AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE THAT SELF-APPRAISAL, SUPPORT APPRAISAL AND FAMILY APPRAISAL PLAY IN COPING WITH ADJUSTMENT TO UNIVERSITY

LYNN LUNDALL

A minithesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Community & Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape

Supervisor: Professor Kelvin Mwaba

November 2005

Key words: education, adjustment, apartheid, stress, coping, fortitude, self-appraisal, support-appraisal, family appraisal and Student Adaptation to College questionnaire.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 5: Discussion

ABSTRACT

In this study the role played by self-appraisal, support appraisal and family appraisal in coping with adjustment to university was examined. The transition from high school to university is a change that many students experience with considerable difficulty. They are expected to adjust to the academic, social, personal and institutional demands of the university environment. In South Africa many historically disadvantaged students are pursuing a tertiary education and are expected to perform academically not only to secure a continued place at a tertiary institution but also to secure themselves a place in the competitive job market post university. While students do experience stress as a result of the demands of university life, they are able to cope and adjust due to either having a positive appraisal of themselves or the support they receive from family and others. Two hundred and seven first-year students, drawn from two faculties at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) completed the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1989). This questionnaire assessed student's self-reported appraisal of the effectiveness with which he or she was adapting to university. The Fortitude Questionnaire (FORQ) (Pretorius, 1998) was utilised to assess the student's appraisal of themselves, support from the family and support received from others. A questionnaire eliciting demographic information was also completed by students. Results of the study indicated that a positive self-appraisal was a significant predictor of adjustment to university across all dimensions namely; academic, social, personal-emotional and institutional attachment. Additionally, positive support appraisal was a predictor of social adjustment to university. These findings showed support for the hypotheses that positive self-appraisal and support appraisal played a role in predicting

adjustment to university. No significant relationship was found between family appraisal and predicting adjustment to university. This study has implications for educational institutions in that it could inform interventions that are more specifically geared toward addressing the needs of first year students. Future research should consider including a broader sample of university students (across universities, faculties and even countries) which would allow for generalisability of results.

DECLARATION

I declare that *An examination of the role that self- appraisal, support appraisal and family appraisals play in coping with adjustment to university* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

_____

Lynn Lundall November 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following persons for their significant support and encouragement:

Omar, for your unwavering support, love and belief that I could finish this.

Zuhayr, I really appreciate your patience and help with the statistics.

Meghan, my daughter, for your unconditional love and patience the past two years.

Mark, for your love, support and patience.

Prof. Mwaba, for your guidance throughout the process of this research undertaking.

My parents, siblings and friends who offered support and encouragement.

All the participants in the study, without whom this project would not be possible.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> Education offers people the ability to step outside what is usual, what has been their personal experience, and to imagine different experiences, feel affinity for different peoples, and to expand their personal horizon's beyond the norm. It can incentivise people to push themselves towards greater achievements, build self-confidence, self awareness and a feeling of self-worth (Enright, 2003).

1.1 The context

According to data posted on the Department of Education website, South Africa has approximately 12 million learners, 366 000 teachers and about 28 000 schools (http://education.pwv.gov.za, 2004). Approximately one million students are enrolled in the country's universities, technikons and many colleges. A greater number of South Africans are either in the process or have completed a higher education qualification now than during the apartheid years. Statistics show that student numbers at learning institutions rose from 480 000 in 1993 to nearly 700 000 in 2002. The greatest increases are reported in the number of African and Coloured students entering university; growing from 46% in 1993 to 66% in 2002 (http://education.pwv.gov.za, 2004). With increasing numbers of students applying to pursue tertiary education the question that arises is how successfully these students manage the transition from high school to university especially during their first year of study. Research studies

Turner, 1975). This led to the establishment of ethnically based institutions in the 'self-governing' homelands and to separate development for Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. The racial segregation resulted in white schools receiving proportionally larger financial assistance. In 1987 R6,6 billion was spent on schooling 6,7 million learners. Of this R2,6 billion was spent on less than a million white learners while only R2,5 billion was spent on more than 4,7 million African learners (Moulder, 1992). Additionally, the learner-teacher ratio for white public schools was at the mid-20 level while a 1:32 ratio was the best that was obtained in the private schooling system for blacks in 1992 (Ferrerke, Luiz and De Kadt, 1994). Schools in the rural areas suffered alarming inadequacies and inequalities in provisions compared with urban schools (Hofmeyr and McLellan, 1992). While 48% of all African primary school learners were schooled in rural areas, rural learners accounted for only 15 per cent of secondary school learners. This unequal distribution of resources and access to education has resulted in high rates of illiteracy (around 30% of adults over 15 years old) and an unacceptably low matric pass rate (http://education.pwv.gov.za).

1.1.2 Education Post Apartheid

Since 1994 when South Africa officially became a democracy, the government has been intent on rectifying the imbalances in education. Based on the premise that the previous system not only disadvantaged black students but also failed to meet the social and economic requirements of the country, a plan to restructure the face of education was initiated. Curriculum change in post-apartheid South Africa started immediately after the election in 1994 when the National Education and Training Forum began a process of syllabus revision and subject rationalisation. The purpose of this process was mainly to lay the foundations for a single national core syllabus. White Paper 3 (Department of Education, 1997) outlined a set of wide-ranging initiatives, which would attempt to redress the gross discrepancies of the past and to transform the higher education system. This transformed education system would; ensure access to a wide spectrum of educational opportunities irrespective of race, colour, gender or age. Additionally, it would endeavor to meet the employment needs of a developing economy by providing responsive programmes; provide educational programmes that would encourage a culture of human rights, critical thinkers and cultural tolerance. The Department of Education along with the Council of Higher Education (CHE) would assist institutions to address the inherited inequalities between historically black and white institutions by making funding available where

needed to enable institutions. Since the implementation of these reforms the following changes in higher education have occurred:

- Student success rates improved between 1998 and 2002, with the ratio of degree completion increasing from 66% to 69%
- The average success rates of African students rose from 57% in 1999 to 64% in 2002.
- Graduate numbers grew by 10% in the five years to 2002, from 89 000 to 98 000.
- The number of qualified post graduates grew by 40% in that period (http://www.education.pwv.gov.za).

Notwithstanding these positive achievements, research conducted by Van der Berg (2001) from most schools in six of the provinces linking school performance, as measured by matriculation pass rate, to socio-economic background, as measured by school fees, and to inputs of teaching resources concluded that the South African school system appears to still perform much as it did under apartheid as a certain percentage of students are still unable to gain access to resources.

Predominantly black schools, although now better resourced, have not improved their matriculation output in quantitative (and indeed also

qualitative) terms, whilst predominantly white schools are still performing as well as in the past. Thus, differentials between schools are largely unchanged, although the racial edge to the inequality has been reduced through the opening up of formerly white schools (Van der Berg, 2003).

1.3 Rationale for the study

It is argued that the university environment is not only competitive but also challenging, placing a high regard on academic achievement and competence (Santiago-Rivera, Bernstein & Gard, 1995., and Baker & Siryk, 1984). Furthermore, findings suggest that first-year students experience more adjustment problems than those in other academic years as their feelings of insecurity coupled with the unfamiliar environment lead to concentration problems, depression and anxiety (Brooks & DuBois, 1995). Not only are they higher than other students but Murphy and Archer (1995) suggest that the levels of psychological distress experienced by students at college/university are higher than that of normal adolescents. South African student's experiences are further compounded by the legacy of apartheid on education. Within this context, it would be expected that South African students would therefore have additional difficulties to overcome. And, while this may be true, large numbers of graduates have also successfully completed their studies. This study therefore, using a sample of first year

students, focused on investigating how students manage the transition from high school to university within an educational context that continues to experience the legacy of apartheid.

1.4 Theoretical Background

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984; 1987) theory on stress posits that 'stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his/her well-being"(p.19) This transactional nature of stress emphasizes the continuous and reciprocal nature of the interaction between the person and the environment. During stress appraisal two component processes namely, primary and secondary appraisal occur (Schwarzer & Schwarzer, 1996). In primary appraisal, an individual appraises a situation as either being irrelevant, benign-positive or stressful (Schwarzer & Schwarzer, 1996). When a situation is appraised as being stress-relevant, it could further be appraised as challenging when it mobilizes physical or psychological activity and the individual sees an opportunity to prove him/herself. The individual gains a sense of mastery or personal growth and confidence from the experience. However, when a situation is appraised as threatening, an individual perceives harm or loss and there may be a discrepancy between

perceived coping capabilities and potentially hurtful aspects of the environment (Schwarzer & Schwarzer, 1996).

