have been easier for them. But it is easy to say that afterwards, you just do what you think is the best at the time (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

She eventually realised, when her children were in high school, that it would be best for her children if she left her husband:

I had two small children and I was trying to hide things from them. All the time I was just hiding things from them, and trying to protect them. At the time I thought

I was doing the right thing, I just wanted them to grow up in a normal house, or at least it looked that way from the outside. But it started getting to me when they started growing up and they actually started telling me that they can't bring friends home because daddy will embarrass them. And then I realised they do notice it; they do know what is going on. So later, with time, he became physically abusive but I wanted to stay until the kids were done with school. When they started high school I realised that it was getting really bad and I had to get out. Also financially, I don't think the kids would have been able to go to school if I stayed in that relationship. So yes, it was the right decision to leave but it was really, really difficult (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

For many years Irene's husband and daughters were her priority and she always did what was best for them while ignoring her own needs and emotions. Even when she made the decision to leave her husband, she did not do it for herself but rather for the sake of her children. After divorcing her husband, Irene started the difficult process of rebuilding her life. She managed to get back on her feet and later met and fell in love with her current husband. However, Irene never really processed the trauma of her first marriage, but during the MBSR programme it became apparent that it was still causing her anxiety. She noted:

“I am realising this for the first time now, I don't think I was always this anxious, so uncertain, it was because of the relationship” (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

When Irene, through mindful learning, learned to pay attention to herself, her body and her emotions, and not ignoring it, it seemed that experiences from the past started returning to her, awakening her awareness. She said:

I think there are lots of things that happened in my previous marriage (*pause*). Bad things that I didn't deal with (*pause*) and I was in a survival mode for a long time and I didn't deal with it (*pause*). I had to survive for the kids and then I fell in love and now it is starting to pop up. So now I have to start dealing with all the hurt that I didn't deal with before. It came up and I just realised I have to deal with these things (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

This was not an easy process. She continued:

“It was really difficult and traumatic. I felt a bit depressed (*pause*). I was really wondering if the course is really good for you. I was really doubting whether I should continue with it” (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

She explained:

Negative things started coming up. There were things, emotions from the past, when we got to the third class it just started feeling that things are just getting too much. I started thinking a lot about things that happened in the past. And that apparently is normal that it start happening. So I had to decide either I deal with it or I put it aside (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

As was the case with Lydia and Sharon, Irene admitted that the process of mindful learning and becoming aware of emotions, or embodied learning, was not always an easy process. However, she persevered and eventually was grateful that she completed the MBSR programme, saying:

I am glad I did. I had a breakthrough. I just realised you know this is coming up, I have to deal with this (*pause*) and I spoke to my husband about some of these things. Just to get rid of it and it really helped. I could really face it for the first time (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

Although Irene found the process of mindful learning challenging, she dealt with her past experiences by sharing it with her new husband, but she also found other ways to deal with it:

“I started thinking a lot about things that happened in the past. You know I really like to write, so now I try to write everything down and just get it out of my system”(Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

During the MBSR programme, Irene had to learn to stop ignoring her own needs and emotions that formed during the years that she was in an abusive marriage. Once she found the courage to acknowledge these emotions, the experiences from the past that were previously ignored, started coming back to her awareness. Irene realised that she had to find ways to deal with these experiences and found that talking to her new husband or writing about her experiences helped her to process what had happened in the past. She acknowledged that this process was continuous and that there were still things that she had to deal with in the future:

I do realise there are more things that I have to deal with. I have realised that these things that I am not dealing with are causing anxiety in my life. So I have to deal with these things to just really be able to let go of it and really be at peace with it. I just want peace and quiet (Irene, narrative interview, 7 May 2015).

In the preceding statement, Irene indicates that she wanted to “let go” of the trauma she experienced, although she might not be able to do it yet. This is indicative of one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme, ‘letting go’, as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 29). It appears that Irene learned the value of acknowledging her emotions, which emancipated her from the habit of simply ignoring her emotions and indicates the transformation of a meaning perspective. Therefore, it seems that cultivating mindfulness and mindful learning, emancipated her from a Western perspective on learning and can be considered emancipatory mindful learning as discussed in Chapter 6. During the MBSR programme Irene finally found the courage to bring awareness to her emotions, which then initiated mindful reflection about events from the past and her abusive marriage. She realised that she still had to deal with her past, which she thought she had left behind. In this way, mindful reflection brought awareness to things she was unaware of. According to Habermas (1972), she brought the unconscious to the conscious in this way. It also revealed to her how her past was still influencing her, which, according to Habermas (1972), Mezirow (1981), Ewert (1991) and Cranton and Roy (2003) can be linked to a process of creating emancipatory knowledge.

The experience of emotional awareness and embodied learning was central to the process of transformation and emancipation as demonstrated by Irene’s story. Instead of ignoring her emotions, Irene found new ways to deal with these emotions such as talking to her new husband or writing about her experience. Irene did not create new cognitive, rational knowledge about her abusive marriage during the MBSR programme. Yet, the data show that she decided to deal with the consequences of this relationship for the first time. Cognitive, rational knowledge did not inspire Irene to take action to deal with and let go of her past; it was her newly found emotional awareness and learning about emotions that prompted these new actions. Irene’s story reveals a theoretical position that critical theory and a critical approach to learning, such as transformative learning theory, should include emotional knowledge-creation processes. It is emotional knowledge, not cognitive, rational knowledge, that inspires people to take action. The data thus point to the potential of mindful learning as such an approach.

7.2.5. Delia: Mindful Learning that Inspires Action

Table 7.5: Story map: Delia

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
<p>1. Abstract</p>	<p>Delia was depressed before she attended the MBSR programme, but learning awareness of the positive aspects in her life made her more optimistic.</p> <p>Mindful learning, especially awareness of the body and embodied learning, inspired her to take action to take better care of herself.</p> <p>Mindful learning, especially awareness of emotions and embodied learning, inspired her to take action to protect the environment and to stop eating meat.</p>
<p>2. Sociality:</p> <p>Interactions with others</p> <p>Social and cultural influences</p>	<p>Delia referred to educating her colleagues about environmentally responsible behaviour.</p> <p>Delia's work environment was very important to her. She referred to her colleagues who loved her, but she did not mention any friends.</p>
<p>3. Temporality</p> <p>Past</p> <p>Present</p> <p>Future</p>	<p>Delia divorced her husband and lost custody of her son because of her depression and a drinking problem.</p> <p>Delia was depressed, lonely and thought life was not worth living.</p> <p>She was aware of environmental issues, but did not do anything about it.</p> <p>She used to eat meat.</p> <p>She started to feel more positive about life and realised that there were people who cared for her.</p> <p>She started to take care of herself and the environment.</p> <p>She made time to tell her colleagues about environmental issues.</p> <p>She became a vegetarian.</p> <p>Delia will continue behaving in an environmentally responsible way and educating those around her.</p>
<p>4. Place</p> <p>Background Information</p>	<p>The meeting took place in a coffee shop.</p> <p>Both her parents had passed away and she had very little contact with any of her family members, including her son.</p> <p>Delia had suffered from depression for many years.</p>

Delia struggled with depression for many years, however, during the MBSR programme she learned a new awareness of experience and to notice the positive aspects in life. The new awareness of experience included her body and emotions, which inspired her to take better care of herself and ignited a passion in her for taking care of the environment and encouraging others to do the same. This passion for the environment included becoming a vegetarian.

Like most of the adult learners, Delia preferred to meet me at a coffee shop. She was 50 years old at the time, and had been working at a large corporate company in a clerical position for many years. She grew up in Johannesburg, but moved to Cape Town with her husband, when he was transferred in 1990. They had a son together but the marriage did not last. She lived alone after her divorce, which was almost 20 years ago, and never remarried. Both her parents passed away and she had very little contact with her brothers or her son, who was in his twenties at the time of the interview. After her divorce, Delia lost custody of her son because of her depression and a drinking problem. She said: “I had a drinking problem. I drank every night and I drank until I passed out” (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

She related that her son’s father was in a better position to take care of their son after the divorce, because of her depression and her drinking. Furthermore, he had a better job and earned more money than she did. She explained:

I was very depressed at the time and could not even take care of a plant. I couldn’t take care of Eugene. The other thing was (*pause*), Warren was very (*pause*), I said then (*pause*), he was a better mom than I ever was (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

Soon after the divorce Delia’s ex-husband moved back to Johannesburg, taking her son with him. Delia stayed in Cape Town and over the years lost contact with both her son and her brothers, who were also based in Johannesburg. Delia suffered from severe depression for many years, which was one of the reasons that she enrolled for the MBSR programme. The data revealed that Delia felt less depressed and more positive after completing the MBSR programme and in general she felt that she had more control over her thoughts and her emotions. She articulated her experience as follows:

I think because I have these negative thoughts under control now I feel a lot more positive about myself. And I feel that my life is actually much better than I thought it was. Before I thought my life was actually not very good and the sooner it ends the better. But now I see, you know what, I have talents. I know people like me a lot. I know my colleagues love me a lot and yes. So I do think differently about myself. I am now more aware of the positive things that I did not notice before (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

In my opinion, Delia's testimony indicates the realisation of a 'beginner's mind', one of the attitudinal aims of the MBSR programme, as identified by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 24). During the MBSR programme, Delia learned to see things in a new way and noticed the positive aspects of her life. Previously she felt lonely because she lived alone and she did not have contact with her family or her son, but she started to realise that she had friends at work. Where she previously felt that her life was not worth living, and that she did not want to continue living, she started to realise that there were people in her life that made it worth living. For Delia, cultivating mindfulness and mindful learning made her more aware of the positive aspects of her life that she was previously unaware of. She realised that her colleagues at work loved and respected her and this realisation gave more meaning to her life. These positive experiences in her awareness seemed to give her a new perspective towards life. In terms of Habermas's (1972) view on emancipatory knowledge, Delia became conscious of experiences that she was previously unconscious of. An awareness of these positive experiences initiated mindful reflection. Delia realised that there were people who liked and loved her, which transformed the assumption that there was nothing good about her life and revealed a new perspective. Furthermore, in my view, Delia's experience illustrates the notion by Solomon (2006, p. 1) that "we live our lives through our emotions, and it is our emotions that give our lives meaning".

During the narrative interview Delia gave another example of how her experience of life changed:

The other thing that also meant a lot to me (*pause*) traffic used to freak me out. And now I have realised it is traffic, there is nothing you can do about it. It is what it is. It is not going to help; it is not going to make the traffic move faster if you freak out or have a heart attack or have a tantrum. So sit, enjoy it, listen to the

radio, look around you or switch off the radio and listen to the birds outside. Just enjoy the ride (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

From the preceding extract, it appears that Delia learned how to turn a negative experience into a positive one by, for instance, listening to the radio while she was caught up in the traffic. This behaviour, once again, is indicative of a ‘beginner’s mind’, as described by Kabat-Zinn (2013, p. 24).

Delia even referred to her new attitude towards traffic as an “emancipation”:

The management of the traffic. That is really a wonderful emancipation for me. To be able to drive to work and not be concerned about traffic . . . There is nothing you can do about it. Sit back and enjoy it. That made a big difference for me. Some mornings I arrived at work and I would have this clamped feeling around my heart. I was really stressed about the traffic so this really made a big difference for me (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

In Chapter 6 the organising theme of an ‘emancipatory interest in mindful learning’ was identified. From the thematic data analysis it seemed that adult learners had an emancipatory interest in learning, and although unconsciously, they wanted to be emancipated from unpleasant experiences such as stress and anxiety. In the preceding extract of the interview with Delia, it appears that she believed that she was emancipated from stress through mindful learning.

Delia also learned that emotions are just temporary, and that negative emotions will not last forever. This realisation was another reason why she felt more positive about life. She explained:

You know, the course meant more for me than years of therapy. Just the fact that you learn that your emotions are just emotions. They will pass. In the past I was very depressed and I thought a lot about horrible things that happened . . . and then I felt depressed and I don't want to go outside and life is horrible. Now that I have learned that emotions will come and go, when those feelings come up I just tell myself it is just an emotion (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

The data suggest that mindful learning included two aspects for Delia, namely learning awareness of positive experiences and secondly, learning that negative emotions will not last forever. Learning about her emotions was central to mindful learning for Delia.

Not only did she learn about her emotions, the MBSR programme and mindful learning also enabled Delia to take better care of herself. She revealed that previously she did not notice what was going on with her own body and did not respond in a constructive way. In the following statement, she explained how she started to become more aware of how her body was feeling, indicating embodied learning, and as a result she could respond in a more positive way:

So yes, I give myself a once-over every now and then throughout the day. So I check in with myself and then I try to respond. If I am hungry, I will eat something or if my hip is causing problems, I will take medicine (Delia, semi-structured interview, 30 August 2015).

Previously Delia did not take action to take care of herself, whereas after the MBSR programme there was a new body awareness that enabled her to take better care of herself. In my view, she was describing mindful learning through embodied learning in the preceding extract, where she explained how she observed her body to gain knowledge about herself. She then used this knowledge to respond in an appropriate way. Previously she was unaware of the needs of her own body, but mindful learning, which paved the way for embodied learning, enabled her to become aware of these needs and to take better care of herself. She did not mindfully reflect on her body's needs, but simply took action when she deemed it necessary. For example, if she was hungry, she would eat something; if she was in pain, she would take a pain-relieving tablet. It was her new awareness of her body that inspired her to take action.

Mindful learning concerning awareness of the body, an objective of the MBSR programme as discussed in Chapter 5, inspired Delia to take better care of herself, but the data also revealed that mindful learning pertaining to the awareness of emotions, inspired her to take action to protect the environment. She elaborated:

It is more things that used to be important but I didn't do anything about it. That feeling became more intensive and now I will do something about it and not just feel strongly about it. For example, to teach my colleagues and to educate them about things that I come across during the day. Like buying badger-friendly honey and to make them aware of what pesticides they are using in the garden. Is it animal friendly? Is it friendly for birds and for fish? Or is it really poisonous? (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

She continued:

I found I am more, I am more interested in things that are related to saving the planet. How, you know, I belong to so many organisations now that send me petitions to sign. Friends of the Rainforest, Compassion in World Farming. Those type of things I am more aware of and it is more prominent in my life. I have never really been involved in this type of thing previously (Delia narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

Delia also decided to stop eating meat and became a vegetarian as a result of emotional awareness, saying:

Animals matter. They have an emotional life too and then I just thought, is it worth . . . that animals suffer in this way? So I became vegetarian. It just happened (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015).

She elaborated: “And using beauty products that are not tested on animals. That type of thing. Those things are very important to me now” (Delia, narrative interview, 5 September 2015). From these statements, it is clear that mindful learning, specifically awareness of emotions and embodied learning, inspired mindful reflection and mindful action. For instance, Delia started to consider whether pesticides are environmentally friendly, which then determined her actions. Similarly, the consideration of what happened to animals when they are killed inspired her to stop eating meat. She also indicated that she became more careful not to use beauty products that have been tested on animals.

