THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SCHEME IN ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY AT SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

By

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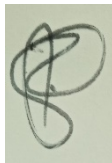University of the Western Cape (UWC)

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DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-thesis, entitled, "The role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food insecurity at South African universities" is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. All the sources used or quoted have been acknowledged and fully referenced.

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ABSTRACT

In the post-1994 period, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has been hailed for affording students from disadvantaged backgrounds access to higher learning institutions. Research has been conducted by various researchers and government officials on the issue of NSFAS and its role in promoting attendance at tertiary institutions. However, there is little research on NSFAS and the role it plays in student food insecurity and hunger. Students at universities are challenged with issues of food insecurity despite the food allowances provided by NSFAS. This research study aims to reflect on the apparent challenges of NSFAS in terms of addressing the issue of hunger and food security at one South African university, the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

The study utilized the qualitative research method and used both primary and secondary data to collect data needed to answer the research questions. It collected primary data from in-depth-interviews with all the participants. The secondary data collected from academic and grey literature was utilized in the study with a focus on NSFAS and student food insecurity at South African universities. The study consisted of five groups: 23 NSFAS recipient students; 5 members of the Student Representative Council; 3 staff members of the UWC Financial Aid office; 2 representatives from the UWC Student Development office; and 1 NSFAS representative. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data.

The results showed that there is food insecurity and student hunger at the university. It also revealed that the NSFAS administration has challenges delivering according to its mandate and its timing, resulting in food insecurity. The study further uncovered a shortage of funds, inadequate allowances, and student financial mismanagement.

This study aimed at contributing to the body of knowledge on NSFAS and student food insecurity at a South African university, UWC. Based on the findings, the study provides recommendations for all relevant stakeholders to play a part in reducing food insecurity. In conclusion, it suggests a further study on this important topic.

KEYWORDS

NSFAS

food insecurity

food security

student hunger

students

DHET

University of the Western Cape

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DHET   - Department of Higher Education and Training

FAO   - Food and Agriculture Organization

FRAC   - Food Research and Action Center

MDGs   - Millennium Development Goals

NSFAS   - National Student Financial Aid Scheme

PCHET   - (Parliamentary) Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training

QLFS   - Quarterly Labour Force Survey

SDGs   - Sustainable Development Goals

SRC   - Student Representative Council

STATS SA   - Statistics South Africa

TVET   - Technical Vocational Education and Training

UN   - United Nations

UWC   - University of the Western Cape

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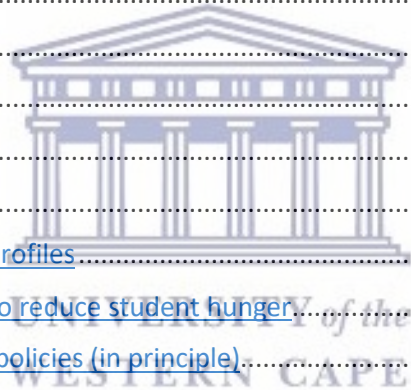I would also like to thank all the participants who participated in this study.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their social support throughout this journey. To my mother, thank you for believing in me and allowing me to pursue my studies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In post-apartheid South Africa, vast numbers of students entered higher learning institutions, including historically disadvantaged Black and Coloured students. The South African government places great importance on education as one of the key contributors to economic development (Sabi et al., 2018). In addition, the government sees the attainment of education as a tool to reduce poverty and accelerate economic growth (Letseka and Maile, 2008). Access to education as a basic human right is engraved in the South African Constitution; the government is thus mandated to make education accessible and affordable to all (Gwacela, 2013).

The increased access of students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds created a new level of socio-economic inequality within the student community, as the majority of students do not have sufficient finances to afford tertiary education (Kassier and Veldman, 2013). The high levels of inequality in South Africa within the education system inherited from the apartheid system led to the implementation of policies that promote equality (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2017a; 2017b) and redress "the historical legacy of an unequal and segregated system resting on the systematic exclusion and political disempowerment of the majority of the Higher Education Pathways 4 population" (Department of Education, 1997, cited in Ashwin and Case, 2018, p. 4). One of the policies introduced by the South African government included the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Act (No 56 of 1999).

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was introduced in 1996 due to the problem of Black students facing debt and struggling to access tertiary education (Bhorat and Pillay, 2017). NSFAS, previously known as the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA) forms a part of the government's service delivery in making education accessible to needy and deserving students (NSFAS, 2016b). NSFAS has a major objective of providing financial assistance to previously disadvantaged Black and Coloured students who want to further their studies at institutions of higher learning (Maphumulo, 2021). Since its inception, NSFAS provided loans and bursaries for undergraduate studies. Post-2018, the system was converted to a full-course bursary.

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The NSFAS bursary provides a food budget for its recipients. Before 2018, there were variations in terms of meal allowances offered at the public institutions in South Africa. For example, the University of Cape Town (UCT) provided monthly allowances of R1,600.00 in 2016, while the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) provided allowances between R1,200.00 to R1,800.00 per month in 2016 (NSFAS, 2016b). At the University of the Western Cape, students who lived off-campus received a R2,000.00 Pick 'n Pay food voucher per semester, while those who lived on-campus received a R3,000.00 Pick 'n Pay voucher and a R1,300.00 dining hall voucher per semester. Pick n' Pay is a departmental store where people come to buy groceries. It is like Shoprite, Checkers etc. and have options of getting groceries with vouchers. But post-2018, the NSFAS loan was converted to a full-cost bursary. This means that all South African university students who fall under the household annual income threshold of R350,000.00 study for free, and get the same amount of food allowance in the form of cash. University students who live on-campus receive an amount of R1,500.00 monthly, while those who live off-campus receive R2,250.00 per month.