Primary appraisals are mirrored by secondary appraisals, which refer to the individual's available coping options for dealing with stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; 1987). During this 'phase' the individual would be assessing his/her competence, social support and other resources in order to readapt to the circumstances. While there is no fixed time order, primary and secondary appraisal depends on each other and often appears at the same time. Some environmental conditions are more likely to induce stress than others, provided the same person is confronted with them. Schwarzer and Schwarzer (1996) posit that it is perceived personal resources that make people more or less vulnerable to the same environmental requirements.

Lazarus (1991) focuses particular attention on situational stressors and mentions the following formal properties; novelty, event uncertainty, ambiguity and temporal aspects as relating to a stressing condition. The more difficult, ambiguous and not pre-parable the situation, the more likely it is to induce threat perceptions. With reference to the individual's perceived personal resources, Lazarus (1991) notes the importance played by commitments and beliefs. Where commitments are personal goals they in

part determine perceptions of situational stress and the stakes at hand and beliefs refers to the individual's beliefs and expectations of being able to meet situational requirements (Lazarus, 1991).

Extensive use has been made of the transactional model of stress in research both internationally and in South Africa. The present study utilised this theory as it proved to be adjunct to the chosen coping measures used and provided an additional medium through which to interpret and discuss the results of the study.

1.5 Aim of the study

The present study focuses on investigating how first year students adjust to the academic, social, personal-emotional and institutional attachment to university. By utilising developments made within coping theory, specifically investigating how self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal impacts/predicts adjustment to university.

1.6 Hypothesis

Positive self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal predict academic, social, personal-emotional, institutional attachment and overall adjustment to university.

1.7 Methodology overview

This study made use of a correlation design, which is located within a quantitative research paradigm. Correlation design was used as it allowed for the examination of individual differences and to examine the relationships between two or more variables to assess whether they covary, correlates or are associated with each other (Barker, Pistrang & Elliot, 1994; Borland, 2001). Utilisation of the quantitative research paradigm allowed for the hypothesising around the relationship between variables by using mathematical models, enabling the researcher to determine how well the data fits the predictions (Barker, et al., 1994). Data obtained from the SACQ and FORQ questionnaires was analysed using product-term regression analysis. This allowed the researcher to establish the nature of the relationships that existed between the independent or third variables namely; self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal and the various dimensions of adjustment to university/dependent variables.

Permission to conduct the research was granted by the University Senate and Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape. Before administration students were advised that participation was voluntary and also anonymous. Students were encouraged to approach the Institute for Counseling of the university should particular feelings they would want to discuss arise out of completion of the questionnaire.

1.8 Chapter overview

Chapter 1 is an introduction and refers briefly to the South African educational context pre and post Apartheid.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of topics relevant to the study. In particular it looks at the paradigm shifts in the fields of psychology in relation to stress and coping. It also examines the theory proposed by Folkman & Lazarus (1984, 1987) which posits that an individual's perception or appraisal of the experienced event, whether discrete or chronic, is critical in determining how the event impacts on him and ultimately how he will cope with that event.

Chapter 3 focuses on the method of conducting the research. Particular attention is paid here to the specific aims of the study, hypotheses, sample characteristics, measuring instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study, following the analysis outlined in Chapter 3. Descriptive statistics and reliabilities of the various scales used in the study are presented. The results of the regression analyses are also presented.

Chapter 5 summarizes and discusses the salient results presented in Chapter 4, making specific reference to literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and integrating results with the theoretical framework. Attention is further paid to limitations of the study, with recommendations for further study put forward.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the literature on adjustment experiences of students at university will be reviewed, with particular reference to South African students. A review of the developments within stress and coping research will be provided, concluding with an overview of the construct of fortitude and its dimensions, namely: self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal. Lastly, the transactional model of stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984, 1987) will be discussed.

2.2 The transition from high school to university

There is general consensus that first year students face a number of problems in adjusting to university life. A review of the literature reveals that research into this topic focuses on various dimensions of adjustment. However, there is agreement that adjusting to university life is a big transition and can have different outcomes for the individual involved. In general most of the research on student adjustment has focused on one or all of the following dimensions of adjustment:

2.2.1 Social Integration

Social integration refers to the integration of the student into the academic and social structure of the university and in the embracing of the role of being a university student (Williams, 1982). Students express this integration not merely by having social interactions but by coming to see themselves as competent members of an academic or social community. It is posited that for students to be fully integrated in university life they need to develop a sense of belonging and an appropriate identity as a university student. Research conducted by Williams (1982) found that students who do not manage this transition feel seriously alienated from the university. Additionally, students are more likely to drop out if they are not sufficiently integrated with the university or if their values are incompatible with those of the university (Christie & Dinham, 1991). Students may also enter university without a clear understanding of the tertiary culture and this gap between their expectation and the reality of the university experience requires personal changes that the student may be unprepared for (Williams, 1982).

2.2.2 Academic Integration

The standard of work expected at university is much higher than at high school and students are therefore expected to attain learning and generic skills which will ensure success. In research conducted by Santiago-Rivera,

Bernstein & Gard, 1995.; Baker & Siryk, 1984.; the results concur that the university environment is not only competitive but challenging, placing a high regard on academic achievement and competence. In a study conducted by McInnes, James & McNaught, 1995.; students reported difficulty with adjusting to the style of teaching at university, confusion about timetabling, learning new skills such as critical thinking, time management, independent learning and motivation.

Findings based on research conducted by Archer and Lamnin (1985) cited in Murphy and Archer (1995) suggests that the stress experienced by first year students can be divided into two broad categories. First, major academic stressors, which include aspects of the typical student environment namely, tests, grade competition, time demands, professors and class room environment as well as career and future success. Second, major personal stressors, which include intimate relationships, parental conflicts, finances as well as interpersonal conflicts with friends. Research conducted by Cahir and Morris (1991), Blankenstein, Flett and Kale (1991) cited in Murphy and Archer (1995) yielded similar results where organization of time, deadlines, family expectations, future job prospects and college requirements were all rated by students as contributing to feelings of anxiety and depression.

2.2.3 Personal – Emotional Integration

Owing to the transition stage of adjusting to university life, students have to undergo a process of constructing their personal relations to a new environment, which can cause both mental and physical disorders as a result of the stress experienced (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger & Pancer, 2000). In research conducted by Brooks and DuBois (1995) findings concluded that first-year students experience more adjustment problems than those in other academic years as their feelings of insecurity coupled with the unfamiliar environment lead to concentration problems, depression and anxiety. Not only are they higher than other students but Murphy and Archer (1995) suggest that the levels of psychological distress experienced by students at college/university are higher than that of normal adolescents. Additionally, the experience of loss, the interruption of normal routine and the adjustment to a new environment, which the individual has not mastered, contributes to the psychological distress experienced by students.

Although the above findings are primarily based on North American, European and Australian student populations, South African students share many similar experiences as well as very different experiences. The difficulties experienced by South African students in adjusting to university are set within a historical political and socio-economic context.

2.3 Adjustment problems of South African university students

Agar (1990) and Kagee, Naidoo and Mahatey (1997) conclude that the quality of black education in South Africa, which is historically inferior, has led to students experiencing difficulties adjusting to the academic demands placed on them by university life. This is particularly so for first generation students whose disadvantaged educational and socio—economic background makes them vulnerable to the demands placed upon them by university life (Kagee et al, 1997). Furthermore, the gross historic inequality in resource provision that was the legacy of apartheid education ensures that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are generally under-prepared for the demands of tertiary education when compared to white students.

Additionally, language has been found to contribute to adjustments problems as many students now have to adjust to receiving instruction and completing academic tasks in either English or Afrikaans which may not be their first language (Agar, 1990). Research findings by Van Heerden (1995) and Luthuli, Masiea and Zuma (1992) suggest that socio-cultural factors such as poor conditions and teaching at schools, inefficient learning styles and problems with the organization of time all contribute to difficulties South African students experience when entering university. The poor quality of black students' school education under the former Department of Education

and Training (DET) is one factor often cited as being to some measure responsible for their underachievement in tertiary education. Honikman (1982) found that the lack of basic academic proficiency inherent in the academic transition from high school to university had a destructive effect on the confidence and intellectual performance of black (including, in this case, "Coloured") first-year students at UCT.

Students coming from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds experience the effects of financial strain, which include academic fees and living costs as well as transport, and housing related difficulties that causes uncertainty and anxiety. There are also the additional expectations of families and communities that can add significantly to the stress already experienced by students.