Delia’s story revealed how emotional awareness and embodied learning may have social consequences. Delia not only changed her own actions, but she also started educating others about environmentally friendly products, saying: “I will do something about it and not just feel strongly about it. For example, to teach my colleagues and to educate them about things that I come across during the day”. In my view, the data suggest that understanding the relationship between emotions, reflection and actions may be an important area of investigation in education aimed at social change. Emotional awareness enabled Delia to take action on a social level. She noted that previously she was aware of environmental issues but she did not do anything about it. However, once she became more aware of her own emotions, through mindful learning and embodied learning, she was inspired to take action to bring about change. This

change indicates that it was not cognitive or rational knowledge that inspired Delia to take action, but rather emotional awareness that she discovered through mindful learning which initiated embodied learning. In another example, Delia knew before she attended the MBSR programme that animals had to be killed to provide meat, so it was not a matter of new cognitive knowledge that came to light during the MBSR programme. It was new emotional knowledge that drove her towards new actions, such as to become a vegetarian.

Neither Habermas's (1972) theory of knowledge-constitutive interests nor Mezirow's (1981) transformative learning theory, considers the power of emotions to inspire action. Both theories focus on rational processes, such as critical thinking and rational discourse that will inspire change. Yet, in Delia's story it is clear that her motivation for taking action towards social change was not based on knowledge created by means of rational processes. Rather, it was emotional knowledge created through mindful learning that inspired new actions. Therefore, the findings of this study concur with critiques in the academic literature that critical theory and transformative learning theory are too dependent on rational processes to inspire action. The findings also confirm the view of Callahan (2004), who suggests that emotions inspire action.

Delia's story demonstrates that emotional awareness, that inspires action towards social change, is an element that needs further consideration in theories aimed at inspiring personal as well as social change. It suggests that critical theories of learning aimed at social change, which ignore the emotional aspects of learning, will not succeed in inspiring action towards social change. The data suggest that these theories need to incorporate ways to create emotional knowledge, such as mindful learning that inspires embodied learning, because it is emotional knowledge that motivates action.

7.2.6. Malika: Emotional and Cultural Awareness due to Mindful Learning

Table 7.6: Story map: Malika

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
1. Abstract	Mindful learning enabled Malika to be more aware of her own emotions, indicating embodied learning. This started a process of mindful reflection which revealed cultural beliefs and

Factors considered in four-step process of narrative analysis	Story map of adult learner
	practices that she did not agree with. This realisation inspired her to change her behaviour.
2. Sociality: Interactions with others Social and cultural influences	Malika referred to interactions with her mother-in-law and her husband during the interview. Malika grew up in a Hindu household but referred to her father as a “modern Hindu” who did not necessarily believe in all the Hindu cultural practices.
3. Temporality Past Present Future	Malika did not tell her family when she had a problem, instead she acted passive-aggressively. She believed that one should not address issues with older people out of respect for them. She ate meat. She started addressing issues at home that bothered her. She stopped eating meat which also changed the family meals. She continued addressing issues at home and not eating meat.
4. Place Background Information	The interview took place at Malika’s house and her young son was at home during the interview. Malika participated in the MBSR programme because she wanted to learn how to manage her stress. She had ulcerative colitis, a disease which she believed could be effectively controlled with stress management.

Malika questioned her own cultural standards as a result of mindful learning and a new awareness of her emotions, indicating embodied learning. This enabled her to learn, to create new knowledge and to change her actions in a way that presented her own best interests.

The interview took place at Malika’s house. She worked in the morning and in the afternoon she had to take care of her young son. She felt that she would be less distracted if she was at home, where there was more entertainment for him. I anticipated that he would interrupt the interview several times, but there was only one, brief interruption. Malika participated in the MBSR programme because she was struggling

with ulcerative colitis, an illness that she believed could be controlled through stress management. Malika was 35 years old and had a demanding job as a management consultant at a consultation firm. She was married, she had a three-year old son, and her mother-in-law lived with the family. During the MBSR programme, as a result of mindful learning, Malika became more aware of her emotions. She said:

It was all of these emotions that started coming out and I don't know what it was. So I spoke to her about it and she said that it was actually quite normal. It was nothing serious but for me it was foreign (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

From these introductory statements, it seems as though Malika was not used to acknowledging her emotions, but mindful learning inspired embodied learning and a new awareness of her emotions, which is an objective of the MBSR programme. She continued:

And that was a big thing for me. You sort of think to yourself, so why did you get worked up about that? You know, was it really necessary to react that way? I mean, you talk to yourself (*pause*) or I find that I talk to myself a lot more. Why on earth did you react that way? You know (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

In this second extract of the interview, Malika questioned the reasons for her emotional reactions which created the potential for further learning through mindful reflection.

This new emotional awareness highlighted issues around her living circumstances. Living with her mother-in-law was challenging for Malika and she related during the interview that she realised how the situation caused her to be passive-aggressive:

What it did make me realise is that a lot of the time I become passive aggressive without realising it and then you know you wonder why is she not getting the message? But then I realise, you know what, it is because you are not telling her. You assume that through your bad behaviour she is picking up that something is wrong. So for me that was a very valuable exercise (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

Considering her preceding statements, Malika shows mindful learning, and a new awareness of emotions or embodied learning in particular, which started a process of

mindful reflection. She identified an emotion, namely passive-aggressiveness, and realised that she did not constructively deal with this emotion. She continued:

And I had that discussion with my husband as well to say that is what I picked up. I don't say what is wrong and what is affecting me . . . But it comes up in other ways and that is silly because nobody else knows what is wrong except I know what is wrong and nobody can help me because I am not talking about it. And everybody knows there is something wrong but when they try to get it out of me I get confrontational and irritated and I don't want to discuss it but in actual fact you just need to hit it straight on. And just tell the person what they did annoyed me and just let it out. And tell people. It has all got to do with being more assertive (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

It appears that by means of mindful reflection Malika discovered that, she assumed that by acting in a certain way and exhibiting certain emotions such as irritation and anger, her family would know that there was a problem. Yet, this was not the case and she realised that it would be better to simply discuss the issue with family members and to tell them what was wrong. Therefore, Malika engaged in new, mindful actions by telling family members what the problem was. Malika linked her unwillingness to raise issues at home to her cultural background, saying:

Because sometimes you feel, like in a cultural sense, you feel like you shouldn't say certain things especially when speaking to people who are older than you. But if you have to put up with them you have to say something otherwise you are going to end up in a situation that you don't want to be in (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

She recognised that she had avoided the discussion because of cultural beliefs that she internalised. These cultural beliefs determined that she could not say certain things to people, especially to those who were older than herself. This is a clear example of how social rationalisation influences internal rationalisation, and how internalising cultural beliefs prevented Malika from acting in her own best interest. This predicament suggests the potential for mindful learning to encourage the interrogation and questioning of cultural, ideological and social influences.

The living arrangement at home was not the only time when Malika's behaviour indicated mindful reflection, that was inspired by emotional awareness, as a result of

mindful learning. Malika started reflecting on her lifestyle choices, or more specifically the practice of eating meat:

I found myself being put off meat. I couldn't get myself to appreciate the fact that people have to kill an animal for me to eat it. And struggled with that a lot during the time that I was on the course and eating meat became an obstacle (Malika, semi-structured interview, 1 August 2015).

Malika became aware of an emotional experience concerning the habit of eating meat. She mindfully reflected on her emotional experience, which created new knowledge, and she then realised that she did not believe that eating meat was morally acceptable to her anymore. During the narrative interview Malika related how, although she was brought up in a Hindu household, they always ate meat and that she was taught that no food should be wasted. She referred to her father as a “modern Hindu” because he believed in eating meat. In her words:

Yes. I always *(pause)* look I always I have been thinking *(pause)*. Us as Hindus, right, in this day and age we have been brought up to *(pause)* so we eat vegetables and we eat white meat and a bit of red meat being lamb so we don't eat beef or pork or nothing of that. And being a very liberated and modern Hindu my dad *(pause)* his belief was if food is on the table you don't say no. You eat what is being provided whether it is beef or pork or whatever. Food is food and you should never look upon it with disdain. And that is how we were raised *(pause)* we kind of eat everything. And going through this process, it made me realise *(pause)* it got me to the point of saying you know what, you should not be eating meat (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

In the preceding statements, Malika recognises the moral values that were imposed on her because of her environment and the ideological beliefs that determined those values. Similar to the previous example, it appears to demonstrate the potential of mindful learning to encourage the questioning of cultural, social and ideological influences. Furthermore, it seems that awareness of an emotional experience started this process of mindful reflection, which resulted in mindful actions. Similar to Delia's story, Malika's story illustrates that it was emotional awareness that inspired her to act in a new way, rather than cognitive knowledge. In her case, she decided that she should stop eating meat. She explained:

And what happened (*pause*), there were a few times that we had eaten it and I felt sick to my core. I could not digest it and I thought no, this is not for me. I was able to eat fish but every time I thought of it (*pause*), it was just. For me it was always fine to eat it but after going through this process it was just, I realised it is actually not fine (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

This transformation in a meaning perspective about eating meat, as described by Malika, also influenced the lives of other people. Her family's diet changed, which in my opinion indicates that Malika's perspective transformation had social consequences. She elaborated:

There are now certain days of the week that we have dedicated to staying meat-free and eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. That day we are pure vegetarian. I am going through a process of where I am struggling to come to terms with eating it. So where I previously thought it was fine, good and great and all of that I no longer feel that way (Malika, narrative interview, 29 August 2015).

The social consequences of Malika's actions, confirm the view of authors such as Ewert (1991), Cranton and Roy (2003) and Kabat-Zinn (2013), that individual change will have social consequences and result in social reproduction. As with the other adult learners' stories, rational discourse and discussions with others did not play a part in the transformation process. The new knowledge that was created through emotional awareness and mindful reflection inspired Malika to act differently, bringing about change not only in her own life, but also in the life of others. This implies that learning, even if it did not involve others in the process of learning, can still have social consequences.

Malika's story highlights how cultural forces can influence knowledge, as Malika herself realised. This insight, according to Ewert (1991), means that an individual is free and can take self-determined actions. She realised how her past influenced her, which according to authors such as Habermas (1972), Mezirow (1981), Ewert (1991) and Cranton and Roy (2003), is central to emancipatory knowledge and emancipatory learning. These insights, however, were acquired by means of a new awareness of emotional experiences as a result of mindful learning.

7.3. EMANCIPATORY MINDFUL LEARNING

In the preceding sections it was explored in detail, through narrative analysis, how mindful learning influenced the lives of six adult learners. Johnstone (2001), Riessman (2004) and Bamberg (2006) posit that narrative analysis can reveal dominant ideologies and perspectives. Johnstone (2001, p. 644) argues that the political and social effects of a narrative should also be examined: “Storytelling not only as a way of creating community but as a resource for dominating others, for expressing solidarity, for resistance and conflict; a resource, that is, in the continuing negotiation through which humans create language and society and self as they talk and act”. Bamberg (2006) adds that personal accounts can reveal how dominant perspectives are resisted. He believes that it may be possible, by means of narrative analysis, to encourage strategies that challenge these perspectives. Consequently, narrative analysis can be useful to investigate emancipation, which according to Habermas (1972, p. 314) fosters “autonomy and responsibility” which supports social change and the data confirm this perspective.

In my opinion, the stories of the adult learners illustrate how they shared a Western perspective on learning prior to the MBSR programme, which determined that the body and emotions should be ignored and cannot be considered a source of knowledge. Their personal accounts further illustrate how the dominant point of view, or meaning perspective, was transformed and moved the adult learners towards emancipation away from a Western perspective on learning. Or, in other words, they progressed towards independence from ideological and social influences reflected in a Western perspective on learning. All six adult learners related how they previously did not pay attention to their emotions but as a result of mindful learning, a new awareness of emotions emerged. These adult learners also described how they used this new awareness to make decisions and how it influenced their actions. This indicates that mindfulness and mindful learning, have the potential to challenge and transform a previous meaning perspective. In other words, mindfulness and mindful learning seemed to emancipate the adult learners from a meaning perspective that previously limited them to rely on cognitive sources of knowledge creation. This emancipation, through the transformation of a meaning perspective, was shared among the adult learners, indicating that emancipatory mindful learning has the potential to promote social change.

An awareness of emotions, which is identified as a key element of embodied learning by Merriam et al. (2007), was central to the stories of the adult learners. Schlattner (1994) and other authors such as Dirkx (2001, 2008), Cohen (2003), Merriam et al. (2007) and Merriam (2008a) point out that the role of the body and emotions should be more central to the process of transformative learning and warrants further investigation. The data confirm the notion that emotions are central to the process of transformative learning. It also suggests that the body and emotions should be considered in emancipatory learning aimed at social change. For instance, adult learners Delia and Malika stopped eating meat as a result of mindful learning and an awareness of emotions concerning the habit of eating meat. Both these adult learners did not gain new cognitive knowledge about eating meat. Yet, a new awareness of their physical and emotional response to eating meat inspired them to change their actions. This, in my opinion, confirms the emerging critiques of critical theory and a critical approach to learning, which state that cognitive knowledge often does not inspire new actions. It is emotional knowledge that prompts new actions.

The data corroborate the view of Callahan (2004) and Dirkx (2012) that emotions are the driving force behind social change. It indicates that without emotional knowledge, cognitive, rational knowledge, which is central to critical theory, does not inspire action with the potential to support social change. Critical theory and a critical approach to adult learning, such as transformative learning theory, attempts to transform and emancipate adults through reason, yet the data indicate that rational, cognitive knowledge is insufficient to initiate new actions. It confirms the view of Callahan (2004) that the reason why critical theory fails to inspire social change is that emotion is excluded and that it is emotional knowledge, not cognitive rational knowledge, that motivates new actions. The data point to the need for the creation of emotional knowledge to complement cognitive knowledge to inspire action with the potential to bring about social change. Furthermore, the data suggest that mindful learning has the potential to foster the creation of emotional knowledge. In this way the cultivation of mindfulness, and emancipatory mindful learning can generate emancipation and social change.

This prevalence of cognitive, rational knowledge in critical theory and transformative learning theory, in itself points to domination and oppression: the domination of the

mind over the body and the oppression of bodily and emotional knowledge. It confirms the view of authors such as Orr (2002) and Van Woerkom (2010) that critical theory in itself, and by implication also transformative learning theory, are informed by ideological and cultural forces particular to Western society. The data indicate that the meaning perspective that endorses a domination of mind over body, is potentially transformed through emancipatory mindful learning. In this way, adult learners are emancipated, or at least motivated towards emancipation, from ideological and cultural forces which determined what they consider to be knowledge. Although the adult learners did not consciously realise that ideological and cultural beliefs influenced their meaning perspectives, they included knowledge about the body and emotions after being exposed to mindful learning. This inclusion of knowledge pertaining to the body and emotions indicates an unconscious transformation of, and progress towards emancipation from, a dominant meaning perspective.