Since its inauguration, NSFAS has played a significant role in supporting access to higher education and training for all students who would otherwise not be able to afford to study. NSFAS not only plays a role in increasing the participation rate at the tertiary level but also a big role in society, as it facilitates the marginalized in society to have access to formal education (Bhorat and Pillay, 2017). Through educational attainment, in principle, they will be active in the labor market, and in theory, the greater employability and higher earnings translate into better material quality of life, which contributes to the advancement of the economy of the country. In addition to that, educational attainment will lead to economic independence and food security (Kassier and Veldman, 2013).

Although there is a visible long-term growth investment in education, other important areas such as food insecurity at South African universities remain unresolved. Food insecurity at South African universities is at 30% compared to the national level of 26% (Mthethwa, 2021). According to several studies, hunger and food insecurity remain a challenge for previously disadvantaged students (Gwacela, 2013, p. 12; Misselhorn and Hendricks, 2017; Munro et al., 2013, p. 170). The prevalence of food insecurity at South African universities is as follows: University of the Free State – 65%; University of KwaZulu-Natal – 34%; North West University – 30%; University of South Africa – 26%; and the University of the Witwatersrand – 7% (Van den Berg and Raubenheimer, 2015). The existence of student

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hunger and food insecurity at South African universities points to the failure in NSFAS addressing students' needs.

The NSFAS scheme faces problems such as a shortage of funding at tertiary institutions (Ministerial Report, 2016). While the enrollment of students entering higher universities has increased, government funding has decreased from R20,187.00 in 1994 to R16,764.00 in 2014 (Dell, 2015, cited in Matukane and Bronkhorst, 2017). Although NSFAS received more than R1.6 billion of funding from the government, the scheme's overall budget remains inadequate to fund the number of demands (McKay et al., 2018). In addition, Rule and Jack (2018) state that financial aid is not enough, and that it could create a gap between the money students receive and what they need to survive.

In 2017, the South African government introduced free-fee education to all students, from 2018 first-year students onwards. Under the new system of NSFAS, students at South African universities receive R1,500.00 per month. NSFAS has been criticized for giving inadequate allocations per student, especially the food stipend (Sabi et al., 2018). Visagie (2019) states that the amount provided by NSFAS is inadequate to cover student necessities such as groceries and toiletries. As a result of that, some students resort to alternative ways of making ends meet, such as looking for part-time employment. According to Broton et al. (2018), food-insecure students are more likely to have part-time jobs than those who are food-secure. A paper released by the DHET in 2011 stated that students experienced great difficulty because of the inadequate funds for NSFAS (NSFAS, 2016b). The issue of the maladministration of student funds further impacts on the ability of students to graduate timeously due to their lack of access to sufficient basic food (Gwacela, 2013; Sabi et al., 2018). All these stated issues are among the factors that determine whether the students do well in their academic work or drop out of university (Sabi et al., 2018). This study sought to examine the challenges faced by NSFAS to address food insecurity and hunger at one South African university, namely the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

1.2 Rationale of the study

A vast body of research has been conducted by various researchers and government officials on the issue of NSFAS and its role in promoting attendance at tertiary institutions (Bhorat and Pillay, 2017; Nkoane, 2006; NSFAS, 2016b). Little research has been conducted on food insecurity among university students (Munro et al., 2013). In recent years, research on the issue of food insecurity at South African universities has been growing. One of the reasons is

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the inadequate allowances provided by NSFAS (Sabi et al., 2018). At most South African universities, the students who are more frequently exposed to food insecurity are those from poor backgrounds, especially students who are NSFAS recipients (Kassier and Veldman, 2013).

Despite the existence of literature on food insecurity and NSFAS, there is not much written on why NSFAS is unable to close the gap of food insecurity at South African universities. From this perspective, this research aims to reflect on the apparent challenges of NSFAS in addressing the issue of hunger and food security at one South African university, UWC.

1.3 Delineation of the case study area

This research study focuses on the governance of NSFAS at a tertiary institution in the Western Cape Province, namely the University of the Western Cape. UWC, a historically black university, is one of the four public universities in the Western Cape (Banda and Mafofo, 2016) and is located in Bellville, Cape Town.

1.4 Problem statement

NSFAS has played a pivotal role in ensuring that students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds enter institutions of higher learning. However, in recent years food insecurity has become a serious problem affecting tertiary students in South Africa (Sabi et al., 2018), especially those who are NSFAS recipients (Mtshali, 2013).

While higher education is one of the few preferred routes to overcoming the cycle of poverty, research has shown that many barriers hinder students from succeeding, especially those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, due to food insecurity and hunger (Broton et al., 2018, p. 2). The literature on food insecurity shows that food insecurity among university students harms their achievements and is deemed one of the factors behind the high drop-out rate of students at tertiary institutions. Letseka (2009) and Devereux (2018a, 2018b) note that student hunger affects the students' academic performance, leading to high drop-out and low graduation rates. This is because hunger leads to low cognitive functioning and lowers the level of concentration in class (Van den Berg and Raubenheimer, 2015). In the broader context, graduate drop-out harms the country's economic development and the generation of human capital, as the completion of degrees and the number of graduates entering the labor market are compromised (Sabi et al., 2018, p. 10). Hunger not only affects academic

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performance but also the mental health of students and could lead to depression or even thoughts of suicide (Henry, 2017).