Nicholas (1995) found that the need for assistance with personal, career and learning skills concerns was much higher in a South African student sample than in a North American one, with the University of the Western Cape students indicating a much higher overall level of need for help or information with all of the concerns listed than their white or black counterparts in North America. The likelihood that South African students experience significant adjustment problems has been proposed also by Cherian and Cherian (1998) who found 33 to 85% of first year students

sampled at the University of the North experienced adjustment difficulties. More recently, research conducted by Sennett (2000) on a sample of first year University of Cape Town (UCT) students found that Black students tended to score lower on social adjustment, suggesting that they may be relatively less integrated into the university environment than their white counterparts (Sennett, 2000). The study also found that first year white students performed better than black students.

While there is sufficient evidence indicating that students experience psychological distress as a result of adjusting to the demands of university life, students do adjust to demands placed upon them academically, socially and emotionally by either acquiring or utilising existing resources which enable them to cope (Baker & Siryk, 1989). There are several theories which may help explain how the stress-coping relationship works. What follows is a review of the developments within stress and coping research, concluding with an overview of the construct of fortitude and it's dimensions namely; self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal.

2.4 Developments within stress and coping theory

2.4.1 Conceptualisation of stress

According to Antonovsky (1979, p.10), stress is endemic and stressors are "omnipresent in human existence". Stress refers to physiological and emotional conditions, generally and specifically, in humans and animals (Robinson, 1999). Once stress is experienced "as a human and animal phenomenon, it results in intense and distressing experience and appears to be of tremendous influence in behaviour" (Lazarus, 1966, p.2).

Stress has been the focus of empirical research since the late 1920's with Canon (1929), investigating the effects of stress on human physiology. By observing bodily changes related to pain, hunger and the major emotions, Canon posited that bodily changes accompany violent emotional states prepare the human organism for flight, fight, or injury. Over the past seventy years, the concept of stress has undergone considerable changes in conceptualisation. The move from a simplistic biological construct to a more complex biopsychosocial construct is illustrated by the following three contemporary approaches to stress; namely the response-based perspective, the stimulus-based view and the transactional approach.

The "response"-based perspective, developed by Hans Selye (1936) cited in Adams (2001, p. 18) defines stress as the "demands placed upon the organism to respond adaptively to a stimulus appraised as noxious". The "stimulus" view of stress, was first significantly researched by Holmes and Rahe (1967). By developing the Schedule of Recent Events (SRE) they were able to postulate that change was naturally stressful and could be initiated by any set of circumstances. However, even though the "stimulus-response" model allows for individual differences in the reaction to stressors and focuses on the nature of the stressor, it does not take the individual's perception of that stressor into consideration (Adams, 2001). The individual's perception of the stressor is better explained by the transaction view to stress proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984, 1987). The transactional view of stress will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter as it forms the basis for the theoretical framework of this study.

2.4.2 Conceptualisation of coping

Historically, research done on stress has either focused on the relationship between a variety of specific social stressors and health outcomes or on the relationship between life events and both physical and psychological distress. However, the results of these studies reflected only modest correlations between life stress and physical symtomatology (Pretorius, 1998). A review

of the literature points to a growing shift in conceptual focus, emphasizing health rather than illness, on coping rather than succumbing (Pretorius, 1998).

The earliest theoretical developments showing this shift are those of Super (1955) cited in Pretorius (1998) distinction between hystiology and psychopathology; Maslow's (1973) cited in Pretorius (1998) self-actualisation; Rogers's (1959) cited in Pretorius (1998) fully-functioning person and to Antonovsky's (1979) concept of salutogenisis. All these concepts have a shared view on positive psychological functioning and wellness.

Subsequent writings, proposing a variety of different concepts, have broadened the conceptualisation of coping considerably. Kobasa (1979) defined the concept of hardiness as a personality style consisting of individuals experiencing a sense of commitment, control and challenge in the face of difficulty situations. Thomas (1981) cited in Strumpfer (1990) utised the concept of stamina to describe human beings born with different potentialities and susceptibilities, which life experiences may mold into a protective shield under girding future health. Colerick (1985) cited in Strumpfer (1990) also utilized the concept of stamina but described individuals in terms of their capacity for growth; personal insight; life

perspective; likelihood of functional breakdown and general competence. The concept of potency, proposed by Ben-Sira (1985, p. 399) assesses an individuals "enduring confidence in his/her own capacities, as well as confidence in and commitment to his/her social environment, which is perceived as being characterized by a basically meaningful and predictable order and by a reliable and just distribution of rewards." The learned resourcefulness concept refers to a set of well-learned behaviours and skills by which individuals self-regulate or control their behaviours was proposed by Rosenbaum (1990). Antonovsky (1979) introduced the concept sense of coherence to understand how people manage stress and stay well while Dyer and Mcguiness (1996) described the concept of resilience as the presence of protective factors that serve to moderate the effect of adversity.

Additionally, the concept of social support received considerable attention, as it appeared to play a role in moderating the effects/impact of stress. Social support appears to play two distinct roles, namely; that links with supportive others serves as a resource to the effects of stress and that social support meets a basic human social need which could have an effect on both physical and psychological health (Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990). Furthermore, research conducted by Compas (1987) appears to support this as he distinguishes between three broad factors when adolescents demonstrate

resilience when confronted with stressful events. These are a) individual disposition, e.g. temperament, b) family circumstances and c) support systems.

Family circumstances such as having experienced the presence of a supportive family climate marked by warmth, closeness and cohesiveness and support systems where an individual or group provides positive models for identification are crucial factors in protecting adolescents from the negative effects of stressful events. Frydenberg (1997) agrees and further posits that family members may serve as role models on how to cope with stressful events. Citing social learning theory, she proposes that children and adolescents may learn adaptive coping techniques through direct experience and/or vicarious learning. Parents who use adaptive coping techniques such as the willingness to approach others for help and support serve as models for their children who may feel free to use similar coping strategies when faced with stressful events.

2.4.3 Fortitude

The concept of fortitude, proposed by Pretorius (1998), allows for a broad understanding of the origins of psychological strength. He is interested in the fundamental question; "Where does the strength come from?" He posits that fortitude is a combination of the following; an individual appraising themselves and the world, namely, support from the family as well as support from others positively, which enables him/her to cope with stress (Pretorius, 1998).

Factor analyses of variables included in his study (namely, self-esteem, self-denigration, self-worth, personal competence, personal efficacy, belief about support from others, perception of problem-solving skills, perceived number and availability of support, support from friends, support from family and family environment) identified three meaningful factors, which were labeled Self-Appraisal, Support Appraisals and Family Appraisals. Essentially, this encompasses elements from theories discussed earlier in this section. "Fortitude therefore is formally defined as the strength to manage stress and stay well and this strength derives from an appraisal of the self, the family and support from others" (Pretorius, 1998, p. 23).

The Fortitude Questionnaire - FORQ (Pretorius, 1998), as a measure of fortitude and its dimensions of self-appraisal, family-appraisal and support-appraisal, has been used substantively in a number of studies in South Africa. Results of these studies point in the direction that fortitude is associated with coping and positive psychological well-being.

Most recently, Barend's (2004) used the FORQ on a sample of third year psychology students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to investigate the role of resilience constructs and academic coping. Results from this study indicated a significant positive relationship between self-appraisal and academic adjustment and emotional adjustment. A significant positive correlation was indicated between family-appraisal and emotional adjustment and between support-appraisal and all the measures included in the SACQ, including academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, goal commitment/institutional attachment and overall adjustment.

Similarly, studies conducted by Miller (1999) indicated a negative relationship between depression and fortitude; Julius (1999) indicated that participants measuring high on fortitude would present with less problems

and Roothman, Kirsten and Wissing (2003) who found that men scored higher than females on fortitude.

For the purpose of this study the three dimensions of fortitude and not the concept of fortitude itself, will be utlised.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

How individuals manage stressful situations can determine their effectiveness in both personal and professional situations. Although a number of theories have been proposed that deal with stress management, transactional theory has been the primary focus of researchers during the past 15 years (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) believe that an individual's perception or appraisal of the experienced event, whether discrete or chronic, is critical in determining how the event impacts on him and ultimately how he will cope with that event. Their conceptualisation of stress and coping is based on the person-environment interaction theory of human action and reaction (Sieffge-Krenke, 1995).

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) cognitive-phenomenological model of stress and coping is transactional in nature, complex and dynamic interactions or transactions occur between an individual and the environment where an

individual reacts to demands in the environment. If an individual perceives that he does not have the necessary resources to deal with the demands then stress is experienced.

In this way stress and coping is defined as "the constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and /or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). In a transactional model separate person and environment join together to form new meanings via appraisal; threat, for example, does not refer to separate person and environment factors, but to the integration of both in a given transaction. The transactional model is concerned with process and change..." (pp. 325-326). Their model of stress is circular and embedded.