7.4. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the stories of six adult learners were presented and analysed, using the thematic narrative analysis that is rooted in a four-step process. These stories illustrated transformation and emancipation from a meaning perspective that determines cognitive knowledge as the only source of valuable knowledge. Adult learners embraced learning and new knowledge available through their body and emotions, as a result of emancipatory mindful learning. In my opinion, they were emancipated from a Western perspective on learning or at least moved towards emancipation if not fully emancipated.

The stories of the six adult learners, as discussed in this chapter, also show that emotional knowledge, rather than cognitive knowledge, inspired new actions. Adult learners did not refer to the creation of new rational, cognitive knowledge during the MBSR programme but rather the creation of new, emotional knowledge that prompted new actions. This suggests that emotional knowledge, created through emancipatory mindful learning, may be a central element of learning aimed at social change, which is not considered in critical theory or a critical approach to adult education and learning. In this way, the data analysis revealed the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change by suggesting an approach to learning that should include both cognitive and embodied, emotional dimensions. Furthermore, the

data suggests that mindfulness may provide a foundation for transformative and emancipatory learning that is necessary to support social change.

In Chapter 8 I will present my findings, recommendations and conclusions, based on the data analysis and theorising processes. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the similarity of the concepts ‘mindful learning’ and ‘embodied learning’ became apparent. Therefore, in Chapter 8, I conceptualise ‘mindful learning’ as ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’, to avoid confusion of the terms, and to promote the interpretation and theorising of the data and the creation of new knowledge.



CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1. INTRODUCTION

When I initiated this PhD study and developed the critical theoretical framework within the field of adult education and learning, I did not anticipate the central role that awareness of the body and emotions would take in this study. The academic literature on adult education and learning did not point to the importance of the body and emotions for knowledge creation and even the academic literature about mindfulness and the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme focused mostly on cognitive processes. Therefore, I was unprepared when, during the data analysis process what I labelled as ‘mindful learning’, highlighted the centrality of the body and emotions in the process of learning, during the MBSR programme offered in South Africa.

The data, as described in the preceding two chapters, illustrated how the body, which was previously ignored, emerged as a key factor in the learning process of the adult learners during the MBSR programme. It has also led to new actions based on new knowledge, even if there was no evidence of rational, cognitive processes to support the process of learning. Furthermore, the data revealed that adult learners largely ignored their emotions prior to the MBSR programme, but as a result of ‘mindful learning’, they cultivated a new awareness of emotions, or new knowledge pertaining to emotional experience. The data analysis thus highlighted how emotions often motivate new actions, rather than cognitive knowledge.

These findings were informed by both the primary and secondary research questions, as outlined in Chapter 1. The primary research question was formulated as follows: What are the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change? The secondary questions were as follows:

- a) How can mindfulness support the learning needs which are located in the domains of instrumental, communicative and emancipatory learning?
- b) To what extent can mindfulness prompt the emergence of a new domain of learning?

- c) How can mindfulness generate perspective transformation that contributes to critical transformative learning? and
- d) How can mindfulness generate critical transformative learning that provides a foundation for social change?’

The critical theoretical framework that I developed for this study, based on a rational, cognitive knowledge-creation process that constitutes learning, did not provide me with the tools to analyse the bodily and emotional aspects of learning thoroughly. This highlighted, similar to the data analysis process, that the body and emotions are often ignored when we consider learning and the creation of new knowledge. Therefore, I had to return to the academic literature to verify the interpretation of the data. At this point I questioned why I did not realise how central the body and emotions would be in the knowledge-creation process prior to the data analysis process. How could I miss something which would turn out to be so fundamental to cultivating mindfulness and mindful learning? The academic literature provided some reassurance as Tobin and Tisdell (2015, p. 216) confirm that “there is only limited published refereed journal research studies in adult education on the subject of the body in learning”.

My experience confirmed this perspective, as I did not come across literature about the body and emotions in adult education and learning during my literature review, or the development of my critical theoretical framework. It was only when I specifically and deliberately searched for academic literature on the body and mind in learning that I came across the concept of ‘embodied learning’. I found that embodied learning was similar to what I described as mindful learning during the data analysis process. Consequently, the concept of embodied learning, as discussed in the academic literature, was selected to support the data analysis process and the findings and conclusions of this study.

In this chapter I discuss the concept of ‘embodied learning’ in-depth and how the academic literature in combination with the data analysis process prompted the first steps towards the exploration of a new critical theoretical perspective of adult education and learning, embodied learning and mindfulness. I outline my main theoretical arguments and new knowledge that was created based on the data collected, as well as the inclusion of embodied learning as a theoretical building-block in a critical theoretical framework. The research aims and research questions will also be discussed

before pertinent findings and recommendations are offered. I conclude this final chapter with my personal reflections on the study.

8.2. TOWARDS A CRITICAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING, EMBODIED LEARNING AND MINDFULNESS

In this section I provide an outline of my new ‘critical theoretical perspective on adult education and learning, embodied learning and mindfulness’, that was guided by the debates in the academic literature and the data analysis process. The data were collected from 55 adult learners who enrolled for the MBSR programme offered in Cape Town and Durbanville, South Africa. I used my critical theoretical perspective on adult education and learning, embodied learning and mindfulness to analyse and theorise the relationships between mindfulness, embodied learning and emancipatory learning. In doing so, I offer new theoretical insights and knowledge on a critical theoretical perspective on adult education and learning, embodied learning and mindfulness, which in turn, uncovers the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

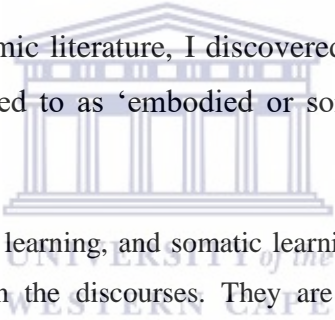
I reveal that marginalised theoretical trends and the data suggest that embodied learning and emotions should be incorporated into a critical theory of adult education and learning. These trends, in combination with the data analysis process of my study, led to my proposed view that the body is a site of knowledge production; and learning and highlighted new knowledge derived from the 55 adult learners and their approximately 170 responses. This view challenges rational critical thinking, which is traditionally considered to be pivotal to critical theory that inspires social action, and suggests that other forms of learning should be included in critical theory. Although I do not argue that critical theory should abandon rational knowledge, I propose that other types of knowledge should be included to complement critical knowledge-creation processes that can promote social change. Furthermore, I believe that by not including other forms of knowledge in critical theory, the potential of critical theory to inspire social change will be impeded.

Central to the development of this new theoretical perspective is the process of theory building which is described by Brookfield (1992, p. 80) as a process of comparing the theoretical framework to concepts identified in the data. According to Brookfield

(2005b) and Delanty (2011), a critical theoretical perspective can investigate issues on a macro level, which pertains to social and ideological issues, but it can also consider issues on a micro level, which focuses on the individual in relation to these issues. Building on the assertion of Brookfield and Delanty, I explore a new critical theoretical perspective and new knowledge on emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness. This new critical theoretical perspective connects the individual to social and ideological issues, which emerge from conceptualisations of the dualism of body and mind in Western society. Furthermore, I reveal new knowledge on emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness that expands the meaning of the theoretical concept of emancipatory learning and emancipation, which is prominent in critical theory. Consequently, I highlight the importance of the inclusion of embodied learning in critical theory, and how its omission represents a vacuum. I propose that this oversight should be addressed to ensure the continued relevance of critical theory.

8.2.1. Mindfulness, Embodied Learning and Emotions

When I revisited the academic literature, I discovered that the connection between the body and learning is referred to as ‘embodied or somatic learning’. Freiler (2008, p. 39)³⁶ notes that



embodiment, embodied learning, and somatic learning are all closely aligned and used interchangeably in the discourses. They are associated with an evolving awareness of bodily experiences as a source of constructing knowledge through engaged, lived, body experiences of physicality, sensing, and being in both body and world.

The word ‘somatic’ comes from the Greek word ‘soma’ which refers to a sensed body and the term denotes awareness of the physical body (Goldman Schuyler, 2010). Hanna (1991, p. 31) adds that soma refers to “the body as perceived from within by first-person perspective”. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 190) describe embodied learning as “learning through the body”, while Freiler (2008, p. 40) claims that “embodied learning involves being attentive to the body and its experiences as a way of knowing”. Sodhi and Cohen (2012) refer to “embodied knowing” and define it as as “knowledge that is held within the body and is manifested as physical sensations” (Sodhi & Cohen, 2012, p. 124). These descriptions of embodied learning resonate with what I refer to as ‘mindful

³⁶ Freiler cites Baudoin, 1999; Brockman, 2001; Clark, 2001

learning’. I developed this term during the data analysis process, which was based on the data collected from 55 adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme. I infer that the term ‘mindful learning’ is similar to ‘embodied learning’, as described in the academic literature.

Norris (2001, p. 112) describes embodied learning, or the knowledge that is available through the body as follows:

Body knowledge differs from the intellectual kind in several ways. First and most obvious is its immediacy, whose roots lie in its closeness to, or even identity with, the original sensory perception. Second, since it is not “conceptual” or “verbal”, it is not inhibited by contradictions but can recognize many meanings at once – its intelligence is polysemic. Third, body knowledge does not need to identify by name and so is a more direct way of knowing the thing in itself.

He contends that the knowledge available through the body in itself is valuable, and that it is not necessary to subject this kind of knowledge to rationality for it to be deemed knowledge (Norris, 2001, p. 112). Norris (2001, p. 122) refers to “the intelligence of body and emotions” and explains that the “body’s intelligence is not based on reason but on direct knowledge of the world”. This description of embodied learning by Norris (2001), which highlights how knowledge is available through the body, and that it is not necessary for all knowledge to be the product of rational processes to be considered knowledge, is also evident in the data of this study. It emphasises the similarity between mindful learning, as described during the data analysis process and embodied learning, as described in the academic literature. The data collected from the 55 adult learners, who participated in the MBSR programme, confirm the academic literature, that suggests the theoretical notion that knowledge creation and learning is not limited to the cognitive, but should, in fact, include the body. This prompted the identification of a new theoretical concept ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ and provided a building-block for a new theoretical perspective.

Supporting the development of new knowledge on the theoretical concept ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’, I found that, in the academic literature, emotions are included as an element of embodied learning. Therefore, I deduce that an awareness of emotional experiences also constitutes embodied learning. According to Merriam et al. (2007, p. 194), “embodied learning has a strong emotional or feeling

dimension” and “emotions are embodied and thus are an integral component of this type of learning” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 195). These authors, as well as Dirkx (2008), contend that in the context of adult education and learning, the role of emotions occurs within a broader focus of embodied learning. Norris (2001, p. 113) confirms the importance of emotions and views it as a link between the body and awareness, saying: “Emotion must be included in a discussion of body intelligence because it is one of the means by which our bodies communicate knowledge to conscious awareness. Emotions are a link between body and mind”. During the data analysis process, awareness of emotions was highlighted as an element of mindful learning, reflecting the academic literature which includes emotions as an element of embodied learning. These arguments also confirm the similarity between mindful learning, as described during the data analysis process of this study, and embodied learning, as described in the academic literature. Therefore, I name mindful learning ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’ in this final chapter to avoid confusion and to explain the interpretation and theorising of the data towards the creation of new knowledge.

The academic literature about embodied learning was useful in explaining the reason for my theoretical blind spot prior to the data analysis process and enabled me to identify the ideological meaning perspective that was highlighted during the data analysis process. Prior to the MBSR programme, adult learners did not include the body and emotions in their process of learning. This meaning perspective suggested an ideological meaning perspective, and was shared among the adult learners. Furthermore, when I developed my theoretical framework, I did not include the body and emotions in the learning process, implying that I had a similar meaning perspective as the adult learners. In the academic literature on embodied learning, I identified this meaning perspective, highlighted by the concept of embodied learning through mindfulness, as a Western perspective on learning.

8.2.2. Embodied Learning and a Western Perspective on Learning

New knowledge about the theoretical concept of ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’ underlines how adult learners, who participated in the MBSR programme offered in South Africa, previously ignored the body and emotions during the process of knowledge creation, pointing to ideological and social influences that determine this perspective. This notion begs the question: ‘What are these ideological and social forces

that guide and determine how we create knowledge?’ Furthermore, in the course of the academic literature review and the conceptualisation of the theoretical framework, I did not find any theories of adult education and learning that included embodied learning. Clarifying the reason for my theoretical oversight, Merriam et al. (2007, p. 188) observe that in the Western world, traditional learning theories on adult education focus on “learning as a mechanical process – one designed to produce responses to stimuli, or to process information, or more recently, to construct knowledge largely through reflection on experience”. This argument points to ideological and social forces in the Western world, that have not only led to a theoretical oversight in the academic literature on adult education and learning, but also to an oversight in my own thinking processes. Furthermore, these ideological and social influences are also reflected in the data.

Merriam et al. (2007, p. 217) further postulate that “the knowledge base that has developed around learning and adult learning has been shaped by what counts as knowledge in a Western paradigm”. According to Orr (2002) and Berila (2014), this separation of body and mind indicates a domination of the mind over the body, where the activities of the mind are considered as far more important and superior to the activities of the body and emotions. Referring to the cultural origins of these discourses, Orr (2002, p. 479) contends that “Western culture has been organized around the mind/body binarism and the assumption that mind is both radically distinct from and of greater worth than the body.”

Debates in the academic literature confirm this dominance of cognitive processes of learning in a Western culture, which has resulted in other forms of learning, such as embodied learning, mostly being ignored. Scholars such as Schlattner (1994), Clark (2001), Dirkx (2001, 2008), Taylor (2001), Cohen (2003), McDonald (2003), Merriam et al. (2007), Didonna (2009), Chari (2016) and Parviainen and Aromaa (2017) trace a Western perspective on learning far back to the scientific revolution and Descartes, a seventeenth-century French philosopher, who separated knowledge from the body. The consequence of these ideas was a Western perspective on learning that values cognitive knowledge above other types of knowledge and emphasises rational reasoning and reflection in the learning process (Dirkx, 2001). Merriam et al. (2007, p. 189) confirm this view by stating that “this separation of the mind and body was reinforced by eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers who believed that knowledge could be

obtained through reason alone”. They continue that “as a result of Cartesian and Enlightenment thinking, learning has come to be equated with mental processes, with knowing through thinking or cognition”.