According to Van den Berg and Raubenheimer (2015, pp. 160-161), food insecurity among students at higher education institutions is under-researched, possibly owing to the general unstated assumption that "higher education, being an expensive, elite and non-mandatory educational avenue, would not be pursued by students if they did not already have access to the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing". However, that is not the case. In recent years, studies show an increasing number of students from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds enrolling at tertiary institutions (Stellenbosch University, 2018). In addition, studies show that students from poor backgrounds are more likely to suffer from food insecurity while receiving NSFAS (Sabi et al., 2018). NSFAS allowances fall short of what is needed to purchase adequate quantities of quality food (Morakile, 2015). Limited research examines this dynamic. Even though there are no available statistics, it is evident that UWC students suffer from food insecurity, based on recent research conducted at the university (Adeniyi and Durojaye, 2020; Drewett, 2018). There have also been seminars that discussed these issues at the institution, presented by the Dullah Omar Institute (DOI), and the Centre of Excellence in Food Security (CoE-FS) (Building, 2021).

The aim of this research study was to investigate why UWC NSFAS beneficiaries are faced with food insecurity.

1.5 Aim of the study

The overall aim of this research study was to investigate the implementation failures of NSFAS in addressing student food insecurity and hunger.

1.6 Research questions

In the exploration of the above-stated research problem, the primary research question to be answered by this study is "Why is there student hunger at the University of the Western Cape when NSFAS exists to make allocations to the needy students to afford their tertiary studies, including a food allowance?"

Within the broad research question as stipulated above, the following subsidiary questions were identified:

- What provisions are made by NSFAS to reduce student hunger?
- How does NSFAS implement its policies in principle and in practice?

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- What are the shortcomings of NSFAS regarding the food budget?
- How could the policy design and implementation of NSFAS be improved to better address food security on South African campuses?

1.7 Significance of the study

Food security research is overlooked in the field of social science, especially within tertiary education (Munro et al., 2013). There is an assumption that university students belong to the elite group with sufficient funds to pay for food, as they have enrolled at tertiary institutions. It is well-known that NSFAS funding ought to cover all the needs of students, including food (Heher, 2017). Research shows that the food component is inadequate. Students suffering from hunger are less likely to perform well and complete their studies, as they have to spend much of their time earning additional money to cover their food costs (Broton et al., 2018; Devereux, 2018a, 2018b). Even though NSFAS is funding students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the funding is not sufficient, as some needs such as food security are not covered (Sabi et al., 2018). This research study addresses the existing gap in the literature and sheds light on the reasons behind student hunger among NSFAS recipients and other challenges faced by these scholarship holders at the micro-level. Furthermore, on a personal level, the researcher has been a recipient of NSFAS funding and found that the scheme fails to provide for the needs of students, particularly concerning the provision of food. Fellow students also suffered from similar challenges during this time.

1.8 Research methodology

This research study used a qualitative methodology, utilizing both primary and secondary data. The researcher collected primary data through in-depth interviews to gather more information from the participants who have the information required to complete this study. The researcher also used secondary data, consisting of reviewing relevant literature and documentary analysis such as NSFAS documents, media reports on NSFAS, NSFAS brochures, and background papers on NSFAS, to gain more knowledge on the NSFAS system. The purposive and snowball sampling was used to connect the researcher to the respondents who would be able to provide the exact information needed for this study. The conceptual framework used by this researcher is derived from policy implementation theory. This is used to identify underlying implementation issues in NSFAS that helped to explain why it appears to be failing, concerning student food insecurity.

1.9 Structure of the study

This thesis consists of five chapters, outlined as follows:

Chapter one introduces the research topic and provides the background of the study. This chapter also includes a summary of the research problem, aims of the study, research questions, objectives, and the significance of the study.

Chapter two discusses the relevant literature regarding the study, defining the important concepts such as food security and food insecurity. This chapter also elaborates on the food security situation in South Africa focusing on university student hunger and its relationship to NSFAS.

Chapter three describes the conceptual framework that is used to interpret the empirical data.

Chapter four outlines the research methods used in conducting the research. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the study design, target population, sample size, and data collection techniques. In addition, this chapter discusses how the data was analyzed, and ethical considerations in conducting this study.

Chapter five presents the main findings of the study.

Chapter six discusses the study findings, using the theoretical framework as a lens with which to interpret underlying patterns in the data.

Chapter seven presents the conclusion and the recommendations of the study and areas for further research.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the introduction and background information for this study. This chapter explained that even though NSFAS exist to provide financial assistance, there are still areas that are left unattended such as student food security. This chapter has also revealed that there is growing literature that focuses on student food insecurity. However, the current literature does not focus on the relationship between NSFAS and student food insecurity. Qualitative study is therefore necessary to get the in-depth information on NSFAS and student food insecurity in South African Universities, UWC. This study, therefore sought to understand the implementation challenges faced by NSFAS to address student hunger.

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Chapters in this study were also outlined. The chapter highlighted on the aims and objective of the study, the research problem statement and background to the study and research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Food insecurity in tertiary institutions is a complex topic. This section discusses the concepts of food security and food insecurity, the state of food security from global to national levels, and the prevalence of food insecurity in South Africa and at universities. The first section defines the basic concepts of food security and food insecurity. The second part of the chapter discusses the literature on the state and prevalence of food insecurity at the global and South African levels and then at universities both globally and in South Africa. It also discusses interventions implemented by universities. It defines NSFAS, including the role of NSFAS in food security. In conclusion, it considers the implementation challenges of NSFAS in relation to student food insecurity.

2.2 Defining food security and food insecurity

2.2.1 Food security

Food security has become a multidimensional concept having more than one definition in academic publications, statements, media, and articles (Simon, 2012). The first definition that was generally accepted for the concept was established in 1974 at the World Food Summit of the United Nations. According to the World Food Summit held in 1996, "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996). Food security is also defined as having the physical, social, and economic ability to access nutritious food daily without resorting to other coping strategies or stealing (Olusanya, 2018). In simple words, food security means that all people have sufficient access to enough food to live an active and healthy life.