The cognitive activities of "primary appraisal" and "secondary appraisal", plays a crucial role in the way the individual copes with stressful life events and can be viewed as a "continuously changing set of judgments about the flow of events for the person's well-being" (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 302). Primary appraisal is used by the individual to determine how the event will impact on his well being and consists of three types, namely, harm-loss, threat and challenge. The above-mentioned type of appraisal determines the individual's perception of how an event will impact on him and leads to

secondary appraisal. In secondary appraisal, the individual assesses which resources may be mobilised to help him cope with the particular life event.

Secondary appraisal is crucial because it entails making evaluative judgments of what action can be taken to improve the dysfunctional person-environment interaction. The relationship between primary and secondary appraisal is bi-directional. If the individual knows that he can overcome a particular danger then that danger may be perceived as less threatening. If through secondary appraisal the individual knows that he will have adequate resources (personal or interpersonal) to cope with the event, then that event automatically becomes less of a threat.

Reappraisal refers to the cognitive and intrapsychic processes that also form an important part of the coping process. This is the feedback system that includes information from the individual's own reactions and from the environment. Reappraisals are cognitive coping strategies aimed at actively managing the demands and distress associated with a particular life event (Seiffge-Krenke, 1995).

Thus the dynamic and circular interaction between primary appraisal, secondary appraisal and reappraisal determines the extent to which the individual copes with major or minor life events and the impact of these life events on his emotional adjustment.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the method of conducting the study. Particular attention is paid to the specific hypotheses, sample characteristics, measuring instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations.

3.3 Hypotheses

i) Positive self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal predict academic adjustment.

ii) Positive self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal predict social adjustment.

iii) Positive self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal predict personal-emotional adjustment.

iv) Positive self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal predict institutional attachment.

v) Positive self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal predict overall adjustment to university.

3.4 Sample

This study made use of a convenience sampling procedure so as to ensure that subgroups within the university population would be adequately represented in the sample (Graziano & Raulin, 2000). The sample consisted of 219 first year students from the Science and Community and Health Sciences faculties at the University of the Western Cape. Table 3.4 describes the characteristics of the present sample.

Table 3.4 Description of sample characteristics

	Frequency N	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	103	47
Female	116	53
Faculty		
CHS	116	53
Science	86	39.3
Language		
English	97	44.3
Afrikaans	55	25.1
Xhosa	31	14.2
Other	34	15.5

Living		
Parents	96	43.8
Residence	63	28.8
Boarding	27	12.3
Other	31	14.2

The sample comprised of predominantly Community and Health Sciences students (53%), English speaking students (44.3%) and students living with their parents (43.8%). The mean age of the sample was 19 years (36.6%).

3.5 Measuring instruments

A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) comprising a section of questions eliciting socio-demographic information, the Fortitude Questionnaire (FORQ) (Pretorius, 1998) and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1989), was administered to the sample.

3.5.1 The Fortitude Questionnaire (FORQ)

The ***FORQ*** is a 20 - item scale that measures three domains of fortitude. These three domains are the self-appraisals, family-appraisals and support-appraisals subscales. There are seven items that measure self - appraisals and include questions such as "I take a positive attitude towards myself". There are seven items that measure family appraisals and include questions such as "I rely on my family for emotional support". And six items which measure

support appraisals comprising of questions such as "my friends give me the moral support I need". Scoring is based on a 4 – point Likert – type scale ranging from 1 ("does not apply") to 4 ("applies very strongly"). Scoring for item 20 is reversed. The reliability of the total scale yielded alpha coefficients of 0.85, which can be considered highly satisfactory (Pretorius, 1998). Content validity has been established by only selecting items correctly sorted into the three categories by independent raters (Pretorius, 1998). Research conducted using the FORQ suggests that fortitude is associated with coping and positive psychological well-being (Muller, 1999; Julius, 1999; Heyns, Venter, Esterhuyse & Roosmarie, 2003; Roothman & Wissing, 2003).

3.5.2 The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

The SACQ is an instrument which assesses the effectiveness of a student's adjustment in the academic, social and personal-emotional spheres, while also providing an indication of the quality of the relationship established between the student and the institution.

3.5.2.1 Interpretation and use

The SACQ is a 67-item self-report measure that yields scores for overall adaptation/adjustment to college/university as well as four facets of college

adjustment: academic, personal-emotional, goal commitment and institutional attachment. Each of these subscales is further divided into four item clusters which will be described later in this section. Each item is rated on a 9-point Likert scale (1= applies very closely to me to 9=does not apply to me at all). Items are coded such that higher scores on each scale are indicative of more positive adjustment ratings in that domain.

An overall Full Scale adjustment score is obtained on the SACQ by adding all 67 items. The authors caution against using the full scale score exclusively to assess a student's adjustment as this would ignore the separate areas of adjustment and valuable information may be lost on the pattern of student adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Academic Adjustment: This subscale consists of 24 items, which measures a student's ability to cope with the particular educational demands of the university. These 24 items are further divided into four item clusters. Motivation, comprising items (5, 9, 23, 32, 50 and 58) assesses the student's attitude toward academic goals, motivation for being in university and sense of educational purpose (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Application, comprising items (3, 17, 29 and 44) assesses how well motivation is being translated into actual academic effort and meeting requirements. Performance, consisting of

items (6, 10, 13, 21, 25, 27, 39, 41 and 52) measures success of academic effort. Academic environment, consisting of items (36, 43, 54, 62 and 66) assesses the student's satisfaction with the academic environment and what it offers (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Empirically derived correlates of the academic adjustment subscale indicate that lower scores are associated with lower overall academic results in the first year, feelings of lack of control over the outcomes of one's academic efforts, unstable and age-appropriate goals and less realistic self-appraisal (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Social Adjustment: This subscale consists of 20 items measuring the student's success in coping with the interpersonal-societal demands of university life. These 20 items are further divided into four item clusters. General, consisting of items (1, 8, 9, 18, 37, 46 and 65) assessing the extent and success of social activities enjoyed by the student. Other people, which includes items (4, 14, 33, 42, 48, 56 and 63) assessing the students involvement and relationships with peers on campus. Nostalgia, consisting of items (22, 51 and 57) measuring how the student is coping away from home. Social environment, comprising items (16, 26 and 30) assessing the students satisfaction with the social environment. Behavioural correlates of the social adjustment subscale demonstrate that lower scores are associated with, among other things, greater social distress and avoidance, greater sense

of loneliness, less perceived social support, less social self-confidence and self –concept and less participation in social activities within the university environment (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Personal-Emotional Adjustment: This subscale consists of 15 items measuring the student's intrapsychic state during adjustment to university and the degree to which he or she is experiencing general psychological distress and any concomitant somatic problems (Baker & Siryk, 1989). These 15 items are further divided into two item clusters: psychological, consisting of items (2, 7, 12, 20, 31, 38, 45, 49 and 64) assesses the student's sense of well-being; physical, consisting of items (11, 24, 28, 35, 40 and 55) assessing the student's sense of physical well-being (Baker & Siryk, 1989). On the personal-emotional adjustment subscale, lower scores are associated with a greater likelihood of being known to campus psychological services, fewer coping resources and a greater degree of emotional distress, anxiety and depression (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Goal Commitment-Institutional Attachment: This subscale consists of 15 items measuring the student's degree of commitment to educational-institutional goals and the level of attachment or affiliation to the particular institution the student is attending (Baker & Siryk, 1989). These 15 items are

further divided into two item clusters. General, consisting of items (15, 60 and 61) assessing the student's feelings about or the degree of satisfaction he or she has with the university in general. This college, consisting of items (16, 34, 47 and 59) assessing the student's feelings about or the degree of satisfaction with attending the university currently registered with (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Behavioural correlates of this subscale indicate lower scores associated with greater likelihood of discontinuing studies and less overall satisfaction with the university experience (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

3.5.2.2 Reliability and validity of the SACQ

Extensive validation research suggests that the SACQ is a reliable and valid measure of college student adjustment. High internal reliability is reported (coefficient alpha) for all scales: academic (.81 to .90), social (.83 to .91), personal – emotional (.77 to .86), and attachment (.85 to .91) (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Criterion-related validity evidence from numerous studies are assumed to reflect the influence of the variables measured by the instrument (Baker & Siryk, 1989). The authors further present intercorrelations among the subscales and between the subscales and the Full Scale which are sizeable enough to suggest that the subscales are measuring a common construct, though small enough to indicate that this construct indeed possess different facets as reflected in the subscales (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Most recently, the SACQ was used in research conducted by Sennett (2000) on a sample of first year students at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The following reliability scores for that sample were obtained; Academic Adjustment = .84; Social Adjustment=.83; Personal-Emotional Adjustment = .81; Institutional Attachment = .84, these scores are in keeping with the coefficients derived from the normative data, suggesting adequate internal reliability (Sennett, 2000).