The dualism of the body and mind that is central to a Western perspective on learning, as described in the preceding paragraph, is also confirmed by authors such as Beckett and Morris (2001), Todd (2001), Kerka (2002), Fenwick (2003), Horst (2008), Van Woerkom (2010), Berila (2014) and Shahjahan (2015), who observe that in the Western world we value cognitive knowledge above all else, while ignoring the body and emotions. Also referring to Western culture, Norris (2001, p. 11) agrees that “our culture marginalizes the body”. In light of the view expressed by these authors, it can be argued that a Western perspective on learning has oppressed the body and emotions. This is also evident in the theoretical framework which describes critical theory and transformative learning theory. In these theories the emphasis is on critical reflection and rational reasoning while not including the body and emotions, reflecting a Western perspective on learning and what Callahan (2004, p. 82) describes as “critical theory’s cult of rationality”. Authors such as Beckett and Morris (2001), Clark (2001), Kerka (2002), Fenwick (2003), Merriam et al. (2007), Horst (2008), Van Woerkom (2010), Berila (2014) and Shahjahan (2015) conclude that Western culture, and the belief in rational reasoning, silenced the knowledge that is accessible through the body, confirming the perspective that the mind dominates the body in Western society.

The dualism of the body and mind is not only incorporated in adult education and learning literature, but also considered in feminist theories and anti-racist theories (Michelson, 1996, 1998). Michelson (1996, p. 191) elucidates:

The valorization of reason as a source of knowledge requires the concomitant denigration of other avenues to knowledge such as emotion, the body, and manual labor that are traditionally associated with social groups such as women and non-Europeans, whose knowledge is largely discounted.

Michelson (1998, p. 218) and Sodhi and Cohen (2012) state that feminist theorists label a Western perspective on learning, that favours cognitive processes of rationality, “abstract masculinity”. Michelson (1998) and Sodhi and Cohen (2012) argue that a Western perspective on learning bounds rationality to masculinity. Jordi (2011, p. 183) verifies the view that a Western perspective on learning implies gender prejudices but

expands this view to include “class, gender and cultural prejudices of its Western capitalist cultural and social environment”.

Unfortunately, the feminist and anti-racist perspectives on embodied learning, emerged during an advanced stage of the data analysis and interpretation process. Consequently, I deemed it beyond the scope of this study to further explore the feminist and anti-racist literature. Again, as I became aware of the feminist perspective on embodied learning, I questioned why I did not consider this perspective at an earlier stage. I rely on Brickhouse (2001, p. 284) who proposes that: “Feminist theories have had very little impact on how we think about how people learn”, to illuminate one of the reasons for this oversight. This statement by Brickhouse (2001) explains why I did not follow a feminist perspective on embodied learning while reviewing the literature on adult education and learning. Furthermore, Jordi (2011, p. 183) confirms that adult education and learning theories, such as transformative learning theory developed by Mezirow (1978, 1981), is reflective of the internalised ideological construct of a Western perspective on learning, which my oversight reflects.

However, embodied learning is re-emerging in adult education and learning. Schlattner (1994, p. 326) notes that “recent literature in education and feminism have critiqued the Cartesian dualism of the mind and body which has dominated Western intellectual discourse since the Enlightenment”. Yet, Merriam et al. (2007, p. 218) contend that although there has been some work on embodied learning, “these perspectives are still very much on the margins of the field”. Scholars such as Beckett and Morris (2001), Clark (2001), Dirkx (2001, 2008), Morris (2001), Kerka (2002), Amann (2003), Cohen (2003), Fenwick (2003), McDonald (2003), Horst (2008), Merriam (2008a), Goldman Schuyler (2010), Shahjahan (2015), and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) acknowledge the connection between the body and learning, which is referred to as ‘embodied’ or ‘somatic’ learning in the literature, and is described as a more holistic way of knowing. This holistic approach to learning has been linked to transformative learning theory. Taylor (2008, p. 11) points to “the importance of a holistic approach to transformative learning in addition to the often-emphasized use of rational discourse and critical reflection”.

Taylor (2008) and Dirkx (2008) propose that a holistic approach to education include emotions in learning and represents ways of knowing that can challenge the dominance

of reason as represented in a Western perspective on learning. Similarly, Clark (2001) points out that embodiment is the most complete way to engage people in the learning experience, but that recognising the body as a source of knowledge is not in line with the Western approach to education. Norris (2001, p. 119) observes that “there is practically no intentional emotional education in secular Western culture”. Orr (2002, p. 479) corroborates with the views of Clark (2001) and Norris (2001) by stating:

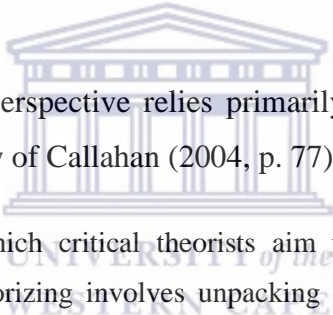
Educational institutions both reflect and entrench the ramifications of this ideological valorization of mind and suspicion of embodied experience in their endorsement of pedagogical practice grounded in the belief that, while the learning process and knowledge production may be stimulated by or call up emotional experience, this experience is extraneous to the processes of learning and knowledge production and should be viewed with suspicion.

The current debates in the academic literature on adult education and learning reveal that although alternative perspectives are present in the literature, a Western perspective on learning remains dominant, while a more holistic approach to adult education and learning continues to be marginalised. This recognition in the academic literature of the need to challenge dominant Western perspectives of learning indicates a need for theoretical work and the creation of new knowledge with which this study converges. Orr (2002) and more recently, Wagner and Shahjahan (2015), posit that embodied learning can empower people and challenge dominant ideological beliefs pertaining to learning. Panaioti (2015, p. 2) states that through mindfulness, an individual develops a relationship with bodily experiences that is “substantially different from that adopted in Western culture”. My study creates new knowledge related to theoretical concepts such as ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ and ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’, which have the potential to challenge internalised ideological constructs such as a Western perspective on learning. Furthermore, it creates the opportunity to explore the significance of ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’ and ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ in relation to social change. This assumption addresses the primary research question of this study, and will be further analysed in the following sections.

8.2.3. Critical Theory, Embodied Learning and Social Change

Although social change, critical theory and emancipatory learning have been discussed and debated for many years, these topics remain current. When working within a critical theoretical framework, it is important to note that one of the goals of critical theory is to theorise human emancipation (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). More recently, McGehee (2012, p. 89) has confirmed this theoretical position by stating that “originators of critical theory aspired for the ultimate goal of human [e]mancipation”. Even if this goal is not realised, critical theory is aimed at producing knowledge about emancipation. It accepts that even if the goal of emancipation is unrealisable, it can still focus on individual, social, political and economic concerns in the hope that it will bring society closer to a more humane existence and an improved world (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 153). In line with the goals of critical theory, emancipation and emancipatory learning were central to this study. With this goal in mind, the focus of the study was on producing new knowledge, through theory building, that will make a positive contribution towards creating an improved world.

However, this theoretical perspective relies primarily on rationality to achieve social change. It confirms the view of Callahan (2004, p. 77) who states:



The mechanism by which critical theorists aim to accomplish this is critical theorizing. Critical theorizing involves unpacking the nature of social reality in order to more fully understand the ways in which we might improve society which requires a dedication to rationality.

Critical theory, which was used to develop the critical theoretical framework of this study, typically excludes the consideration of embodied learning and emotions. Callahan (2004, p. 75)³⁷ confirms:

Critical theory, in particular that associated with the Frankfurt School, typically focuses on rationality both as a means of domination and a mechanism for resisting such domination. The very essence of critical theory is its attempt to emancipate dominated people through reason.

However, Callahan (2004, p. 75) points out that “emotion is an essential component of critical thought” and that “the very praxis of critical theory relies on emotion as its

³⁷ Callahan (2004) cites Brookfield (2001) and Turner (1991)

catalyst”. It is emotions that motivate people towards action, which is believed to be “the heart of critical theory” (Callahan, 2004, p. 76).

Dirkx (2012) agrees with this view and claims that often academic scholars neglect to acknowledge that critical theory also considers the individual. In a discussion about self-reflection, which is central to a cognitive-emancipatory interest in knowledge creation, Habermas (1972, p. 234) recognises the importance of emotions in critical theory when he states that “it includes two moments equally: the cognitive, and the affective and motivational . . . Critique terminates in a transformation of the affective-emotional basis”. However, although Habermas (1972) acknowledges the role of emotions in critical theory, he focuses on rational reasoning to achieve emancipation. The data collected during this study confirm the notion of Callahan (2004) and Dirkx (2012), illustrating that emotions, rather than cognitive insight, often inspire action. It illustrates that embodied learning, which includes emotions, could motivate the social change that critical theory pursues.

Similar to Habermas (1972), Mezirow (1978, 1981) relies on rationality embedded in critical reflection to inspire transformative learning, which Mezirow (1981) elaborates as an extension of emancipatory learning. Many authors, including Langer (1993); Taylor (1997, 1998, 2001); Baumgartner, (2001)³⁸; Orr (2002); Duerr, Zajonc and Dana (2003); and Dirkx (2012) critique this emphasis on rationality and acknowledge the need to explore emotions and “other ways of knowing” that can encourage transformative learning (Taylor, 2001, p. 220). Taylor (2001, p. 234) proposes that “by exploring research beyond the narrow confines of the adult education field, much can be learned about how transformative learning takes place”. Responding to the current debates in the academic literature, this suggestion by Taylor (2001) was implemented in the present study by including mindfulness in the exploration of the transformative learning process and emancipatory learning.

Marginalised theoretical trends in the academic literature, as well as my data analysis, point to the importance of acknowledging new theoretical concepts such as ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ and ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’. My critical theoretical perspective challenges the domination of the mind over the body by incorporating these concepts in a critical theoretical framework as

³⁸ Baumgartner cites Clark and Wilson, 1991; Lucas, 1994 and McDonald, Cervero and Courtenay, 1999

theoretical building-blocks. As such, I agree with the views of authors such as Berila (2014) and Shahjahan (2015, p. 489) who claim that “bringing awareness to our bodies help us acknowledge and dismantle hegemonic knowledge systems that privilege the mind”. Furthermore, I confirm Berila (2014)’s reasoning that mindfulness can be a useful tool in creating this awareness.

Berila (2014), Shahjahan (2015) and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015, p. 246) propose that educational theory needs to be expanded to include the body as a “space or a site in which knowledge is constructed”. Merriam et al. (2007, p.190) convey a similar belief when they argue for the promotion of “the body as a site for learning”. These authors observe that through embodied learning “these noncognitive dimensions of knowing can bring greater understanding to our lives” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 192). In line with these academic debates, the importance of bodily and emotional experience that was revealed in the data and described as ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’, can be linked to what Lawrence (2008, p. 66) refers to as an “epistemic shift away from pure rational thinking”.

Wagner and Shahjahan (2015, p. 246) contend that there is a need to challenge “the underlying epistemological foundation of the educational system”, which is based on the mind dominating the body. They hold the view that this can be achieved by including embodied learning in critical pedagogical approaches, which are founded in critical theory (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). Wagner and Shahjahan (2015, pp. 252-253) envision embodied learning as an approach that

encompasses an acknowledgement that diverse systems of knowledge exist and holistic learning requires us to center the significance of power relations in local and global contexts, foregrounding the interconnection between learners and their broader social and cultural environments. This requires a pedagogy that moves beyond psychologically informed approaches that privilege the individualistic learner and his/her mind.

In a similar vein, Shahjahan (2015, p. 489) emphasises that “bringing awareness to our bodies help us acknowledge and dismantle hegemonic knowledge systems that privilege the mind”. These authors, as well as Berila (2014) and Chari (2016), consider embodied learning as a link between individual learning and the recognition of constructs imposed by social and cultural environments. My research confirms this view, by pointing to the

potential of embodied learning through mindfulness which leads to the recognition of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, and connects the individual to social change.

Orr (2002, p. 479) states that the separation of the body and mind has been based on the assumption that the mind is far more important and of “greater worth” than the body. Orr (2002, p. 479) claims that this assumption has generated discourse on “sexism, racism, class, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination”. Orr (2002, p. 479) continues that in terms of social classes, the privileged groups are associated with the mind and the “intellectual activities of cultural reproduction”, while the lesser privileged groups are associated with the body and emotions. Orr (2002) argues that domination is reflected in the separation of body and mind in teaching practices in the Western world and that ways must be found to bring awareness to the dualistic perspective which upholds domination. Embodied learning, which prompts an awareness of the body, creates the possibility of change. This awareness

empowers students to make choices about the attitudes and the experiences they wish to preserve. This empowerment radically deepens and widens their education. With it they can decide not only to reject oppressive and discriminatory positions, but begin to live these decisions in all areas of their lives (Orr, 2002, p. 493).

Similarly, Wagner and Shahjahan (2015, p. 247) propose that we can challenge “dominant pedagogical approaches” by introducing embodied learning. Embodied learning practices present the opportunity to not only engage students cognitively, but by providing them the opportunity to reflect on bodily and emotional experiences, they get the opportunity to process intellectual concepts at a deeper level. These authors posit:

Incorporating embodied learning in anti-oppressive pedagogy and theorizing offers one means of moving beyond traditional Eurocentric paradigms, unsettling dominant tropes, and working toward incorporating a more holistic, decolonized approach that acknowledges multiple worldviews (Wagner & Shahjahan, 2015, p. 252).

Berila (2014, p. 62) describes embodied learning as generative and points out that “students become co-creators of knowledge by recognizing the body as a dynamic epistemological site”. Berila (2014, p. 62) claims that embodied learning can help

students to recognise the “oppressive systems” that influence knowledge. My study validates this view as the body was identified as a site of knowledge production; and learning that challenges dominant perspectives on learning.

Other authors who acknowledge the potential of embodied learning to promote social change, are Orr (2002) and Callahan (2004). Orr (2002, p. 480) argues:

Knowledge... remain largely cognitive and so function primarily on the intellectual level in students lives. Such pedagogical praxes, which remain situated on the dominant side of the mind/body binarism, are not, nor can they be, entirely successful in creating the necessary conditions to achieve deep levels of transformation.

Orr (2002) observes that learning that focus on the cognitive domain exclusively, is incomplete and limited and a more holistic approach is required. The development of a more holistic approach to learning is the only way to truly address oppressive ideologies and bring about change.

This perspective is corroborated in the data collected from the adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme and it was clear that cognitive knowledge alone was not sufficient to inspire the new actions that are vital for transformation, emancipatory learning and social change. Callahan (2004) focuses on the role of emotions, which is an element of embodied learning, to promote social change and believes that it is emotions that inspire people to take action that could bring about social change. Callahan (2004, p. 76) continues: “As educators of adults, we need to help learners deconstruct the assumptions of the world around them and offer them the opportunity to become emotionally engaged in the pursuit of making positive change”. Callahan (2004) concludes that by considering emotions and including emotions in reflection processes, it has the potential to drive the individual change that will motivate social change. This argument was validated by the findings of this study, as the data confirm that it was emotions that motivated new actions among the adult learners.