As mentioned earlier, in its dimensionality, four pillars were identified, namely: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability (Ghattas, 2014). Food availability means the availability of adequate quantities of food at household, national, and global levels (Du Toit et al., 2011). Food availability is also defined as the "amount of food that is present in a country or area through all forms of domestic production, imports, food stocks and food aid" (WFP, 2009, p.170, cited in Napoli et al., 2011, p. 19). Food availability can be achieved

through domestic and international production (Ndobo, 2013). Availability of food shows the supply side and is affected by all the elements that have an impact on the domestic supply of food and the ability to finance food imports (Matebeni, 2018, p. 13). These include, among other things, the production, distribution, exchange, consumption, and waste of food (Pereira, 2014).

Food access means the ability of a nation and household to acquire enough food on a sustainable basis (Du Toit et al., 2011). In addition, food accessibility is also when all households have the physical and economic ability to acquire adequate nutritious food (Olusanya, 2018) to live a healthy life (Ndobo, 2013). Physical refers to transportation of the acquired food from where it is produced (Sabi et al., 2018; Napoli et al., 2011). The economic aspect refers to being able to afford to buy nutritious food (Sabi et al., 2018). Food accessibility is acquired through consumption, production, and receiving gifts from other individuals (Ndobo, 2013, p. 14; Matebeni, 2018, p. 13). Purchasing power is one of the most significant determinants of food access (Ndobo, 2013). This is why access to food also means being physically, socially, and economically able to access adequate food for a nutritious diet (Verhart et al., 2016).

Food utilization refers to how food is used, based on the knowledge of nutritional care, as well as access to sufficient water and sanitation (Du Toit et al., 2011). This dimension of food security is concerned with ensuring that the nutritious food consumed by an individual is safe and of good quality to provide an adequate and healthy life to ensure that the individual's psychological needs are met (Ndobo, 2013). Food access and availability are not enough to ensure that an individual eats safe and nutritious food (Napoli et al., 2011); hence, this dimension is pivotal.

Stability refers to the first three dimensions of food security (availability, accessibility, utilization) being achieved (Sabi et al., 2018). Stability refers to the consistency of household food supply at all times without struggles, even in times of economic shocks (Ndobo, 2013). For example, in cases of market price instability, natural disasters, political instability, and unemployment, stability refers to individuals being able to recover or being pulled out of poverty (Matebeni, 2018). The household becomes vulnerable when one or more of the dimensions are not met (Matebeni, 2018).

2.2.2 Food insecurity

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1983) defines food insecurity as "a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and active and healthy life". Many factors cause food insecurity; chief among them is food availability – where there is a lack of food, and accessibility – where there is a lack of resources to access food (Micevski et al., 2014). Improper utilization of food also causes food insecurity, as well as changes in time that can affect the stability of households having food (Simon, 2012). Some households who are food insecure experience short-term food insecurity at different points during the year, while other households who are food insecure experience long-term food insecurity, that is, throughout the year (Matebeni, 2018).

Food insecurity is categorized into three types: acute, occasional, and chronic (Fawole et al., 2015; Simon, 2012). Acute food insecurity is the type of severe hunger and malnutrition that leads to the point where the life of an individual is threatened. Food insecurity occasionally exists because of temporary situations but is deemed chronic when the ability to meet food needs is constantly or permanently under threat (Fawole et al., 2015).

2.3 The state of food security from global to national levels

Access to adequate nutritious food is a global challenge (Adeniyi and Durojaye, 2020). According to Matebeni (2018), over the past half-century, global food production has always been ahead of demand; however, there is still a great number of people experiencing food insecurity around the world. In 2000, 189 countries gathered at the United Nations (UN) to formulate the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce world challenges by achieving eight development goals by 2015 (Hwang and Kim, 2015). Goal One of the MDGs was to reduce extreme hunger and poverty (UN, 2015). According to the United Nations Report, the number of undernourished people dropped from 23.3% between 1990 and 1992 to 12.9% between 2015 and 2016 (UN, 2015).

However, other reports reveal shocking numbers of food insecurity after the MDGs. A report released by the FAO in 2017 revealed that the number of people who are undernourished in the world increased from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. Africa has the highest prevalence of undernourishment while Asia has the highest number of undernourished people (FAO et al., 2017). According to various international organizations (see in particular, FAO et al., 2019), more than 820 million people in the world experience hunger, making it difficult

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to achieve the zero hunger 2030 goal. According to the FAO et al. (2019), about 1.3 billion of the world population experience food insecurity at a moderate level, meaning that they do not have access to nutritious food.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced after the deadline of the MDGs (Matebeni, 2018). The SDGs were established in 2015 to continue the efforts of trying to achieve the MDGs and to deal with other new challenges (Hwang and Kim, 2015). The SDGs contain 17 goals that should be achieved by 2030 (Hwang and Kim, 2015). SDG 1 focuses on ending poverty and SDG 2 on ending hunger and food insecurity by 2030 (Matebeni, 2018). Estimations of the SDG indicators that monitor the progress towards achieving access to all, show that about 2 billion people in the world experience food insecurity (FAO et al., 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue of food security, disrupted the chains of food supply, caused the loss of income, and widened income inequalities (FAO et al., 2021). According to the FAO et al. (2021), between 720 million and 811 million people around the globe faced hunger in 2020, an increase from 161 million from 2019. These trends and events show that food insecurity continues to be a major problem facing the global population.

In 1994 after the collapse of the apartheid system in South Africa, achieving food security was prioritized by the South African government and the right to access to sufficient food was included in the Constitution. Sections 26 and 27 of the Constitution state that every South African citizen has a right to food, water, and social security (Du Toit et al., 2011). South Africa is described as being food secure at the national level because it can produce enough staple foods and can import them (Mothae, 2017). This means that the country can produce food for everyone and still have a surplus to export to other countries.