3.5.2.3 Biographical questionnaire

A self-developed biographical questionnaire was used to obtain information regarding participant's age, gender, faculty registered with, and language and living arrangements while studying.

3.6 Procedure

After permission was granted by the science, psychology, nursing and OT departments to conduct the study using first year students, arrangements were made with the relevant lecturers to administer the questionnaires in the designated lecture theatres. Students were briefed on the purpose of the research and informed that participation was voluntary. Questionnaires averaged between 15 to 25 minutes to complete.

3.7 Analysis of data

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner & Brent, 1975) was used to perform the statistical analysis of the data in the study. This programme was used to obtain descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients for the FORQ and SACQ. Product term regression analysis was conducted to establish the nature of the relationship between self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal on the dimensions of adjustment, namely; academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment and goal commitment-institutional attachment.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

So as to ensure that ethical research practices were employed, the following measures were undertaken. Participants were advised that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that completed questionnaires ought to be anonymous. Participant's attention was drawn to the introduction section to the questionnaire where students are encouraged to approach Student Counselling should particular feelings they would want to discuss arise out of completion of the questionnaire. Students were also advised that the results of the study would be available for their perusal and discussion during 2005.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results, following the analysis outlined in chapter 3 are presented. Firstly, the descriptive statistics and the reliabilities for the FORQ and SACQ are presented. Then the results of the product term regression analysis are presented.

4.2 Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for scales

The following section looks at the descriptive statistics as well as reports on the results of the internal consistency reliability analysis of the various scales using Chronbach's alpha as the reliability coefficient. According to Nunnaly (1978) 0,7 is an acceptable reliability coefficient.

Table 4.2.1 Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the FORQ

Scale	N	Mean	SD	No. of items	Alpha
Fortitude	219	57.47	8.99	20	0.83
Self	219	20.00	3.46	7	0.78
Family	219	19.40	4.99	7	0.70

Support	219	17.38	3.64	6	0.78

Table 4.2.1 represents the results from the present study and indicates a mean of 57.47 for fortitude; 20.00 for self-appraisal; 19.40 for family appraisal and 17.38 for support appraisal. Reliability coefficients obtained in the present study include 0.83 for fortitude; 0.78 for self-appraisals; 0.70 for family appraisals and 0.78 for support appraisals.

Table 4.2.2 Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the SACQ

Scale	N	Mean	SD	No. of items	Alpha
Full Scale (adjustment)	**219**	388.50	59.03	67	0.70
Academic	**219**	140.06	23.62	24	0.70
Social	**219**	111.49	20.25	20	0.76
Emotional	**219**	81.60	22.28	15	0.74
Attachment	**219**	48.32	11.33	15	0.78

Table 4.2.2 presents descriptive statistics for the available scores as exhibited in the Full Scale Adjustment, Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional and

Institutional Attachment subscales of the SACQ. The results from the present study indicate a mean of 388.50 for the Full Scale score; 140.06 for the Academic subscale; 111.49 for the Social subscale; 81.60 for the Personal –Emotional subscale and 48.32 for the Institutional subscale.

Reliability coefficients obtained in the present study include; 0.70 for Full Scale adjustment; 0.70 for Academic Adjustment; 0.76 for Social Adjustment; 0.74 for Personal-Emotional Adjustment and 0.78 for Institutional Attachment.

4.3 Results of the Product Term Regression Analysis

Table 4.3.1 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of attachment to university

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Attachment	Self-appraisal	0.15	2.13	0.20	2.57		
	Family	-0.04	-0.50	0.20	2.57	0.00	-0.04

	appraisal

Table 4.3.1 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of attachment to university. In the first regression analysis, attachment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and family appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + family appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting attachment to university. When self-appraisal and family appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again statistically significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis family appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for family appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p > 0.05$) and indicates that family appraisal does not predict attachment to university.

Table 4.3.2 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of attachment to university

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Attachment	Self-appraisal	0.15	2.16	-0.04	-0.51		
	Support appraisal	-0.00	-0.01	0.16	2.21*	-0.05	-0.72

Table 4.3.2 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of attachment to university. In the first regression analysis, attachment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and support appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + support appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting attachment to university. When self-appraisal and support appraisal was

entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis support appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for support appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p > 0.05$) and indicates that support appraisal does not predict attachment to university.

Table 4.3.3 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of emotional adjustment

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Emotion	Self-appraisal	0.30	4.23*	0.30	3.97*		
	Family appraisal	0.10	1.38	-0.01	-0.18	0.04	0.51

Table 4.3.3 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of emotional adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, emotional adjustment was entered

as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and family appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + family appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p< 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting emotional adjustment to university. When self-appraisal and family appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis family appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for family appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p> 0.05$) and indicates that family appraisal does not predict emotional adjustment to university.

Table 4.3.4 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of emotional adjustment

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t

Emotion	Self-appraisals	0.29	4.21*	0.29	4.01*		
	Support appraisals	0.09	1.23	0.02	0.27	-0.11	-1.57

Table 4.3.4 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of emotional adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, emotional adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and support appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + support appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting emotional adjustment to university. When self-appraisal and support appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis support appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients we see that the beta coefficient for support appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p >$

0.05) and indicates that support appraisal does not predict emotional adjustment to university.

Table 4.3.5 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of social adjustment

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Social	Self-appraisal	0.31	4.46*	0.32	4.21*		
	Family appraisal	0.11	1.44	-0.03	-0.42	-0.07	-0.95

Table 4.3.5 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of social adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, social adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and family appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + family appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisals is statistically significant in

step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting social adjustment to university. When self-appraisal and family appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis family appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients we see that the beta coefficient for support appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p > 0.05$) and indicates that family appraisal does not predict emotional adjustment to university.

Table 4.3.6 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of social adjustment

Depend. Variable	**Predictors**	**Step 1 of regression df 1/161**		**Step 2 of regression df 1/160**		**Step 3 of regression df 1/159**	
		Beta	**t**	**Beta**	**t**	**Beta**	**t**
Social	Self-appraisals	0.29	4.11*	0.23	3.27		
	Support appraisals	0.30	4.32*	0.25	3.53	-0.03	-0.41

Table 4.3.6 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of social adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, social adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and support appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + support appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting social adjustment to university. When self-appraisal and support appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis support appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for support appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that support appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting social adjustment to university.

Table 4.3.7 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of academic adjustment

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
Academic	Self-appraisal	0.48	7.61*	0.45	6.54*		
	Family appraisal	0.25	3.63*	0.07	0.98	-0.07	-1.14

Table 4.3.7 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of academic adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, academic adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and family appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + family appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting academic adjustment to university. When self-appraisal and family appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta

coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis family appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for family appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p > 0.05$) and indicates that family appraisal does not predict academic adjustment to university.

Table 4.3.8 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of academic adjustment

Depend. Variable	**Predictors**	**Step 1 of regression df 1/161**		**Step 2 of regression df 1/160**		**Step 3 of regression df 1/159**	
		Beta	**t**	**Beta**	**t**	**Beta**	**t**
Academic	Self-appraisals	0.49	7.74*	0.49	7.55*		
	Support appraisals	0.10	1.42	0.00	0.04	-0.07	-1.03

Table 4.3.8 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of academic adjustment to

university. In the first regression analysis, academic adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and support appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + support appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting academic adjustment to university. When self-appraisal and support appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis support appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for support appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p > 0.05$) and indicates that support appraisal does not predict academic adjustment to university.

4.3.9 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of adjustment to university

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161	Step 2 of regression df 1/160	Step 3 of regression df 1/159

		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
1.Adjustment	Self-appraisal	0.44	6.33*	.45	5.97*		
	Family appraisal	0.15	1.92	-0.04	-0.50*	-0.01	-0.11

Table 4.3.9 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and family appraisal as predictors of adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and family appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + family appraisal) in the third step. In the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting adjustment to university.