Based on the current academic debates discussed in the preceding sections, and the data analysis process, it can be concluded that two new theoretical concepts, namely ‘embodied learning through mindfulness’ and the ‘body as a site of knowledge production; and learning’ have the potential to lead to social change. By including these

theoretical concepts in a critical theoretical framework, I am converging with current academic debates and what is described by Wagner and Shahjahan (2015, p. 245)³⁹ as “a growing number of other scholars” who are making a case for the body to be included in learning. The two new theoretical concepts as described in this paragraph, represent a critique of current critical theory and critical theorising processes that are too focused on rational, cognitive processes of knowledge creation. Yet, the academic literature is limited and there is a need for further research and theory building related to these concepts.

8.2.4. Embodied Learning Through Mindfulness and Social Change

Although there is some evidence of current debates on embodied learning in the academic literature, there is very little evidence of practical suggestions of how to introduce embodied learning in the adult education and learning environment. Norris (2001) proposes that learning movements and postures through dance is one way to engage the body in learning. Orr (2002), Berila (2014), Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) and Chari (2016) point out that mindfulness represents a way to introduce embodied learning into pedagogical practices. The findings of my study confirm this perspective that, through mindfulness and more specifically the MBSR programme, embodied learning can be introduced in an adult education and learning environment, creating new knowledge in the process.

Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) claim that any pedagogical practice aimed at social change must engage in multiple world views, and one way to achieve this is by including the body in the process of learning through mindfulness. Orr (2002), Berila (2014) and Chari (2016) verify this perspective with Chari (2016, p. 228) describing mindfulness as “a set of practices that can potentially foster alternative relationships between mind and body at a practical level”. Chari (2016, p. 228) adds that “mindfulness practices can challenge extant forms of mind-body inhabitation both in theory and practice, in scholarship, and in society” (Chari, 2016, p. 228). This argument is confirmed in my study as the adult learners revealed how they “returned” to the body to create new knowledge.

³⁹ Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) cite Ng(2008), Wilcox (2009), Berila (2014) and Perry and Medina (2011)

Embodied learning through mindfulness as identified in this study addresses one of the critiques in the academic literature of Western mindfulness and the MBSR programme. The argument is that mindfulness in a Western culture emphasises cognitive knowledge, whereas mindfulness comes from a culture where subjective experience is regarded as a source of knowledge (Chiesa, 2013). Yet, the findings of my study show that embodied learning through mindfulness is central to mindfulness in a Western culture. Furthermore, the MBSR programme curriculum illustrates that in the MBSR programme, which is aimed at cultivating mindfulness, the focus is on embodiment and the knowledge that is available through the body, indicating the awareness and experience of the body as a source of knowledge (Didonna, 2009; McCown, Reibel & Micozzi, 2010; Cullen, 2011). Authors such as McCown et al. (2010) and Berila (2014) acknowledge that the Western society is often “disconnected” from their bodies. McCown et al. (2010) report that many adult learners who participated in an MBSR programme aimed at cultivating mindfulness, had very little awareness of their bodies and embodied knowledge, except for the embodied experiences that they were trying to avoid such as pain and discomfort. Similarly, Kabat-Zinn (2011, p 288) concurs that human beings in the Western world are mostly not aware of their own bodies and it can be highly beneficial for them to cultivate this awareness.

Didonna (2009, p. 5) points out that “Cartesian dualism of the mind and body has permeated Western culture to the point that it has nearly eliminated the entire sphere of body-mind interactions”. However, Didonna (2009) and Panaïoti (2015) posit the view that mindfulness encourages the dialogue between the Western and the Eastern world. Panaïoti (2015, p. 2) notes that “a greater interest in science and philosophy to a foreign tradition surely indicates that a healthy spirit of cosmopolitanism has at last begun to affirm itself in the West”. Through mindfulness, an individual develops a relationship with bodily experiences that is “substantially different from that adopted in Western culture” (Didonna, 2009, p. 5). This connection with the experience of the body, according to Didonna (2009, p. 5), “has basically been lost in Western culture”. The findings of my study confirm Didonna’s claim that mindfulness is a way to reconnect to the experiences of the body, and by doing so, creates new knowledge on embodied learning through mindfulness and the body as a site of knowledge production and learning.

Supporting this view, Michalak, Burg and Heidenreich (2012, p. 197) observe “that the body is highly relevant” in programmes that focus on cultivating mindfulness. Similarly Hölzel, Lazar et al. (2011) recognise body awareness as a central component of mindfulness and Berila (2014) concurs that mindfulness is a tool that can create body awareness. However, others like Panaïoti (2015) contend that mindfulness, as associated with the MBSR programme and the work of Kabat-Zinn, has strong Western ideological roots. According to Panaïoti (2015), these Western ideological roots lead to the tendency to overlook alternative types of knowledge, such as embodied knowledge, which is available through mindfulness. Rapgay and Bystrisky (2009) agree with this notion stating that “in the field of research in mindfulness, there is an increasing attempt to modify the concept of mindfulness to configure with cognitive theories and models”. This perspective was confirmed by the literature review, which revealed several attempts to incorporate mindfulness in cognitive theories and models. The findings of my study challenge the argument of Rapgay and Bystrisky (2009) and Panaïoti (2015), as the data confirm that embodied learning through mindfulness and the body as a site of knowledge production and learning was central to the learning process during the MBSR programme. In fact, the data illustrate that embodied learning has not been lost in Western mindfulness. In this way, the findings validate the arguments by Hölzel, Lazar et al. (2011), Michalak et al. (2012), and Berila (2014) that body awareness is a central component of mindfulness.

Yet, it is important to acknowledge that there is a need to include embodied learning in theorising processes concerning mindfulness and the MBSR programme in the Western world. With the exception of Hölzel, Lazar et al. (2011), Michalak et al. (2012), Berila, (2014), Caldwell (2014), Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) and Chari (2016), there was insignificant evidence of the consideration of embodied learning pertaining to mindfulness in the academic literature. Although the present study contributes to new knowledge about embodied learning through mindfulness, and the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, further theoretical work on the relationship between embodied learning and mindfulness is needed.

8.3. MAIN THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS AND NEW KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO MINDFULNESS, EMANCIPATORY LEARNING AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In the following sections I outline my main theoretical inferences and new knowledge that was created during this study as a result of the data analysis process and the incorporation of a new theoretical framework.

8.3.1. Emancipatory Embodied Learning Through Mindfulness

The relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change can be supported and further developed by considering the theoretical concepts that were discussed in the earlier sections, namely embodied learning through mindfulness and the body as a site of knowledge production and learning. The data show that adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme ignored the body and emotions prior to their participation in the programme. This lack of considering the body and emotions points to a shared meaning perspective among the adult learners that the body and emotions should not be included in the knowledge-creation process. This meaning perspective was also reflected in the initial theoretical framework, which focused on rational, cognitive processes to create new knowledge. Brookfield (2000a, p. 38) asserts that “ideologies . . . manifest in language, social habits and cultural forms. They legitimize certain political structures and educational practices so that these come to be accepted as representing the normal order of things”. In my study, it was clear that the habit of ignoring the body and emotions and prioritising cognitive, rational processes was representative of an internalised ideology on learning. Consequently, I identified a Western perspective on learning that influenced the knowledge-creation process, not only in terms of the adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme, but also in the academic literature. As mentioned earlier, the dualism of the body and the mind, with the mind dominating the body, prominent in Western society, was highlighted during the data analysis process. The data in the study furthermore illustrate how ideological and social influences can determine meaning perspectives and guide personal actions.

Although the adult learners, who participated in the MBSR programme, did not consciously recognise the influence of a Western perspective on learning, they changed the way they learned, which is not in line with a Western perspective on learning.

Therefore, mindfulness holds the potential of emancipation from the internalised ideological and social influences of Western society. Mindfulness can thus be linked to social change as it challenges Western ideological influences concerning learning.

As alluded to earlier, the inclusion of embodied learning through mindfulness, which leads to the recognition of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, is potentially emancipatory and prompted the formulation of a new theoretical concept, ‘emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness’. Adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme offered in South Africa, were guided towards emancipation away from the perspective that the body and emotions should be ignored in the process of knowledge creation and learning. This pattern to ignore the body and emotions, as explained earlier, points to a Western perspective on learning that represents an internalised ideological construct. Furthermore, the theoretical concept of ‘emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness’, verifies the view of Berila (2014), Shahjahan (2015) and Chari (2016) that the potential of mindfulness to bring about social change is reliant on the ability of mindfulness to challenge the domination of mind over body in Western culture. Therefore, I propose that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness is potentially a vehicle for social change. I would therefore also recommend that future research on mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change should include the concept of emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness.

8.3.2. Emancipatory Embodied Learning Through Mindfulness as Motivator of New Actions

The relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change are also closely linked to how embodied learning motivates new actions. The data show that a new awareness of the body and emotions, or emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness – and not cognitive, rational knowledge – often motivated new actions among the adult learners. This finding is contrary to the academic arguments in the theoretical framework pertaining to critical theory, emancipation and emancipatory learning that emphasise the creation of rational, cognitive knowledge as the basis for new actions, in particular new actions that will create social change.

This finding suggests that critical theory and a critical approach to learning aimed at emancipation and social change should include embodied learning. In addition, the

findings of this study concur with the marginalised academic literature that argues that critical theory is overly reliant on rationality and the creation of cognitive knowledge to motivate social change. The marginalised literature also shows that it is not sufficient for people to cognitively understand social issues, but that they have to be emotionally connected to these issues in order to take action to change it. My argument is that emotions are the driving force behind social change and without emotional knowledge, rational, cognitive knowledge would not inspire action. Yet, it is important to note that I am not advocating that cognitive, rational learning processes should be completely excluded from critical theory and a critical approach to learning. Converging with the arguments of authors such as Beckett and Morris (2001), Jordi (2011) and Lawrence (2012), I posit the view that alternative forms of learning, such as embodied learning, should be on equal footing with cognitive processes of learning.

8.3.3. Emancipatory Embodied Learning Through Mindfulness as a Holistic Approach to Adult Education and Learning

Embodied learning is not taken into account in the process of transformation or emancipatory learning. Yet, my study shows that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness during an MBSR programme can support transformation and the emancipatory domain of learning. Consequently, I infer that embodied learning should be considered a sub-domain of the emancipatory domain of learning. As a result, the findings of this study concur with critiques of a critical approach to learning that is focused on rationality. Furthermore, the findings of the study concur with authors such as Langer (1993); Taylor (1997, 1998, 2001); Baumgartner (2001); Orr (2002); Duerr et al. (2003) and Dirkx (2012), who believe that there is a need for a more holistic approach to learning.

The data initiated a theory building process that proposes embodied learning as an essential building-block of a critical adult learning theory. The findings suggest that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness and the body as a site of knowledge production and learning may represent a new dimension of emancipatory learning that was not recognised by Habermas or Mezirow. It was found that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness and recognising the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, supported emancipatory learning by bringing an awareness to the experience of the body and emotions and including this in the process

of learning. As a result, the findings resonate with that of Berila (2014), Shahjahan (2015) and Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) that educational theory should be expanded to include the body in learning. I concur with the view of Lawrence (2008, p. 66) that there is a need for an “epistemic shift away from pure rational thinking”. The inclusion of emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness, which reveals the body as a site of knowledge production and learning in critical theorising processes related to adult education and learning, may just represent such an epistemic shift.

As mentioned in the preceding section, the inclusion of these two theoretical concepts in critical theorising processes, responds to the call for a more holistic approach to emancipatory learning, emancipation and critical theory. Furthermore, it creates the potential to challenge what is described by Callahan (2004, p. 82) as “critical theory’s cult of rationality”. It is therefore concluded that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness will represent a novel and more holistic approach to adult education and learning.

8.3.4. Emancipatory Embodied Learning Through Mindfulness and Transformation

The theory of transformative learning that informs emancipatory learning relies on awareness of experience as the foundation for the transformation process. This awareness of experience is turned into knowledge by means of a cognitive process of critical reflection and rational discourse.

However, this experience is compared to a disorientating dilemma. In this study, I found that the experience of a disorientating dilemma was not the foundation for the transformation process. Instead, it was the emancipatory-cognitive interest in learning that motivated the learning process among the adult learners. As a result, my findings do not correspond with the steps in the transformation process as identified by Mezirow (1981, 2009). During this study, I came to the conclusion that the experiential basis for the transformation process was a new awareness of the body and emotions. Therefore, I recommend that the body and emotions should be included in the process of learning.

I also found that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness was often sufficient to motivate new actions among the adult learners, indicating that embodied learning combined with new actions led to perspective transformation. Therefore, I

propose that, in certain instances, embodied learning can be sufficient to inspire perspective transformation. The theory of transformative learning relies on three themes to encourage transformation, namely awareness of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse. The data in this study show that embodied learning through mindfulness, which has led to the recognition of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, could activate transformation. In some cases, emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness initiated critical reflection, but it was not always the case and the relationship was weak. There was very little evidence in the data to specify rational discourse as a prominent theme in transformative learning theory. Consequently, I concluded that rational discourse was insignificant in terms of perspective transformation prompted by mindfulness and participation in the MBSR programme. Therefore, I align myself with the view of Cranton and Kasl (2012) that rational discourse is not always the route to perspective transformation.

8.3.5. Stress and Anxiety Reframed as a Social Dilemma

The relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change can also be further explored by reframing stress and anxiety, which were identified as an emancipatory-cognitive interest in learning, as a social dilemma. Almost all the adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme referred to stress and anxiety as a reason for their participation in the programme. Although the adult learners perceived anxiety and stress as an individual problem that they had to overcome themselves, the fact that almost all the adult learners, with the exception of one, referred to this as the primary reason for their participation, points to a broader social dilemma that needs to be addressed on a social and ideological level. Rockefeller (1994), Thurman (1994), Orr (2002), Hyland (2009), Cho (2010) and Kabat-Zinn (2011, 2013), assume that mindfulness will have a social impact through its expanding influence on individual change. Yet, authors such as Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) contend that individual change is not enough. I agree with Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) that more emphasis should be placed on mindfulness in relation to social change and with the perspective of Oppenheim (2013), Purser (2015), Chari (2016) and Walsh (2016) that mindfulness has the potential to generate social change if the focus is shifted from the individual to society. Recognising stress and anxiety as a broader social dilemma, rather than an individual problem, may be one way to shift the focus from the individual to society.