Even though South Africa is considered to be food secure at a national level, there are numerous households experiencing food insecurity (Mothae, 2017; Ndobo, 2013). According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2019b), several studies have established links between food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Research conducted in South Africa shows that poverty is rooted in the apartheid policies that perpetuated racial inequalities where most black South Africans were placed in unsustainable settlements (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006, cited in Stats SA, 2019a). Under these conditions, people struggle to meet their basic needs, making it impossible for them to buy food. According to Stats SA (2017), 56% of the South African population live in poverty, while nearly 28% live in extreme poverty below the poverty line. In another study conducted by the South African National

Health and Nutritional Examination, it was found that 28% of households from urban areas were at risk of hunger, while 26% were experiencing hunger in comparison to rural areas, where the risk was 32% and 36% respectively (Oxford, 2018).

The unemployment rate in South Africa as of 2021 was 34.9% (Stats SA, 2021). This unemployment rate is derived from the results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) which indicates that the number of employees decreased by 660,000 in the third quarter of 2021 to 14,3 million (Stats SA, 2021). This is reported to be the highest unemployment rate to be recorded since the establishment of QLFS in 2008 (Stats SA, 2021). South Africa is known for having the highest global Gini coefficient, which is the income inequality of a country (Read, 2021). The Gini coefficient in the country is 63.0 (World Population Review, 2021).

More than 15 million of South Africa's population depend on social grants (Moosa and Patel, 2021). This indicates that many South Africans of working-age are not employed, and thus do not have the resources to access food. Therefore, in South Africa, food insecurity, linked to the socio-economic status of a household, is indicated by employment and food expenditure (Chakona and Shackleton, 2019). For example, the majority of people who live in informal settlements in South Africa have inadequate access to food because they have no income (Chakona and Shackleton, 2019). The South African government introduced social grants to enhance income and act as one of the strategies to help curb the rate of poverty in South African households (Chakona and Shackleton, 2019). According to Moosa and Patel (2021), more than 17 million people from low-income households are recipients of social grants. This hinders the economic growth of the country because a large proportion of the population depends on the government for survival. The COVID-19 pandemic placed more responsibility on the government, as it increased the monetary amounts of social grants, and created social relief grants for those who lost their jobs, and could not afford to apply for other forms of grants (Köhler and Bhorat, 2020). Even though social grants play a pivotal role in food security (Moosa and Patel, 2021), improvements in the employment rate would also make a great change.

Despite being afforded great importance by the South African government, food insecurity is still one of the major challenges in the country. Food insecurity is a problem that co-exists alongside other social problems in the country that still need to be addressed. To help reduce food insecurity in South Africa, social issues such as unemployment, that has been identified

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as a major cause of food insecurity in the country, need to be addressed. To this end, the government must expand the employment opportunities for the citizens and also reduce income inequalities.

2.4 Food security among university students

There is a general misconception that students who are at higher institutions of learning are an elite group and are thus food secure. However, in reality, students at these institutions are more likely to be food insecure than the general population (Adeniyi and Durojaye, 2020). Evidence from developed countries like the United States, Australia, and Canada reveals concerning levels of food insecurity among tertiary students (Sabi et al., 2018). A 2014 study showed that 59% of students at Oregon University, USA, are food insecure (Dubick et al., 2016), which was higher than the 15% rate of food security of the general population in the country (Patton-López et al., 2014). This 59% of food-insecure students was also higher than the prevalence of food insecurity at the City University of New York (CUNY) which was at 39%, according to a 2011 study (Dubick et al., 2016). Those who were at risk of food insecurity are those referred to as Hispanic, international, first-generation students, and African American students (Kashuba, 2017). This, therefore, shows that there is a racial component to the food insecurity issue at tertiary education institutions as most of the affected students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Another university in Australia revealed high levels of up to 70% food insecurity among students (Adeniyi and Durojaye, 2020). Another study conducted in 2016 on the prevalence of student food insecurity in five Canadian universities, found that the average rate of student hunger in these universities was 39% (Silverthorn, 2016).

South African universities are not an exception to this challenge of food insecurity. Even though there is limited research, food insecurity is an alarming problem at institutions of higher learning (Dunn-Coetzee and Foflonker, 2019). In recent years more students are embarking on higher learning and the number of students from low socio-economic communities is growing (Letseka, 2009; Gwacela, 2013). Furthermore, tertiary institutions are faced with a great number of students who are delayed in completing their studies, failing, and dropping out of tertiary institutions (Sabi et al., 2018). According to Mtshali (2013), the graduation rate for undergraduate students at 23 South African universities was between 15 and 20%. In addition, the students faced challenges such as hunger (Mtshali, 2013). Studies on student food security have been conducted in some South African universities such as the

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University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of the Free State (UFS), the University of Cape Town (UCT), and the University of Pretoria (UP) (Drewett, 2018).

Research conducted by Munro et al. (2013) between 2007 and 2010 at the UKZN revealed that students from disadvantaged backgrounds were vulnerable to food insecurity. The study revealed inadequate access to nutritious food (Munro et al., 2013). In addition, Munro et al. (2013) reported food insecurity levels of 20.8% at the university. Another study conducted by Gwacela (2013) at the university found challenges of limited financial aid and that food insecurity posed a threat to the academic performance of students. The study also reported that the majority of the students were food insecure, with 80% experiencing food anxiety with issues concerning food access, and with more than half of the students having experienced being out of food (Gwacela, 2013). According to Kassier and Veldman (2013), UKZN is among the institutions affected by food insecurity, because 53% of its students come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. A similar study at UFS found that there were high levels of food insecurity in the population study (Van den Berg and Raubenheimer, 2015). The results were also linked to academic performance; 60% of students experienced food insecurity with hunger, while 26% experienced food insecurity without hunger (Van den Berg and Raubenheimer, 2015).