When family appraisal and self-appraisal was entered together in step 2, the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is again significant. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis family appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for

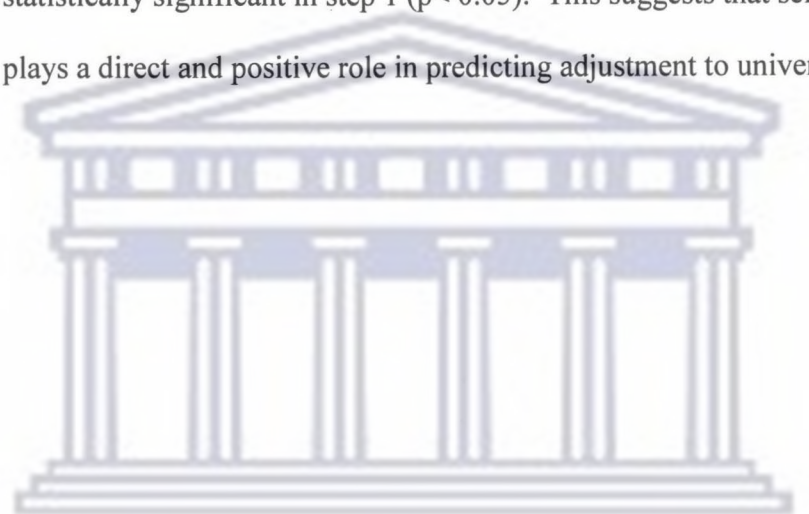
family appraisal is statistically non-significant in step 1 ($p > 0.05$) and indicates that family appraisal does not predict adjustment to university.

Table 4.3.10 Product-term regression analyses with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of adjustment to university

Depend. Variable	Predictors	Step 1 of regression df 1/161		Step 2 of regression df 1/160		Step 3 of regression df 1/159	
		Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
1.Adjustment	Self-appraisal	0.43	6.28*	0.41	5.80*		
	Support appraisal	0.18	2.44*	0.08	1.15*	0.13	-1.85

Table 4.3.10 reports on the product-term regression analysis with self-appraisal and support appraisal as predictors of adjustment to university. In the first regression analysis, adjustment was entered as the dependent variable and self-appraisal as a first step, self-appraisal and support appraisal together as a second step and an interaction term (self-appraisal + support appraisal) in the third step. Under coefficients for the first regression analysis the beta coefficient for self-appraisal is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$).

This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting adjustment to university. The second regression analysis is a duplicate of the first with the exception of step 1. In this alternative regression analysis support appraisal was entered as the first step. In the second regression analysis, under coefficients the beta coefficient for support appraisals is statistically significant in step 1 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that self-appraisal plays a direct and positive role in predicting adjustment to university.



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the results, as presented in Chapter 4, and is discussed in light of the central hypotheses of the study, outlined in Chapter 3 and the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. A summary and conclusion is presented, with the inclusion of limitations of the present study as well as recommendations for future research.

5.2 Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the FORQ

The scores obtained in the present study compare favourably with those obtained in a study conducted by Pretorius (1998). In that study Pretorius (1998) field-tested the FORQ, using 484 undergraduate psychology students at the University of the Western Cape. A mean score of 57,79 was obtained for fortitude; 21,33 for self-appraisal; 19,91 for family appraisal and 16,61 for support appraisal. In addition, like the normative data reported in Pretorius's (1998) study, a comparison of the subscales for the present study indicates more positive self-appraisal than family or support appraisals. Furthermore, in a recent study conducted by Barend's (2004) using 163 third year psychology students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the following results were obtained; a mean of 56,09 for fortitude; 20,93 for self-

appraisal; 18,47 for family appraisal; and 16,7 for support appraisal. The results obtained in the present study compare favourably with Barend's (2004) study.

The reliability of the overall scale as well as the subscales of the FORQ of the present study compare favourably with that of the normative data reported by Pretorius (1998). The normative data reported by Pretorius (1998) yielded reliability coefficients of 0,85 for fortitude; 0,74 for self-appraisal; 0,82 for family-appraisal; and 0,76 for support-appraisal. Reliability coefficients yielded for the present study include 0,83 for fortitude; 0,78 for self-appraisal; 0,70 for family appraisal; and 0,78 for support appraisal. Comparable results were reported by Barend's (2004) where reliability coefficients included 0,83 for fortitude; 0,69 for self-appraisal; 0,84 for family appraisal and 0,71 for support appraisal. The results from the present study therefore suggest adequate internal reliability.

5.3 Descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the SACQ

The mean scores for the present study differ somewhat from those obtained in previous studies using the SACQ. In Sennett's (2000) study, using a sample from the University of Cape Town (UCT), a mean score of 401, 4 was yielded for overall adjustment; 136,0 for academic adjustment; 124,3 for social adjustment; 81,7 for personal-emotional adjustment; and 106,7 for goal

commitment/institutional attachment. While the present sample yielded lower scores for overall adjustment, social adjustment and attachment, scores obtained for academic adjustment were higher and personal-emotional attachment scores compared favourably. This suggests that the present sample scored somewhat higher on academic adjustment than the UCT sample in Sennett's (2000) study.

In Barend's (2004) study a mean score of 393.41 was yielded for overall adjustment; 138.06 for academic adjustment; 116.43 for social adjustment; 74.35 for personal-emotional adjustment and 92.7 for institutional attachment. Results obtained for the full-scale adjustment score, academic, social and emotional subscales from the present study compare favorably with those of Barend's (2004) study. However, the institutional attachment scores of the two studies differ significantly with the score in the present study markedly lower.

With regard to reliability, none of the subscales compared favourably with that of the normative data or of those yielded in Sennett's (2000) study. The authors of the SACQ reported high internal reliability for all scales and suggest scores of, 0.85 to 0.91 for academic adjustment; 0.83 to 91 for social adjustment; 0.77 to 0.86 for personal-emotional adjustment and 0.85 to 91 for

institutional attachment (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Sennett's (2000) study yielded coefficients of 0.84 for academic adjustment; 0.83 for social adjustment; 0.81 for personal-emotional adjustment and 0.81 for institutional attachment. When compared with Sennett's study, coefficients for academic adjustment are significantly lower in the present study. Barend's (2004) study also yielded varying results with coefficients of 0.85 for academic adjustment; 0.63 for social adjustment; 0.75 for personal-emotional adjustment and 0.72 for institutional attachment. Results from the present study suggest higher levels of social adjustment while the Barend's (2004) study suggests higher levels of academic adjustment. Although results obtained for the present study do not compare favourably with those suggested by the normative data, 0.7 is still considered an acceptable reliability coefficient and was therefore not rejected.

5.4 Product Term Regression Analysis

The primary hypothesis of the present study states that positive self-appraisal; support appraisal and family appraisal are predictors of adjustment to university. The results of the study yielded partial support for this and are discussed in relation to previous findings and then linked to the theoretical framework.

5.4.1 Self-appraisal with family and support appraisal as predictors of attachment to university.

A significant positive relationship was indicated between self-appraisal and predicting student's feelings of attachment to the university. This finding lends support to the primary hypothesis of the present study. These results implied that students evaluated themselves positively on the following items: having a positive attitude about myself; no trouble making up mind; trust ability to solve problems and satisfied with self (Pretorius, 1998). The direct effect of these evaluations therefore would influence the level of attachment or affiliation the students felt toward the university (Baker & Siryk 1989). Furthermore, according to Baker & Siryk (1989) and McInnes, et al (1995), students are more likely to finish their studies if they experience a sense of satisfaction with the university in general. Family and support appraisal did not have a significant relationship in predicting student's feelings of attachment to university and suggests that students in the present sample appraised their own ability to cope highly.

5.4.2 Self-appraisal with family and support appraisal as predictors of personal-emotional adjustment to university

A significant positive relationship was indicated between self-appraisal and predicting student's personal-emotional adjustment to university. This

finding offers support for the primary hypothesis of the present study. These results suggest that students in the present sample may have been experiencing a sense of relative psychological and physical well-being while adjusting to university. As suggested by Lazarus & Folkman (1987), students may have perceived themselves as having the necessary resources to deal with the demands of university life. During the primary appraisal phase students may have appraised the university environment as being stress-relevant and thus experienced this as a challenge mobilizing them to prove themselves (Schwarzer & Schwarzer, 1996). Student's positive self-appraisal may therefore have played a direct role in protecting them from experiencing the negative impact of the environmental conditions intrinsic to university life (Pretorius, 1998). A significant positive relationship between self-appraisal and personal-emotional adjustment was also reported in Barends (2004) study. Family appraisal did not have a significant relationship in predicting personal-emotional adjustment to university. These results differ from previous research, which highlights the role of positive relationships between family variables and adjustment to university (Feenstra, Banyard, Rines & Hopkins, 2001; Moore, 2003; Barend's, 2004).