Returning once again to the academic literature to inform my findings, I found that although stress is discussed extensively in the academic literature, it is mostly focused on helping individuals to deal and cope with stress. Authors such as Nightingale and Cromby (2001), Donnelly and Long (2003), Long and Kahn (2005) as well as Howell (2001), point out that the popular literature makes it the responsibility of the individual to cope with stress while not addressing the social issues that may be responsible for the stress. In line with a critical theoretical perspective, Nightingale and Cromby (2001, p. 117) argue that the individual cannot be separated from the “social, material, political and economic circumstances within which we reside”. This view is supported by Donnelly and Long (2003⁴⁰) who identify a number of themes that are linked to stress. These themes describe stress as an unavoidable part of modern society where the focus is on achievement and little value is placed on relaxation. In other words, people have to deal with increasing levels of stress, yet they are seemingly unable to reduce their own stress levels. This observation is verified by Harkness et al. (2005) and Doublet (2000).

Stress is recognised to be harmful and the link between stress and both physiological and psychological illness is widely accepted (Donnelly & Long, 2003; Harkness et al., 2005; Doublet, 2000). However, the accepted norm is that it is the individual’s responsibility to deal with stress while contextual factors are ignored. It can even be seen as a weakness if an individual struggles to cope with stress (Donnelly & Long, 2003; Harkness et al., 2005; Long & Khan, 2005). However, Harkness et al. (2005) and Doublet (2000) posit that feeling stressed has almost become a ‘status symbol’, indicating that one works hard and that one’s work is important. It is clear that stress is “naturalised, normalised, problematised, and individualised” (Donnelly & Long, 2003, p. 399).

I align my perspective with authors such as Howell (2001), Nightingale and Cromby (2001), Donnelly and Long (2003) and Long and Kahn (2005), who recommend that social issues associated with stress should be investigated. The extensive academic literature on mindfulness, stress and anxiety has shown that mindfulness is an effective way to deal with stress and anxiety. Therefore, mindfulness has the potential to address social and ideological challenges that are linked to stress and anxiety. Yet, similar to what Donnelly and Long (2003) emphasise, in the academic literature on mindfulness, it

⁴⁰ Donnelly and Long cite Pollock, (1988); Mullhall, (1996); Meyerson, (1998) and Whittaker and Connor, (1998)

is the individual's responsibility to deal with stress. This view points to a theoretical opening to reconceptualise that stress is indicative of a broader social dilemma and that mindfulness is a possible solution to address this social dilemma as there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and stress reduction. If the potential of mindfulness to address stress and anxiety, framed as a social dilemma, is further explored and investigated, it may become the "formidable force for a radical transformation of Western capitalist society", as Purser (2015, p. 42) predicts. Yet, the first step towards this "radical transformation" would be to challenge the view that stress and anxiety is an individual problem, and to acknowledge that it is in fact a broader social dilemma.

8.4. NEW THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND RECONCEPTUALISATIONS

In this section I describe new theoretical concepts and reconceptualisations as a result of the findings of this study. These concepts and reconceptualisations have the potential to be theoretical points of departure for further research on critical theory, transformative learning theory, mindfulness, and the MBSR programme. These new theoretical concepts and reconceptualisations are as follows:

- a) The influence of the Cartesian dualism of mind and body and how this ideology upholds domination and oppression needs further investigation. The new theoretical concept of 'emancipatory embodied learning' as a way to motivate individuals towards emancipation and to promote social change, should be further investigated. The assumption is that emancipation is not limited to the cognitive, and that emancipatory learning should be reconceptualised to include embodied and emotional dimensions. As emphasised earlier, I do not imply that the cognitive and rational dimensions of learning should be excluded from emancipatory learning, but rather that the new theoretical concept of 'emancipatory embodied learning' should be on equal footing with the cognitive and the rational.
- b) The academic literature shows that mindfulness is not the only way that embodied learning can be cultivated. Norris (2001), for instance, suggests that body movement is another way to encourage embodied learning. Yet, there is limited evidence of alternatives that may encourage embodied learning with the potential to initiate emancipation. Further research is necessary to identify other approaches towards embodied learning as a way to encourage emancipation and

the reconceptualisation of emancipatory learning to include the concept of embodied learning.

- c) During this study, emotions were highlighted as a powerful motivator for new actions that could lead to emancipation and transformation. The role of emotions, as an element of embodied learning that can initiate the reconceptualisation of emancipation, emancipatory learning, and transformative learning in critical theory and transformative learning theory, should be further explored.
- d) Critical theory and transformative learning theory have been criticised in the academic literature for being overly rational, and the data confirm this perspective. New theoretical concepts such as embodied learning through mindfulness and the body as a site of knowledge production and learning challenge this overly rational approach and should be included as building-blocks in critical theory and transformative learning theory. However, further research and theorising is needed. Again, I emphasise that I do not believe that rational and cognitive learning should be excluded from critical theory and transformative learning theory. I infer that we should expand our understanding of what constitutes learning in these theories.
- e) The data suggest that a disorientating dilemma can be deemed similar to an emancipatory interest in learning, and that it can motivate learning. Yet, it was not the experience of a disorientating dilemma that was the foundation for transformative and emancipatory learning. This finding points to the need of the reconceptualisation of a disorientating dilemma as an emancipatory interest in learning that motivates learning, rather than the experiential foundation for transformative learning.
- f) Transformative learning theory emphasises rational discourse as an important theme that enables transformation and emancipation. Yet, the findings of this study suggest that transformation and emancipation as a result of embodied learning can also be an individual process that does not include rational discourse with others. Therefore, the process of transformation should be reconceptualised without the inclusion of rational discourse as a prerequisite.

- g) Current academic debates illustrate that certain authors such as Forbes (2012), Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) argue that mindfulness in the Western world is not connected to social issues as it is in the traditional Eastern context and that the relationship is weak. Others, including Orr (2002), Hyland (2009) Cho (2010) and Kabat-Zinn (2011, 2013) contend that mindfulness has a social impact through its expanding influence on social change. The theoretical concepts of ‘emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness’ and ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ represent an opportunity to create theoretical connections between mindfulness, emancipation and social change in Western society. Consequently, I suggest that the connection between mindfulness, emancipation and social change is reconceptualised. At the same time, further research to strengthen this connection is needed.
- h) The data point to stress and anxiety as a shared problem, or a shared disorientating dilemma, among the adult learners, suggesting that this is a social dilemma that needs to be addressed. Stress and anxiety are usually considered individual problems, as is evident from the academic literature, and the approach to address this issue is focused on the individual. Yet, if stress and anxiety are reconceptualised as a broader social dilemma and as a disorientating dilemma that is experienced by many people, there may be alternative ways to address these issues on a social rather than on an individual level. Further research is recommended to further explore this concept.

8.5. RESEARCH AIMS

In this section I reveal how the new theoretical insights obtained and the new knowledge that were created during this study relate to my research aims that were developed at the commencement of the study. Five research aims were formulated, which will each be discussed separately along with the related new knowledge created and new insights obtained.

8.5.1. To Generate new Knowledge About the Relationships Between Mindfulness, Emancipatory Learning and Social Change

Bentz and Shapiro (1998) caution that research within a critical theoretical framework does not need to be directly associated with social change, this is the domain of critical action research. Another approach is to consider how a transformation in consciousness

can change an immediate situation. With this study, I wanted to investigate the possibility of both social and individual change pertaining to mindfulness. The data clearly illustrate individual change, but there was insignificant evidence of direct social change. In general, adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme in South Africa did not indicate an increased awareness, interest or involvement in social, political or ideological issues.

Yet, I discovered that the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change were not what I expected. In terms of the first research aim, this study illustrates that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness, which prompted the recognition of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning among the participants, revealed new, previously unconsidered relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Although the adult learners did not recognise this at first, embodied learning through mindfulness and the recognition of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, activated them towards emancipation, away from internalised ideological perspectives, which emanated from a Western perspective on learning.

8.5.2. To Investigate how Mindfulness can Facilitate Emancipatory Learning

The study reveals that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness can support the facilitation of transformative and emancipatory learning. I propose that including emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness, as an element of emancipatory learning, in facilitation processes aimed at emancipation and transformation may contribute to a more holistic and inspiring approach to transformative and emancipatory learning. In this way, I align myself with the view of Lawrence (2012, p. 12), who proposes that we should develop a pedagogy that holds embodied learning in equal esteem as cognitive learning.

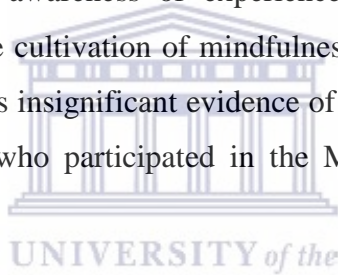
8.5.3. To Investigate how Mindfulness can Facilitate Social Change Through Emancipatory Learning

Mindfulness, the core of the MBSR programme, encourages emancipatory embodied learning, which includes awareness of both the body and emotions. It was found that emancipatory embodied learning, in particular an awareness of emotions, was often the motivating factor for new actions. In the academic literature, much emphasis is placed

on rationality to motivate new actions concerning emancipatory learning and social change, however, this study indicates that it is new knowledge about emotions, rather than cognitive knowledge, that propels action. Therefore, I deduce that mindfulness prompts embodied learning, which encourages emancipatory learning and has the potential to motivate new actions towards social change. This conclusion challenges a Western perspective on learning within a critical theoretical framework that relies on rational, cognitive processes to inspire change. New knowledge that was created during this study as well as new theoretical insights suggest that critical theory should include both embodied and rational learning processes to support emancipation, emancipatory learning and social change.

8.5.4. To Determine to What Extent Mindfulness Training Supports and Enables Transformative Learning

Transformative learning theory relies on three major themes that promote transformation. These are awareness of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse. In this study, the cultivation of mindfulness supported both the first and the second theme, but there was insignificant evidence of and support for rational discourse among the adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme. Yet, they did indicate transformation.



As highlighted earlier, transformative learning theory relies on awareness of experience for the creation of new knowledge. This awareness encourages critical reflection, which is considered learning. It was found that embodied learning through mindfulness created a new awareness of the experience of the body and emotions that was previously unavailable to the participating adult learners. This revelation in itself constitutes learning and prompts the recognition of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning. In terms of critical reflection on experience, there was evidence of the adult learners who had reflected on their emotional experiences, which created new, cognitive knowledge that was particularly valuable to the individual. However, this reflection typically did not include a critical consideration of ideological and social issues. Consequently, the relationship between embodied learning through mindfulness and critical reflection was weak. It points to a potential limitation of the MBSR programme, namely to prompt critical reflection as conceptualised in transformative learning theory.

Furthermore, there was insignificant evidence during this study that mindfulness prompted rational discourse, which is another prominent theme in transformative learning theory. Mezirow (1998c) asserts that when individuals find others that share transformed values, meaning perspectives and frames of references, it indicates social and cultural change. Yet, in this study, transformative learning was an individual process that typically did not include rational discourse with others. It was found that embodied learning, or a new awareness of the experience of the body and emotions, was often sufficient to motivate new actions. New actions combined with a new awareness indicates perspective transformation in terms of transformative learning theory, therefore I conclude that embodied learning presents an alternative approach to transformative learning. As such, I concur with authors such as Cranton and Kasl (2012), who also believe that alternative approaches to transformative learning theory should be explored.

8.5.5. To Investigate the Reasons for the Growing Popularity of Mindfulness in the Western World

In line with the academic literature, I found that most adult learners enrolled for the MBSR programme because of certain dissatisfactions with their lives. Adult learners wanted to learn how to deal with stress, anxiety, addiction and depression. This finding points to a social need for change in the Western world. Although the adult learners perceived their personal challenges as individual problems, the data suggest that these challenges may be indicative of a deeper social dilemma that requires new, creative solutions. I concur with the calls of authors such as Howell (2001), Nightingale and Cromby (2001), Donnelly and Long (2003) and Long and Kahn (2005), that social issues associated with stress and anxiety should be further investigated.

8.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section, the findings pertaining to the primary research question will be discussed first, followed by the secondary research questions.

8.6.1. Primary Research Question

In this section, the findings pertaining to the primary research question will be discussed.

8.6.1.1. The Relationships Between Mindfulness, Emancipatory Learning and Social Change

In terms of the primary research question, tensions are apparent in the academic literature that prompt the question whether mindfulness, as cultivated in the Western world and during the MBSR programme, can be linked to social change. My study confirms the view of authors such as Forbes (2012), Purser (2015) and Walsh (2016) that mindfulness does not address the traditional goals of social change such as active citizenship or the investigation of ideological forces such as capitalism, consumerism and individualism. As far as these issues are concerned, the MBSR programme did not inspire learning.

Yet, I found that new theoretical concepts such as ‘emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness’ and ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ generated new knowledge about the relationships between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change, specifically in the field of adult education and learning. This finding converges with a marginalised body of research in the academic literature that points to the need to include other, non-rational forms of knowledge in critical pedagogical approaches inspired by critical theory. However, as emphasised earlier, I do not advocate a reversal of the current status quo, meaning I do not believe that other forms of learning, such as embodied learning, should be elevated above cognitive learning. I propose that rational and non-rational forms of learning should enjoy equal status and are interdependent.

At the commencement of this study, I did not anticipate that embodied learning would take such a central role in this study, yet embodied learning creates the foundation to construct a novel approach to emancipatory learning that has the potential to bring about social change. Awareness of emotions, which is a key component of embodied learning, was found to be a motivating factor among the adult learners to act in a new way, which in turn, is necessary for social change. In other words, the findings suggest that embodied learning can support emancipatory learning, which has the potential to initiate social change. Consequently, I believe that embodied learning is the important link between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. Furthermore, I posit the view that this notion can contribute to current debates in the literature related to mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.

The identification of the new theoretical concept of ‘emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness’, can provide the premise for critiquing the traditional Western perspectives on learning. As explained earlier, a Western perspective on learning determines that the mind is separate from and dominates the body. However, new knowledge on emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness, challenges these dominant perspectives on learning and creates the aperture for a new perspective on learning within critical theory. Mindfulness did not enable adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme to recognise the internalised cultural forces that determine how they learn. From this point of view, the potential for mindfulness to strengthen critical pedagogical approaches and critical theory is limited and the relationship between mindfulness, emancipation and social change is weak. However, it still encouraged the adult learners to learn in a new way, through embodied learning, which was not in line with the dominant cultural influences. This suggests that mindfulness has the potential to encourage a more holistic approach to emancipatory learning which does not limit emancipatory learning to cognitive, rational processes. I therefore propose that, in combination with cognitive information about social and ideological issues, mindfulness can promote and inspire a powerful and more holistic approach to emancipatory learning.

8.6.2. Secondary Research Questions

Four secondary research questions were formulated to address the primary research question and will be discussed in this section.