There is limited research on food insecurity levels at other South African universities. There was a study conducted at Wits University by Dominguez-Whitehead (2017), which focused on the student challenges in acquiring food. There is also a 2016 unpublished research report on UCT, which focused on UCT campus foodways and students' lived experiences (Spetus-Melhus, 2016). Another unpublished research study was conducted at UP and focused on factors linked to student food security at the university (Du Rand et al., 2017). Recently, research on student food insecurity at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was conducted by Adeniyi and Durojaye (2020), and Drewett (2018). Additionally, seminars on food security at the institution were facilitated by the Dullah Omar Institute (DOI), and the Centre of Excellence in Food Security (CoE-FS) (Building, 2021).

Food insecurity at universities is not a topic that can be easily discussed by those who experience it. According to Broton et al. (2018, p. 3), "despite growing awareness of food insecurity and hunger on college campuses, food insecurity is faceless, has no standard image, and is often silent". Cady (2014) adds that most people who are experiencing poverty

choose to keep it hidden because of shame and stigma. The social stigma associated with food insecurity usually has a negative effect on students' self-esteem and isolates them from other students. Research conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal revealed that the students did not feel comfortable speaking about their food insecurity experiences (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2017a, 2017b).

2.5 Impact of food insecurity on students

Food insecurity has a negative impact on the affected students. One of the major consequences of food insecurity among tertiary students in South Africa, is poor academic performance (Devereux, 2018a, 2018b). The mental health issues accompanying lack of food are more likely to result in students under-performing academically. According to Rule and Jack (2018), students from all levels of education – from primary to tertiary levels – can be affected, due to being too hungry to learn because they cannot concentrate during lessons. Also, as a result of tiredness, some even fall asleep during class. Although there is not much research on this issue, especially among tertiary students, it is known that food insecurity limits the ability of students to study and eventually leads to the attainment of low marks. Furthermore, some of the academic outcomes include failing courses, and dropping out of university (Food Research and Action Center, 2018).

A 2016 study found that students at several Canadian universities had a nutrition deficiency, because they could not afford to buy nutritious food, and the food that was offered by the food banks was also not nutritious (Silverthorn, 2016). Research by Sabi et al., in 2020 and Maroto in 2013 (cited in Silverthorn, 2016) revealed that the students had low levels of concentration in class because of hunger. Other students suffered from depression, anxiety, and even had thoughts of suicide, compared to those who were not affected by food insecurity (Silverthorn, 2016). A similar study conducted by Mukigi et al. (2018) found that students who suffer from food insecurity are more likely to have anger issues and they usually separate themselves from others. Many do not seek help because of stigmatization. In some cases, they would rather steal from others, especially those who live at university residences. This is evidenced in a study done by Rule and Jack (2018), where some students reported stealing from their cafeterias to have meals.

One of the results of student hunger is having to seek part-time employment to make ends meet. Devereux (2018a, 2018b) notes that students from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to work to cover the extra costs and these students work more than 20 hours

per week. As a result, these students often cannot keep up with their schoolwork and are more likely to drop out of school because of work commitments. This threatens the economic and human development of the country as the completion of the degree is compromised (Sabi et al., 2018). In addition, students who work while studying end up getting low grades, which consequently impact on low graduate rates for the university (Letseka, 2009). This is possibly due to the impact of food insecurity that hampers the academic achievement of students.

2.6 Institutional interventions

Many universities in South Africa have tried to lessen the incidence of food insecurity at their university campuses. For example, the University of Cape Town (in 2016) provided students with lunch vouchers worth R25.00 to buy food on campus (Spetus-Melhus, 2016). The University of the Free State introduced the "No Student Hungry" campaign that provides daily allowances for food-insecure students that allow them to buy food around campus (Meko and Jordaan, 2016). This program was introduced by the university in 2011 (Morakile, 2015). The students apply for a food bursary, worth R30.00 a day, that is loaded on their student cards and can be used at campus shops (Devereux, 2018a, 2018b). The University of Johannesburg (UJ) has similarly adopted this program, which aims to provide 7,000 meals to UJ campuses every week (Devereux, 2018a, 2018b). The University of KwaZulu-Natal has also provided an initiative that will help fight the crisis of student hunger where only students funded by NSFAS receive meal vouchers every day (Devereux, 2018a, 2018b). The University of the Witwatersrand also has programs that help fight food insecurity and hunger such as, Wits Food Bank, Masidleni Daily Meal Project, SVP Soup Kitchen, and Wits Inala (Vakil, 2017). The University of Stellenbosch has also designed initiatives to help fight student hunger on campus – it has a "Move4Food" campaign that also plays a role in reducing food insecurity on campus (Stellenbosch, 2018). This shows that at least something is being done to help curb this growing crisis of student hunger.

The University of the Western Cape also has some programs in place to help fight food insecurity on campus. UWC has partnered with Tiger Brands in helping to reduce food insecurity on campus (Mogatosi, 2016). This is an initiative that was started by Mr Bomester of UWC Donor Relations in 2014 when he approached Tiger Brands to assist in creating a student support system at UWC (Tiger Brands, 2019). In 2017, Tiger Brands became a UWC student support center and the company committed to providing monthly food parcels to UWC for needy students (Tiger Brands, 2017, p. 57). There is also a page on Facebook named "UWC Fairy Godmother" that assists students with food and some basic needs such as

transport money, groceries, and books. This Facebook page was founded by a UWC lecturer who remains anonymous (Somdyala, 2019). Another program is the UWC Ikamva Lethu campaign which was founded by the Student Representative Council (SRC) of the university (Mogatosi, 2016). The campaign sources donors and helps students with academic clearance, course materials, and food security programs (Mogatosi, 2016).