5.4.3 Self-appraisal with family and support appraisal as predictors of social adjustment to university

A significant positive relationship was indicated between self-appraisal and support appraisal in predicting social adjustment to university. This finding offers support for the primary hypothesis of the present study. These results suggest that students in the present sample perceived themselves to be functioning successfully on a social level; "are involved and have relationships with others on campus"; "are dealing with being away from home" and "are satisfied with the social aspects of the university environment" (Baker & Siryk, 1989). While positively appraising their own ability to master given situations, students also appeared to have an awareness of support from others. This finding confirms the conclusions by Lazarus & Folkman (1984; 1987), which posits that individuals assess not only their own competence but also available social support and other resources that can be mobilized which will help him/her cope with the particular life event. This may suggest that students previous experience of having received support from others had been satisfactory and could therefore be utilized again (Pretorius, 1998). A significant positive relationship between self-appraisal and social adjustment was also reported in Barend's (2004) study. Family appraisal did not have a significant

relationship in predicting social adjustment to university as did Barend's (2004) study.

5.4.4 Self-appraisal with family and support appraisal as predictors of academic adjustment to university

A significant positive relationship was indicated between self-appraisal in predicting academic adjustment to university. This finding offers support for the primary hypothesis of the present study. This suggests that students in the present study viewed themselves as being; "motivated to do the academic work required", "were applying themselves and meeting academic requirements", "were experiencing academic success" and were "satisfied with the academic environment and what it offered" (Baker & Siryk, 1989). These results suggest that students perceived that they had adjusted to the challenging and competitive demands of university life (Santiago-Rivera, Bernstein & Gard, 1995.; Baker & Siryk, 1984) and had required the necessary skills such as critical thinking, time management, independent learning and motivation (McInnes, et al, 1995). Family and support appraisal did not have a significant relationship in predicting academic adjustment to university. This differs from previous studies indicating positive relationships between supportive relationships (Arellano & Padilla, 1996), as

well as family factors (Molefo, 2000; Barends, 2004) and academic performance.

5.4.5 Self-appraisal with family and support appraisal as predictors of adjustment to university

A significant positive relationship was indicated between self-appraisal and support appraisal in predicting adjustment to university. This finding offers support for the primary hypothesis of the present study. This suggests that students positive appraisal of themselves, coupled with support received from others play a direct role predicting adjustment to university in all its facets.

The theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) is again useful in understanding this result. Students in the current sample would have simultaneously appraised their environment and its demands and his/her personal resources to deal with these demands – referred to as primary and secondary appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The university environment could either be appraised as being both stressful and threatening (academically, socially, personally-emotionally and institutionally). But, as the student has a personal stake in this situation, an evaluation of his/her coping resources will determine if equilibrium between person and environment can be established (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Where the

student appraises the situation as stressful/threatening, it may mobilize him/her to actively use the opportunity to prove him/herself. Looking at the present study, it is clear that students evaluated their coping resources and perceived their own competence and available social support as resources which would help them deal with the multi-dimensional demands of adjusting to university. It is likely that the more successfully a student learns to cope and adjust, the more his/her sense of mastery and competence will develop leading to greater confidence to meet new demands.

5.5 Summary and conclusion

It was established that increasing numbers of students are applying to pursue tertiary education in South Africa. Research studies indicate that the move from high school to university is a major transition that many adolescents experience considerable difficulty adjusting to. Research has been conducted into the causes of adjustment problems of South African students (Nettles, 1988; Maree, 1995; Luthuli, Masiea & Zuma, 1992; Honikman, 1982; Barends, 2004; Sennet, 2000) who link it to socio-economic, demographic and political factors.

According to Baker and Siryk (1989) and Pascarelli and Terenzini (1991) the process of adjustment to college/university is multidimensional, and therefore

requires that students develop effective strategies for adapting to a host of demands, including those found in the academic, social and emotional spheres. They therefore operationalised the SACQ. The SACQ was used in the study as a measure of adjustment.

The aim of this study was therefore to investigate how students adjusted to university. To this end, the present study utilized developments within stress and coping theory and elected to examine the role played by self-appraisal, family appraisal and support appraisal – all dimensions of the construct fortitude, as possible predictors of adjustment to university. The FORQ, which was constructed to measure fortitude and its three dimensions (self, family and support appraisal) was used in the study to measure coping (Pretorius, 1998). The primary hypothesis of the study stated that positive appraisals of the self, the family and support would predict student's academic, social, personal-emotional, institutional attachment and full scale adjustment to university.

Analysis of the data, collected from a sample of 219 first year, Community and Health Sciences and Science faculty students at the University of the Western Cape, yielded partial support for the hypothesis put forward in the research. Results therefore suggested that:

Positive self-appraisal was a predictor of adjustment to university across all dimensions namely; academic, social, personal-emotional and institutional attachment.

Positive support appraisal was a predictor of adjustment to university and in particular, social adjustment.

5.6 Limitations of the study

1. While student's positive appraisal of themselves predicted their level of attachment to the university, the scope of the current study did not allow for an investigation into how the university structures may have contributed to this process.

2. While students appraised their academic adjustment/integration positively, the scope of the current research did not allow for a comparison between students perceptions and actual academic performance.

3. The scope of the current study did not allow for any comparisons of coping between various demographic variables. This may have provided additional data on for example differences between males

and females coping styles. As well as differences between the students from different faculties.

4. The composition of the sample, which appears to be predominantly English speaking (44.3%), females (53%), living with their parents (43%) and registered with the Community Health Sciences faculty has implications for the generalizability of the results outside of this first year population at the University of the Western Cape.

5. The present study is also restricted in its use of standardized measures of resilience and university coping and adaptation. The use of only general measures limits further expansion and exploration of the nature of perceived variables of resilience and academic coping and adaptation, and the perceived relationships between these variables that participants share among their social networks, which may differ across contexts.

5.7 Recommendations

In light of the above limitations it is recommended that future research

1. Consider investigating whether a correlation exists between students who access support services offered by the university, either during orientation or later, facilitates feelings of attachment to the university.

2. Consider a longitudinal study that includes measuring students perceptions of their academic performance versus actual test/assessment results. Additionally, future research should also endeavour tracking the samples actual completion and dropout rates annually and provide specific support or interventions to students at risk of not completing their course.

3. Consider investigating comparisons based on demographic variables as well as possibly inter-university comparison studies. This would provide a varied picture and would enable support agencies at universities to direct interventions more specifically.

4. With regard to the limitations discussed with regard to the use of only standardized measures, it is recommended that further exploration involve open-ended questions, which could qualitatively add insights into participants' perceptions of variables typifying and impacting on resilience and academic coping. This could add valuable insights

involve open-ended questions, which could qualitatively add insights into participants' perceptions of variables typifying and impacting on resilience and academic coping. This could add valuable insights regarding perceptions as well as the validity of measuring instrument use across contexts.

5. Given the questionable generalizability of the findings of the present study, for future research with the aim of exploring similar phenomena, it is recommended that a sample more representative of all the faculties and years of study be used. Randomized sampling techniques, in conjunction with using various samples from various universities, representative of the student population in South Africa are recommended. Comparative studies, investigating differences in resilience and university coping between different universities, racial groups, between and across faculties at universities, etc., is recommended, given the historical and contextual issues in South Africa. Even broader, differences in this regard could also be explored across countries and continents.

References

Adams, O. (2000). *The relationship between life stress, emotional adjustment and family relationships in early adolescents from low-economic urban areas.* Unpublished Master's thesis. Bellville: University of the Western Cape.

Agar, D. (1990). Non-traditional students: Perceptions of problems which influence academic success. *Higher Education, 19*, 435-454.

Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, stress, and coping*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Baker, R.W. & Siryk, B. (1984). Measuring adjustment to college. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 31(2)*, 179-189.

Barends, M.S. (2004). *Overcoming adversity: An investigation of the role of resilience constructs in the relationship between socio-economic and demographic factors and academic coping*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Bellville: University of the Western Cape.

Barker, C., Pistrang, N., & Elliot, R. (1994). *Research methods in clinical and counselling psychology*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Ben-Sira, Z. (1985). Potency: A stress-buffering link in the coping-stress-disease relationship. *Social Science and Medicine, 21*, 397–406.

Brooks 11, J.H., & DuBois, D.L. (1995). Individual and environmental predictors of adjustment during the first year of college. *Journal of College Student Development, 36* (4), 347-360.

Canon, W.B. (1929). *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage.* New York: D. Appleton and Company.

Cherian, V.I., & Cherian. L. (1998). University students' adjustment problems. *Psychological Reports, 82*,1135-1138.

Christie, N. & Dinham, S. (1991). Institutional and external influences on social integration in the freshman year. *Journal of Higher Education*, 62(4), 412-436.

Compas, B.E. (1987). Coping with stressful life events during childhood and adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 101* (3), 393-403.

Department of Education and Training. (1986). *The provision of education for black pupils in rural areas: A synthesis report.* Pretoria: Department of Education and Training.