8.6.2.1. Mindfulness as an Instrument to Support the Learning Needs Located in the Domains of Instrumental, Communicative and Emancipatory Learning

It was found that mindfulness, through the cultivation of embodied learning during the MBSR programme, was mainly applicable to the learning needs located in the domain of emancipatory learning. There was no significant evidence that mindfulness supported instrumental learning or communicative learning. Yet, I do recognise that a different theoretical framework and alternative data analysis processes may result in a different conclusion.

8.6.2.2. The Extent to Which Mindfulness can Prompt the Emergence of a new Domain of Learning

Although the identification of a new domain of learning may have been somewhat overly ambitious, my study prompts the identification of emancipatory embodied learning as a sub-domain within the domain of emancipatory learning. It was found that embodied learning can cultivate emancipatory learning in a way that has not been recognised before, therefore, it can be considered a sub-domain of emancipatory learning. Furthermore, supporting the conceptualisation of emancipatory embodied learning as a sub-domain of emancipatory learning, embodied learning creates non-rational knowledge about emancipation that is not available through rational, cognitive processes. In this way embodied learning can complement rational, cognitive processes of learning.

8.6.2.3. How Mindfulness can Generate Perspective Transformation that Contributes to Critical Transformative Learning

It was found that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness was often sufficient to motivate new actions among the participating adult learners, indicating a new awareness, combined with new actions, which equates to perspective transformation. Therefore, I infer that embodied learning alone can be sufficient to inspire perspective transformation. The data show that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness represents a new awareness of the experience of the body and emotions with the potential to inspire transformation. It was found that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness had the potential to initiate cognitive processes of reflection, but that it was not always the case. Furthermore, reflection usually did not include reflection on social, cultural and ideological assumptions which would be typical of critical reflection, a prominent theme of transformative learning theory. There was also very little evidence in the data to substantiate rational discourse that included others, another prominent theme in transformative learning theory. Rather, transformative learning was seen as an individual process where the individual simply acted on new knowledge, whether this was created through non-cognitive or cognitive processes of learning. Consequently, I concluded that these themes of transformative learning theory were insignificant in terms of perspective transformation that was prompted by mindfulness. Once again, I do not dismiss critical reflection and rational

discourse as important theoretical concepts related to transformative learning, but I do believe that learning prompted by the MBSR programme does not support these concepts in learning. For mindfulness to promote critical reflection on ideological and social issues and rational discourse with others about these issues, it will have to be included in the MBSR programme curriculum.

8.6.2.4. The Role of Mindfulness in Generating Critical Transformative Learning as a Foundation for Social Change

In this study I propose that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness can create a new awareness of the experience of the body and emotions that can activate transformative learning. Embodied learning is a non-rational and experiential way of knowing that has the potential to provide the motivation for new actions that are necessary for transformation and social change.

The study highlights that cognitive knowledge is often not sufficient to motivate new actions and that an alternative way to create knowledge, such as embodied learning, can inspire such motivation and complement cognitive knowledge. It is important to note that cultivating mindfulness did not highlight ideological issues or the need for social change to most adult learners participating in the MBSR programme. Although ideological influences such as a Western perspective on learning was identified in the data, adult learners did not consciously recognise these ideological influences. Yet, the data suggest that combining cognitive knowledge on social and ideological issues with embodied knowledge, has the potential to be a powerful, inspiring and holistic approach to transformation aimed at social change.

8.7. KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings emerged from the study.

- a) New theoretical concepts such as ‘emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness’ and ‘the body as a site of knowledge production and learning’ were formulated as a result of data collected during the MBSR programme. New knowledge about these theoretical concepts suggest that embodied learning is transformative and emancipatory as it holds the potential to emancipate adult learners from an internalised Western perspective on learning, albeit unconsciously.

- b) New knowledge, based on the data collected from adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme, suggests that emancipatory embodied learning represents a link that creates a contingent relationship between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change.
- c) Emancipatory embodied learning should be included as a theoretical building-block in critical theory and critical approaches to adult education and learning, for example transformative learning theory, as it represents a more holistic approach towards learning that can support rational knowledge and social change.
- d) Emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness, prompted by participation in the MBSR programme, can create emotional knowledge that motivates new actions with the potential to bring about social change. In this way it can also complement cognitive, rational learning aimed at social change.
- e) Transformative learning theory for adult learners should include embodied learning as a theoretical building-block as it supports the transformation process.
- f) Stress and anxiety are social dilemmas that should be factored in future research studies about the MBSR programme.

8.8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES

8.8.1. Mindfulness-Based Adult Learning Programmes Should Highlight Ideological Influences on Learning

The data in this study show that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness introduced the concept of the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, and challenged internalised ideological Western perspectives on learning in adult learners, who participated in the MBSR programme. Emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness illustrates a movement towards emancipation from a Western perspective on learning and in this way, I deduced that mindfulness can initiate social change. Yet, adult learners who participated in the MBSR programme were unaware of this emancipation and did not consciously recognise the ideological and social influences that determined how they created knowledge prior to participating in the MBSR programme. Highlighting how ideological and social issues influence learning during a

mindfulness-based adult learning programme, such as the MBSR programme, may pave the way for further exploration of ideological and social issues through mindfulness.

Mindfulness in the Western world and the MBSR programme, in particular, have been critiqued for being too focused on the individual and not considering society at large. By making the connection between learning and social and ideological influences more explicit, mindfulness programmes in the Western world, and in particular the MBSR programme, can adopt a more balanced approach and connect the individual to society through embodied learning.

8.8.2. Mindfulness-Based Adult Learning Programmes Should Explore Stress and Anxiety as a Social Dilemma

Stress and anxiety is a shared problem among many members of society. Emphasising stress and anxiety as social dilemmas, rather than an individual problem during mindfulness training, can highlight social and ideological influences in the daily lives of adult learners. This creates the opportunity for further exploration of social and ideological influences that cause oppression and domination. At the very least, it can help adult learners to recognise how ideology and society affect them personally.

8.8.3. Adult Education and Learning Programmes Aimed at Emancipatory Learning and Social Change Should Include Mindfulness

The data demonstrate the potential of embodied learning through mindfulness and recognising the body as a site of knowledge production and learning, to complement critical and transformative pedagogical approaches aimed at social change. Therefore, embodied learning through mindfulness should be included in adult education and learning programmes aimed at social change.

Mindfulness, as introduced during the MBSR programme, is an experiential approach to learning that can be used to establish the body as a site of knowledge production and learning. In this way it illustrates, in a very practical way, how social and ideological issues influence how we learn. Although emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness, prompts unintentional emancipation from an internalised ideological perspective, bringing this emancipation to the consciousness of the learner can demonstrate the effect of ideological and social influences on the individual in an experiential and personal manner. Once adult learners have recognised the influence of

ideological and social forces experientially, they may be able to expand this realisation to include other areas in their lives. In this way it has the potential to create the opening for further exploration of other manifestations of ideological and social influences.

The study also demonstrates that embodied learning through mindfulness, prompted by participation in the MBSR programme, encourages the creation of emotional knowledge that often is the motivating factor for new actions. It shows that cognitive knowledge alone is not adequate to bring about change. Consequently, critical and transformative educators, who want to encourage action towards social change, should find new ways to include emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness in pedagogical approaches. Such an inclusion has the potential to create emotional knowledge that can motivate action, complement cognitive knowledge and promote social change.

The academic literature confirms the dire need for education aimed at emancipatory learning and social change, in the field of adult learning and education, that is more holistic and adopts a more balanced approach towards learning. This means that the body and mind should be in balance and that the one does not dominate the other. Emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness can support the development of such an approach and critical educators should find ways to include it in a critical curriculum.

8.8.4. Embodied Learning Should be Included in South African Adult Education and Learning Programmes Aimed at Social Change

As mentioned earlier, the new knowledge created during this study suggests that cognitive knowledge alone is not sufficient to inspire action for social change. Rather, it is new emotional knowledge that is the catalyst for new actions. Therefore, critical educators in a South African context, have to find ways to introduce embodied learning in critical adult education and learning environments. Mindfulness and participation in the MBSR programme is one way to do this and may inspire the emotional insights that are necessary for South Africans to take action towards social change. There may be other ways to introduce embodied learning in a South African context, but these fall beyond the scope of this study and may be the subject of future research.

8.8.5. Mindfulness Should be Included in South African University Programmes

The new knowledge created during this study shows that emancipatory embodied learning through mindfulness is a powerful process of learning that can complement rational knowledge-creation processes. Worldwide, the University of California in the United States (US), Bangor University in North-Wales and the University of Aberdeen in Scotland are introducing mindfulness in their higher education programmes. In South Africa, the University of Cape Town has introduced mindfulness in their MBA programme, while Stellenbosch University also offers a post-graduate certification programme in mindfulness. However, these programmes reach a limited number of students and more programmes, such as the MBSR programme, should be offered at universities throughout South Africa. Furthermore, undergraduate programmes should also be included in this wider offering of mindfulness at university level.

8.8.6. Mindfulness Should be Included in Training Programmes for Educators in South Africa

New knowledge created during this study shows that mindfulness fosters a more holistic approach to education and learning which complement rational knowledge-creation processes. Therefore, mindfulness should be introduced in teaching and training programmes for educators in South Africa to enable educators and trainers to incorporate a more holistic approach in their education and learning programmes in a South African context.

8.9. CONCLUSION AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

On a personal note, the new knowledge that was created during this study was not what I expected. As mentioned before, I did not anticipate the central role that the body and emotions would take in adult learning during the MBSR programme offered in South Africa, nor did I predict that this would be the link between mindfulness, emancipatory learning and social change. I guess, if I had anticipated my findings, the research would have been pointless. My critical theoretical framework unfortunately had limited potential for analysing and interpreting this very central theme of embodied learning in the data. As a result, I had to revisit the academic literature to support the data analysis process. In future, I will approach research on mindfulness differently. Having discovered the literature on embodied learning in adult education and learning, I may

also engage with feminist and anti-racist literature, which I have found could also be informative to embodied learning.

McCabe and Holmes (2009) propose that the creation of new, emancipatory knowledge is not limited to the research on adult learners, but should also include the researcher themselves. I must admit that, at the commencement of this study, I was not entirely sure what my personal emancipation would be. I am an experienced mindfulness practitioner and very familiar with the MBSR programme, having both participated in it and taught it. Consequently, I was slightly sceptical and not sure if I would be able to relate new knowledge to my own, personal emancipation. Yet, reflecting on my own internalised ideological beliefs on what constitutes learning, I must admit that I, like the adult learners in this study, was also trapped in a Western perspective on learning. Discovering embodied learning and a Western perspective on learning made me realise that I could not exclude myself from the movement towards emancipation from a Western perspective on learning.

As a researcher I had a similar social and cultural background as most of the adult learners who participated in this study. Within a critical-emancipatory paradigm, the focus is on understanding the meaning of human experience, an assumption that is shared with the interpretive paradigm. However, within a critical-emancipatory paradigm, the aim is to discover the social and cultural origins of this interpretation of experience. I believe that accepting the interpretation of human experience presented by adult learners, without questioning the social and cultural influences that guide this interpretation, would have resulted in limited insights. However, because I shared certain social and cultural norms with the adult learners who participated in the study, it was particularly challenging for me to recognise these influences. In my opinion, an interpretive paradigm is limited as it does not allow the researcher to explore social and cultural influences, which is necessary if one wants to create knowledge related to emancipation and social change. Yet, I discovered that working in one's own social and cultural environment can make it very challenging to recognise social and cultural assumptions. It may even result in both the researcher and the participants accepting certain interpretations of experience without questioning the social and cultural roots of these interpretations.

Despite of the aforementioned challenges, as I present these findings, conclusions and recommendations of this final chapter, I cannot avoid reflecting on the need for balance. I am aware of calls in general society for a more balanced approach to living for health reasons, and this call for balance is echoed in this study. The only difference is that in this case the need is for a more balanced approach to teaching and learning. Lawrence (2012, p. 12) concludes: “We have a long way to go before embodied knowing is taken seriously in our curriculum and in our practice”. It is my hope that this study is a small step in that direction.



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APPENDIX A:
PRE-COURSE SELF- COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email address: _____

PROFILE

1. Age _____

2. Race _____

3. Gender _____

4. Highest level of education _____

5. Are you: _____

Single	Married	Divorced	Living with a partner
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(please circle the appropriate answer)

6. Dependents _____

7. Do you earn an income? _____

8. If yes, what is your occupation?

9. Please indicate your approximate annual income:

0-R150 000	R150 000-R250 000	R250 000-R400 000	R400 000+
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(please circle the appropriate answer)

10. How would you describe mindfulness?

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

1. Are you involved in any of these organisations? If yes, please circle the appropriate answer and indicate the specific organisation in the space provided.

Church Organisations	
Spiritual Organisations	
Education Organisations (committees/ boards/ councils/ school governing bodies)	
Voluntary Organisations	
Trade Unions/ Work Committees	
Political Party/ Political Organisation	
Yoga/ Meditation Organisations	

MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS COURSE

1. Why did you enrol for this course in mindfulness?

2. What do you expect from this course?

**APPENDIX B:
PRE- COURSE LIKERT SCALE**

**CAPACITY FOR TRANSFORMATION THROUGH YOUR PARTICIPATION
IN THIS COURSE**

Please answer the following questions by indicating the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am impatient with myself					
I am unaware of the struggles of other people close to me					
I accept that my opinions and beliefs are not always correct					
I am forgetful					
I am impatient with others					
My perceptions are the truth					
I am not active in my community					
I am good at solving problems					
I struggle to accept the opinions of others					
I am compassionate towards myself					
I have empathy for other people					
I am fulfilled and my life is meaningful					
I take action to make a positive contribution to society					
I have good interpersonal relationships					
I am aware of my own thoughts					
I struggle to stay calm during confrontations					
I am a good person					
I struggle to deal with change					
I am unkind towards others					
I like myself					
It is not my responsibility to help people I do not know personally					
I respect people from a different racial background					
I help people close to me					
I am aware of the struggles of people I do not know personally					
I make fun of people with a different cultural background than my own					
I live in a society where everybody have equal opportunities					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am intolerant towards people who are different from me					
Politics has nothing to do with me					
I struggle to concentrate at work					
Everybody suffers					
I am a good listener					
My emotions control me					
My religious view is the only acceptable option					
I question my own beliefs					
I am efficient at work					



APPENDIX C:
POST-COURSE SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

1. How would you describe mindfulness?

2. Did you experience mindfulness?

3. Did you attend all the sessions during the 8 weeks?

3.1 If no, please indicate which of these sessions you did not attend by making a cross next to the applicable session:

Week 1 Session	
Week 2 Session	
Week 3 Session	
Week 4 Session	
Week 5 Session	
Week 6 Session	
Week 7 Session	
Week 8 Session	
Full day Session	

**APPENDIX D:
POST-COURSE LIKERT SCALE**

**CAPACITY FOR TRANSFORMATION THROUGH YOUR PARTICIPATION
IN THIS COURSE**

Please answer the following questions by indicating the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am impatient with myself					
I am unaware of the struggles of other people close to me					
I accept that my opinions and beliefs are not always correct					
I am forgetful					
I am impatient with others					
My perceptions are the truth					
I am not active in my community					
I am good at solving problems					
I struggle to accept the opinions of others					
I am compassionate towards myself					
I have empathy for other people					
I am fulfilled and my life is meaningful					
I take action to make a positive contribution to society					
I have good interpersonal relationships					
I am aware of my own thoughts					
I struggle to stay calm during confrontations					
I am a good person					
I struggle to deal with change					
I am unkind towards others					
I like myself					
It is not my responsibility to help people I do not know personally					
I respect people from a different racial background					
I help people close to me					
I am aware of the struggles of people I do not know personally					
I make fun of people with a different cultural background than my own					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I live in a society where everybody have equal opportunities					
I am intolerant towards people who are different from me					
Politics has nothing to do with me					
I struggle to concentrate at work					
Everybody suffers					
I am a good listener					
My emotions control me					
My religious view is the only acceptable option					
I question my own beliefs					
I am efficient at work					



APPENDIX E:
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name: _____

INTRODUCTION

1 How would you describe mindfulness?

.