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter showed that food security is a global problem facing different countries, despite the economic state of these countries. The chapter narrowed it down from the prevalence of food insecurity at universities at the international level to universities in South Africa. Since 1994 more students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds were entering institutions of higher learning, with the help of the government through NSFAS. However, it was found that food insecurity among students is still an issue and that students who are prone to food insecurity are students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are recipients of a NSFAS bursary. This is linked to the problem of South Africa not being food secure at household level. The issue of food security at South African universities is still huge because there is a stigma attached to it, as students are not comfortable admitting that they are hungry, and that has a negative impact on their academic performance and overall health. This chapter also considered interventions on the parts of several South African universities. Despite that, and the commitment of NSFAS to the food budget, as well as the existence of the literature on food insecurity and NSFAS, there is not much written on why NSFAS is unable to close the gap of food insecurity at South African universities. In some of the studies discussed above, NSFAS was found to be part of the cause of food insecurity among students. From this perspective, this research study aims to reflect on the apparent challenges of the NSFAS system from the implementation side, in terms of addressing the issue of hunger and food security at a South African university, namely UWC.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used to guide this study. Many theories can be used to analyze a study of this nature. However, for this study, the researcher selected the policy implementation theory. The conceptual framework is used to examine the relationship between NSFAS and the food insecurity challenges facing students at South African universities. The chapter starts with defining the implementation theory, then discusses the three generations or stages of the theory, as the theory has evolved over time. The researcher then discusses the gap between policy planning and policy implementation, and finally, considers the factors that affect the success of policy implementation, which is followed by the closing summary.

3.2 Defining policy implementation

Implementation plays a pivotal role in the policy process and is critical to a policy's success. The term "policy implementation" has been defined by different scholars from a range of different perspectives. The concept of implementation can be defined as carrying out or accomplishing a given task (Paudel, 2009). According to Khan and Khandaker (2016, p. 540), policy implementation refers to the "execution of law, in which various stakeholders and organizations work together with the use of procedures and techniques to put policies into effect to help attain goals". O'Toole (2003, p. 266, cited in Paudel, 2009, p. 37) defines policy implementation as "what develops between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something or stop doing something and the ultimate impact of the world of actions". In simple terms, policy implementation is putting the goals and objectives of policy into action. Khan (2016) states that the studies of policy implementation aim at having a broader understanding of the success or failures of policy by looking at the factors that impact it. They help policymakers and scholars to study the processes within implementation that influence the outcomes of public policies.

The origin of the theory of policy implementation can be traced back to Phillip Selznick where he was analyzing the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1949 (Mugambwa et al., 2018). Selznick's analysis showed that the aims and outcomes of the federal economic development initiative were shaped by the local implementation, where the local leaders changed and were

in charge of the process (Mugambwa et al., 2018). The theory was promoted in the works of Pressman and Wildavsky who published a book in 1973 titled "Implementation", which discussed the requirements needed to execute a policy successfully (Paudel, 2009). Implementation theory, therefore, emerged from the interests of scholars to understand the factors that affect the success or failure of policy implementation.

3.3 Three generations of policy implementation theory

3.3.1 First generation

Over the past years, policy implementation theory has evolved, from the first generation to the third generation. The first generation of implementation theory is known as the top-down approach. With the top-down approach, it is believed that policy implementation will occur once it has been approved by the authorities (Mugambwa et al., 2018). Paudel (2009) states that this generation was based on single authoritative decision-making. In simple words, top-down perspectives can be explained as policy goals set by policymakers and implemented using certain mechanisms chosen by the policymakers, not by the beneficiaries (Paudel, 2009).

The first-generation theory focused on describing different barriers to effective policy implementation (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). With the top-down approach, the designers of the policy are the central actors (Cerna, 2013) and are the ones responsible for formulating a policy that they think is suitable for the problem at hand. This means that the only people who develop the policy are the designers and not those who are affected or will benefit from the policy (Signé, 2017). This approach has been promoted by scholars such as Meter, Horn, and Maznamin (Khan, 2016). One of the examples of the first generation is the already mentioned, book by Pressman and Wildavsky published in 1973 titled "Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington are Dashed in Oakland" (Khan, 2016). The first generation was "characterized by pioneering but largely atheoretical, case-specific, and non-cumulative studies" such as that of Pressman and Wildavsky (Paudel, 2009, p. 38).

This generation was criticized for its lack of theory and generalization (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). The top-down approach has also been removed because of its assumptions that have been proven not to be working (Signé, 2017).

3.3.2 Second generation

The second generation of implementation theory established frameworks such as bottom-up approaches to policy implementation (Khan, 2016). In the bottom-up approach, the central actors or key actors are the target population (Mugambwa et al., 2018). In other words, the policy is made at the micro-level, targeting the beneficiaries of the policy (Cerna, 2013), and involves both formal and informal relationships when formulating the policy and when implementing the policy (Paudel, 2009). These key actors are called street-level bureaucrats by Michael Lipsky (Signé, 2017). This perspective is similar to the people-centered approach because it focuses more on the beneficiaries of the policies by making sure that they participate in constructing the policy and benefit from it. Bottom-up approaches have been promoted by scholars such as Elmore Lipsky (Khan and Khandaker, 2016).

This second generation also focused on explaining the successes or the failures of implementation (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). The success or failure of policy implementation is dependent on the commitment and skills of the actors that are at the forefront and who are beneficiaries. This generation also contributed to the development of the analytical framework to act as a guide on policy implementation (Khan, 2016).