Dyer, J.G. & McGuinness, T.M. (1996). Resilience: Analysis of the concept. *Archives-of-Psychiatric Nursing, 37(2),* 203-282.

Enright, O. (2003). *The role of education in a civilized society.* Speech delivered at the MacGill Summer School, 23 July. Unpublished Paper.

Fedderke, J., Luiz, J. & De Kadt, R. (1994). Unraveling the education crisis. *Indicator South Africa, 15*, 70-73.

Feenstra, J.S., Banyard, V.L., Rines, E.N. & Hopkins, K.R. (2001). First-year students' adaptation to college: The role of family variables and individual coping. Jou*rnal of College Student Development, 42(2)*, 106-113.

Frydenberg, E. (1997). *Adolescent Coping: Theoretical and research perspectives*. Routledge: New York.

Heyns, P.M., Venter, J.H., Esterhuyse, K.G., Bam, R.H. & Odendal, D.C. (2003). Nurses caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease: Their strengths and risk of burnout. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 33(2), 80-85.

Hoffmeyr, J. & McLellan, A. (1992). The challenge of equalizing education. In R. Schrire (Ed.), *Wealth or poverty? Critical choices for South Africa* (pp. 174-192). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Holmes, T.H., & Rahe, R.H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of psychosomatic research, 11*, 213-218.

Honikman, K. (1982). *Process and problems of first-year students at a South African university*. Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town.

Julius, M. N. (1999). *The influence of gender and fortitude on the types of problems that students present with at the Institute for Counselling at the University of the Western Cape*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Bellville: University of the Western Cape.

Kagee, A., Naidoo, T. & Mahatey, N. (1997). Theoretical underpinnings of a student mentoring programme at a historically black university in South

Africa. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, 19*, 249-258.

Khoshaba, D. & Maddi, S. (1999). Early antecedents of hardiness. Consul*ting Psychology Journal, 51(2)*, 106-117.

Kobasa, S.C. (1979). Stressful life events, personality and health: An enquiry into hardiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37(1)*, 1-11.

Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., & Kahn, S. (1982). Hardiness and health: *A prospective study*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*, 168–177

Lazarus, R.S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer

Lazarus, R.S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping. *European Journal of Personality, 1*, 141-169.

Lazarus, R.S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation*. London: Oxford University Press.

Luthuli, N.D., Masiea, S.E. & Zuma, L.C. (1992). The hurdles faced by black students. *Nurs RSA, 7(2)*, 30-33.

McInnis, C., James, R. & McNaught, C. (1995). *First year on campus:diversity in the initial experiences of Australian undergraduates*. Centre for the study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.

Moulder, J. (1992). Education and distribution. In R. Schrire (Ed.), *Wealth or poverty? Critical choices for South Africa (*pp. 161-173). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Muller, P.W. (1999). *The prediction of change in academic performance amongst children of divorced parents*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Orange Free State.

Murphy, M. & Archer, J. (1996). Stressors on the college campus: A comparison of 1985 and 1993. *Journal of College Student Development, 37(1)*, 461-471.

Nettles, M.T. (1988). *Toward black undergraduate student equality in American education*. USA: Greenwood Press.

Nicholas, L. (1995). Personal, career and learning skills of first-year university students. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 18*, 33-37.

Nie, L.W., Hull, C.H., Jenkins, J.G., Steinbrenner, K. & Brent, D.H. (1975). *SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

National Commission on Higher Education (1996). *An overview of a new policy framework for higher education transformation.* [Online]. Available http://www.education.gov.za

Nunnaly, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pretorius, T.B. (1998). *Fortitude and stress-resistance: Development and validation of the Fortitude Questionnaire (FORQ)*. Bellville: University of the Western Cape.

Roothman, B., Kirsten, D.K., Wissing, M.P. (2003). Gender differences in aspects of psychological well-being. *South African Journal of Psychology, 33(4)*, 212-218.

Rosenbaum, M. (Ed.). (1990). *Learned resourcefulness: On coping skills, self-control and adaptive behaviour*. Springer: New York.

Sarason, B.R.,Sarason, I.G., & Pierce, G.R. (Eds). (1990). *Social support: An interactional view*. New York: Wiley.

Santiago-Rivera, A.L., Bernstein, L.B & Gard, T.L. (1995). The importance of achievement and appraisal of stressful events as predictors of coping. *Journal of College Student Development, 36(4)*, 374-383.

Schwarzer, R. & Schwarzer, C. (1996) A critical survey of coping instruments. In M.Zeidner & N.S. Endler (Eds), *Handbook of coping – theory, research, applications*. New York: Wiley

Seigffge-Krenke, I. (1995). *Stress, Coping, and Relationships in Adolescence*. New Jersey: LEA.

Sennet, J.P.B. (2000). *A preliminary investigation into the adjustment to university of first-tear students at the University of Cape Town, with*

particular emphasis on the relative adjustment of black students. Unpublished Master's thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Strümpfer, D.J.W. (1990). Salutogenesis: A new paradigm. South African Journal of Psychology, 20(4), 265–276.

Van der Berg, S. & Burger, R. (2003). *Education and socio-economic differentials: A study of school performance in the Western Cape. Working Paper 03/73.* Cape Town: Development Policy Research Unit. [Online]. Available http://www.commerce.uct.ac.za/DPRU

Van Heerden, E. (1995). Black university students in South Africa: The influence of sociocultural factors on study and performance. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 26* (1), 50-80.

Williams, C. (1982). *The early experiences of students on Australian University campuses.* University of Sydney.

Dear Student

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about how you as a first year student have adjusted to university life. The information will be used to facilitate a better understanding of how first year students cope at university.

You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire, and your answers will remain completely anonymous and confidential. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this questionnaire, an appointment can be made at STUDENT COUNSELLING (959 2299). Should you for any reason not wish to complete the questionnaire you are under no obligation to do so.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Lynn Lundall
Intern Counselling Psychologist

Prof. K. Mwaba
Supervisor

Biographical Information

Age:------

Please tick the appropriate box

Sex:

Male	Female
1	2

Faculty Registered with:

CHS	Science
1	2

First Language:

English	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Other
1	2	3	4

Where do you live this year while you are studying?:

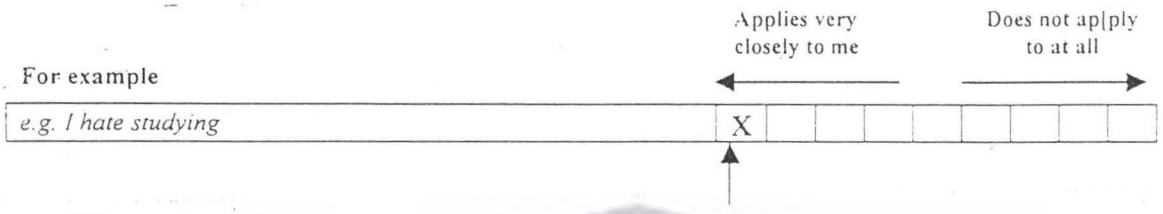
With parents	In residence	Boarding with people	Other
1	2	3	4

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

Please state the extent to which the following statements applies to you and/or your situation:

A scale is provided which allows you to relate the applicability of the statement to you. Boxes to the extreme left and right indicate extreme answers as they relate to the applicability of the statements. Please mark the appropriate box with an 'X'

For example



An 'X' here indicates that the statement applies very strongly to me

	Applies very closely to me								Doesn't apply to me at all
1. I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I have been keeping up to date with my academic work.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. I know why I'm at university and what I want out of it.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I am finding academic work at university difficult.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. Lately I have been feeling down and moody a lot.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. I am very involved with social activities at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am adjusting well at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. I have not been coping well during exams.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. I have felt tired much of the time lately.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. Standing on my feet, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. I have had informal, personal contacts with university lecturers.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. I am pleased now about my decision to go to university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
16. I am pleased now about my decision to attend this university in particular.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
17. I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18. I have several people I feel close to at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
19. My academic goals are well defined.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
20. I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. I'm not really clever enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

	Applies very closely to me								Doesn't apply to me at all
53. I feel I have good control over my life situation at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
54. I am satisfied with my programme of courses for this semester.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
55. I have been feeling in good health lately.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
56. I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
57. On balance, I would rather be home than here.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
58. Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
59. Lately I have been thinking about transferring to another university or technicon.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
60. Lately I have been thinking about dropping out of university altogether and for good.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
61. I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
62. I am very satisfied with the lecturers I have now in my courses.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
63. I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
64. I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
65. I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
66. I am quite satisfied with my academic situation at university.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
67 I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at university	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Your time and effort is greatly appreciated!!!