2 What did you experience as mindfulness during the 8 weeks of the course?

.

MINDFULNESS AND EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION

1. In the questionnaire that you complete you said that your expectations for this course were.....Did it meet your expectations?

1.1 Did your expectations change during the course? If yes, please explain.

2. In the questionnaire that you completed you said that your reason for participation was..... Do you think there were other people participating in the course that had similar reasons for participation?

2.1 If yes, did you discuss it with them?

2.2 If yes, did these discussions influence you?

3. Did you learn anything about yourself during this course? Is yes, please explain

4. Do you think about yourself differently? If yes, please explain.

5. Did the experience of mindfulness make you more aware of your body?

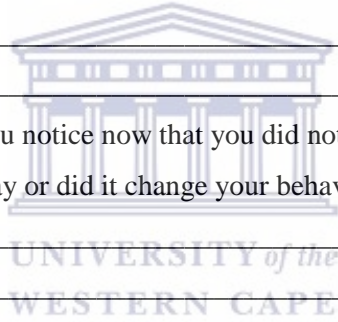
5.1 If yes, could you please say more about it?

6. Were you able to recognise your thoughts during meditations?

6.1 If yes, how did you respond?

6.2 Did this influence your daily life in any way?

5. Is there anything that you notice now that you did not notice before? If yes, does it influence your daily life in any way or did it change your behaviour?



6. Did you become aware of strong emotions during meditations?

6.1 If yes, what kind of emotions were you aware of?

6.2 How did you respond to these emotions?

6.3 Did this influence your daily life in any way? If so, please explain.

7. Did you feel any spiritual connections during meditation?

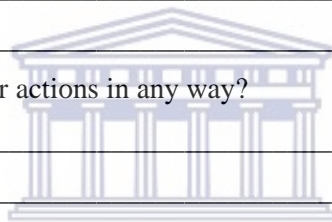
7.1 If so, could you say more about this?

7.2 Did this influence your daily life in any way?

7. Have what you consider to be good or bad, right or wrong, true or false, changed in any way?

7.1 If yes, would you like to tell me more about it?

7.2 If yes, did it change your actions in any way?



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8. Have you taken on any new responsibilities after participating in this course?

8.1 If yes, are you comfortable with these new responsibilities? Please explain (step 9 development of confidence)

9. Has anything at work changed as a result of participating in this course? If so, please explain.

10. Is there anything that you would like to change at work after participation in this course?

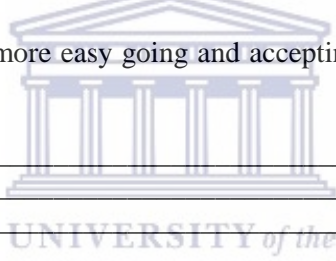
10.1 If yes, would you do anything about it?

10.2 If yes, what will you do to bring about this change? (step 5 and 6)

11. Do you feel the need to make any changes in your life after participating in this course? If yes, please explain.

EXPERIENCE OF MINDFULNESS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

1. Would you say you are more easy going and accepting of others after this course? If yes, please explain.



2. Has your relationship with other people changed at all? If yes, please explain.

3. Has the way that you look at the world changed in any way? For example politically, economically, socially? If yes, please explain.

4. Have any of your actions related to the wider society changed? If yes, please explain.

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

1. Have any of your goals in life changed as a result of this course? If yes, please explain.

2. Is there anything that you will do differently in the future? If yes, please explain.

3. Will you continue to practise mindfulness? If yes, why?



APPENDIX F:

NARRATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Section A: Life Story

The questions below will be asked at the beginning of the interview to help the interviewee to tell their story.

Tell me more about yourself

Where did you grow up?

Do you have family?

Do you enjoy your working fororganisation?/Do you enjoy your job? (If the respondent indicated during the semi-structured interview that they were currently employed or working for an organisation)

Any hobbies or other activities that you are interested in?

How do you find spiritual or religious expression? Has this changed?

Section B: Involvement/Interest in issues related to social change/awareness

Once the participant has finished their story they will be prompted to discuss their interest in social change/awareness

Have you always been interested or involved in social justice issues? Please tell me more about this.

Are there any specific events in your life that triggered/further developed this interest/involvement?

Section C: Further questions

When the participant has answered the question in section B they will be asked to elaborate, if necessary, on areas of specific interest that they mentioned.

Please tell me more about (insert specific topic of interest)

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APPENDIX G:

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535

South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2801

Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2481

Website: www.uwc.ac.za

Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za

This information sheet provides you with information about the research study that I am conducting to satisfy the requirements for my doctoral degree in education at the University of the Western Cape. You have been selected to participate in this study because you have recently enrolled for the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course. With this information sheet I would like to present you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail should you decide to participate.

There is a growing interest in Western society in mindfulness, the benefits associated with it and the methods that cultivate mindfulness. It can be argued that the benefits associated with mindfulness and the possibility of a more meaningful life, fulfilment, health and wellbeing is driving the increased interest in mindfulness. This aspiration for a better way of living can be considered a critique of the current society and prompts the question whether this is an indication of a critical awakening in the West. Within this context, the purpose of this study will be to explore the relationship between critical theory, transformative learning and mindfulness.

Participation in the study is voluntary and there will be three phases to this project. During the first phase you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire before and after the MBSR course. In the second phase of the study I will conduct interviews with selected participants and during the third phase a small number of participants will be contacted for follow-up interviews. The interviews will take place at a time and place that is convenient to you. Please note that you may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish and may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 072 990 8590 or via email at lizahamman@hotmail.com. You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Zelda Groener, at 021-9592801 or email her at zgroener@uwc.ac.za.

I would like to thank you in advance for considering participating in this research study.



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APPENDIX H:

LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF IMISA

Liza Hamman
42 Dukes Estate
Hoogenhout Street
Wellington
7655

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2801

Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2481

Website: www.uwc.ac.za

Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za

Email: lizahamman@hotmail.com

(Insert Date)

Dr. Simon Whitesman
Chair Person
The Institute for Mindfulness South Africa

Dear Dr. Whitesman,

Request for Permission to Conduct a Research Study

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study pertaining to the Mindfulness Stress Reduction Course offered by trainers associated with the Institute for Mindfulness South Africa (IMISA). I am conducting this study in fulfilment of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in adult education from the University of the Western Cape. The study is entitled “Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness: A case study of a mindfulness training programme” and will explore the potential relation between critical theory, transformative learning and mindfulness.

I would like to initiate contact with MBSR course facilitators listed on the IMISA website to request permission to collect data from MBSR course participants. Data will be collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. Before commencement of the course, research participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire and at the conclusion of the course they will be asked to complete one again. To collect the interview data, selected participants will be contacted to arrange a suitable time and place for an interview. A small number of participants will be contacted for a second interview. Participation will be voluntary, data will be collected in the strictest confidentiality and the identity of the participants as well as the facilitator will remain confidential. No costs will be incurred by either the facilitators or the individual participants.



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If permission is granted, course participants will be invited to participate and will be presented with a letter explaining the purpose of this study. Course participants, who volunteer to participate in the research study, will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to me at the beginning of the data collection process (please find copies of the letter and consent form enclosed).

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated and I will be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Liza Hamman



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APPENDIX I:

CONSENT FORM (CHAIR PERSON IMISA)

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2801
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2481
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za

Research title: Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness: A case study of a mindfulness training programme

Researcher:

Ms. Liza Hamman
lizah@bolandcollege.com
072 990 8590

Supervisor:

Prof. Zelda Groener
zgroener@uwc.ac.za
021-9592801

The purpose of the research is to investigate Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness in relation to a mindfulness training programme. It is important to note that my intention with this research will not be to judge or evaluate the perspectives and opinions of participants but to know and understand their personal perceptions and experiences.

Please note that:

- Participation is voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw at any time without prejudice.
- The results of the questionnaires will be recorded, analysed and interpreted
- The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The recordings and the transcripts will be stored in a safe place for five years after which it will be destroyed.
- The participant's identity, the name of the training programme and all other records will be strictly confidential. In order to protect participants' identity pseudonyms will be used when writing up and analysing the data and all identifying descriptors will be removed from the data.

Statement of Consent

I have reviewed the above mentioned terms and any questions that I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby give permission to Ms Liza Hamman to approach MBSR course facilitators on the condition that the above mentioned stipulations are honoured.

Name: Dr. Simon Whitesman

Signed:

Date:

Place:



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APPENDIX J:

LETTER TO REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ADDRESSED TO THE COURSE FACILITATOR

Liza Hamman
42 Dukes Estate
Hoogenhout Street
Wellington
7655

Email: lizahamman@hotmail.com

(Insert Date)

Dear (Insert Name)

Request for Permission to Conduct Research Study

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study pertaining to the Mindfulness Stress Reduction (MBSR) Course facilitated by you. I am conducting this study in fulfilment of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in adult education from the University of the Western Cape. The study is entitled 'Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness: A case study of a mindfulness training programme' and will explore the potential relation between critical theory, transformative learning and mindfulness.

It is my hope that you will allow me to recruit research participants for this study from course participants scheduled to commence a MBSR course in the near future. Data will be collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. Before commencement of the course, research participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire and at the conclusion of the course they will be asked to complete one again. To collect the interview data, selected participants will be contacted to arrange a suitable time and place for an interview. A small number of participants will be contacted for a second interview. The data collected will be analysed but individual results of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all identifying descriptors, such as names, will be removed from the data.

If permission is granted, course participants will be invited to participate and will be presented with a letter explaining the purpose of this study. Course participants, who volunteer to participate in the research study, will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to me at the beginning of the data collection process (please find copies of the letter and consent form enclosed).

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated and I will be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Liza Hamman



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APPENDIX K:

CONSENT FORM (COURSE FACILITATORS)

Research title: Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness: A case study of a mindfulness training programme

Researcher:
Ms. Liza Hamman
lizah@bolandcollege.com
072 990 8590

Supervisor:
Prof. Zelda Groener
zgroener@uwc.ac.za
021-9592801

The purpose of the research is to investigate Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness in relation to a mindfulness training programme. It is important to note that my intention with this research will not be to judge or evaluate the perspectives and opinions of participants but to know and understand their personal perceptions and experiences.

Please note that:

- Participation is voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw at any time without prejudice.
- The results of the questionnaires will be recorded, analysed and interpreted
- The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The recordings and the transcripts will be stored in a safe place for five years after which it will be destroyed.
- The participant's identity, the name of the training programme and all other records will be strictly confidential. In order to protect participants' identity pseudonyms will be used when writing up and analysing the data and all identifying descriptors will be removed from the data.

Statement of Consent

I have reviewed the above mentioned terms and any questions that I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby give permission to Ms Liza Hamman to approach MBSR course participants on the condition that the above mentioned stipulations are honoured.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Place:



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

APPENDIX L:

CONSENT FORM (PARTICIPANTS)

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2801
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2481
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za

Research title: Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness: A case study of a mindfulness training programme

Researcher:
Ms. Liza Hamman
lizah@bolandcollege.com
072 990 8590

Supervisor:
Prof. Zelda Groener
zgroener@uwc.ac.za
021-9592801

The purpose of the research is to investigate Critical Theory, Transformative Learning and Mindfulness in relation to a mindfulness training programme. It is important to note that my intention with this research will not be to judge or evaluate the perspectives and opinions of participants but to know and understand their personal perceptions and experiences.

Please note that:

- Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without prejudice.
- The results of the electronic questionnaires will be recorded, analysed and interpreted
- The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The recordings and the transcripts will be stored in a safe place for five years after which it will be destroyed.

Your identity, the name of the training programme and all other records will be strictly confidential. In order to protect your identity pseudonyms will be used when writing up and analysing the data and all identifying descriptors will be removed from the data.

Statement of Consent

I have reviewed the above mentioned terms and any questions that I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby agree to participate and I give permission to Ms Liza Hamman to use the information collected for the purposes of this study on the condition that the above mentioned stipulations are honoured.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Place:

I thank you for your participation.



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APPENDIX M:
E-MAIL INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH STUDY AND
REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

Dear (insert name)

This email is an invitation to participate in a research study I am conducting to satisfy the requirements for my doctoral degree in education at the University of the Western Cape. You have been selected to participate in this study because you have recently enrolled for the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course. With this letter I would like to present you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail should you decide to participate.

There is a growing interest in Western society in mindfulness, the benefits associated with it and the methods that cultivate mindfulness. It can be argued that the benefits associated with mindfulness and the possibility of a more meaningful life, fulfilment, health and wellbeing is driving the increased interest in mindfulness. This aspiration for a better way of living can be considered a critique of the current society and prompts the question whether this is an indication of a critical awakening in the West. Within this context, the purpose of this study will be to explore the relationship between critical theory, transformative learning and mindfulness.

Participation in the study is voluntary and there will be three phases to this project. During the first phase you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire before and after the MBSR course. In the second phase of the study I will conduct interviews with selected participants and during the third phase a small number of participants will be contacted for follow-up interviews. The interviews will take place at a time and place that is convenient to you. Please note that you may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish and may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

If you are willing to participate, please click on the link below to complete the online questionnaire before your first class. Alternatively, copy and paste it into your browser. It should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

<https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s.asp?sid=9i1i9xv1oonn20c607255#/0>

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 072 990 8590 or via email at lizah@bolandcollege.com. You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Zelda Groener, at 021-9592801 or email her at zgroener@uwc.ac.za.

I would like to thank you in advance for considering participating in this research study.

Sincerely,
Liza Hamman