This approach has been critiqued for being biased, it over-emphasizes the capability of one side of the actors in making decisions, which in this case is the target population (Cerna, 2013).

3.3.3 Third generation

While both first- and second-generation implementation studies have contributed to the knowledge and understanding of the concept of implementation, they have not explained the different types of outcomes from both approaches (Paudel, 2009). The third generation emerged as an attempt to fix the conceptual and measurement problems that delayed progress in the discipline of research (Khan, 2016). This generation aimed at combining both the top-down and bottom-up approaches to benefit from the strengths of both approaches and minimize shortcomings (Cerna, 2013).

In this generation, more precise scientific designs were seen as an important step toward progressive theoretical progress (Goggin, 1986; Leater et al., 1987; Goggin et al., 1990; all cited in Hupe and Sætren, 2015). Hupe and Saetren (2015) listed the main features of the third generation as:

a) Key variables must be clearly defined

b) Hypothesis derived from theoretical constructs should guide empirical evidence

c) More use of multivariate statistical analysis on quantitative data to supplement qualitative data

d) More careful considerations and selection of cases for comparison both across different units of analysis

e) More longitudinal research design.

The goal behind this generation of studies was to become more scientific than the previous generations about implementation (Khan and Khandaker, 2016).

However, there has been little to no progress in the implementation of the third generation (Mugambwa et al., 2018; Paudel, 2009). In other words, the third generation has not yet been implemented, it has not been seen in practice (Paudel, 2009), and there is no response to the call of the third generation (Mugambwa et al., 2018). This is due to the high demands of the research design of the third generation and some "inherent dualities and tensions between some of the essential features that make it hard to optimize them all simultaneously" (Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 217).

3.4 Policy planning and policy implementation gap

This section briefly discusses the gap between policy planning and policy implementation, known as the implementation gap. The implementation gap is defined as the gap that exists between what the policy was intended to achieve and what is actually achieved (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). In simple terms, policy gap implementation is when the results of the policy do not correspond or match with the aims and objectives of the policy. The results are usually felt by those at the bottom, the ones who are intended to benefit from the policy being formulated and implemented. Therefore, poor implementation can be traced back to the gaps in the implementation process.

Figure 1 below illustrates the gap between policy planning and policy implementation. The diagram indicates that policies, once they are adopted, are not always implemented as envisioned and do not necessarily achieve the stated goals. The cause of the gap between policymaking and the implementation phase resulting in failure can be because of miscommunication, lack of planning, unclear goals, and corruption (Khan and Khandaker, 2016; Siddique, 2016). Khan (2016) maintains that implementation is viewed as a

challenging process, despite written guidelines on goals, roles, and responsibilities, and even when monitoring frameworks are provided.
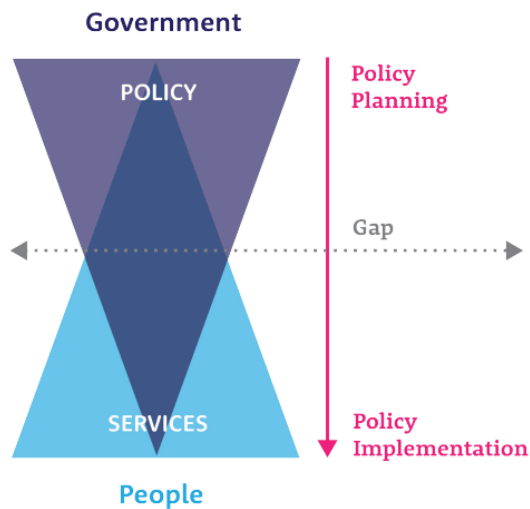
Figure 1: Gap between policy planning and policy implementation

 Source: Conliffe et al. (2018)

Policy implementation theory is an important theory for policymakers because the model provides feedback on how policy is being implemented and the progress it is making. In such cases, policymakers will be in a better position to assess the achievements and make the necessary corrections to improve the policy. It is important, therefore, to highlight that the success of a policy outcome does not only occur by formulating effective systems, but also by managing the implementation (Khan and Khandaker, 2016). This means that even though policy goals may be excellent, they may not be executed according to their perceived design. In some cases, the implementers are not able to carry out the implementation processes, and therefore the services are not delivered to the beneficiaries of the policy for whom it was designed in the first place.

3.5 Factors affecting the success of policy implementation

It is difficult to state which major factors will lead to the success of policy implementation, in other words, there is no "one size fits all" approach (Cerna, 2013, p. 17). However, this has not hindered scholars from coming up with the possible major success factors for certain policy areas (Cerna, 2013). From the perspective of the implementation theory, there are

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significant factors that affect the success of policy implementation. According to Paudel (2009) for example, factors that influence the success of a policy implementation include the following: (a) specified tasks and objectives that state the goal of policy; (b) management plan with task allocation and performance standards to allocations; (c) objective means of performance measures; and (d) a management system of control and social sanctions that hold assistants accountable for their performance. These factors are set out in the implementation literature on how policy can be successfully implemented. Other scholars are of the view that effective policy implementation is hindered by a lack of funding resources, competent staff, lack of administrative capabilities, delays in delivering the demands, and increased demand for service (Khan and Khandaker, 2016).

According to Tezera (2019), different authors have come up with different ways of implementing policies effectively. In Table 1 below the factors set out in multiple literature sources have been compiled by the researcher to construct an analytical framework to guide this study's examination of the implementation successes of NSFAS in relation to food security. It is within the above context that policy implementation theory will be used to inform this investigation and used to reflect on the findings. The theory will be used as a lens to examine the implementation of the NSFAS and its success in addressing food security at tertiary institutions using the case study of the University of the Western Cape. Within the context of this research, it is hypothesized that the governance failure of the NSFAS could be the result of its failure to deliver on its mandate due to implementation challenges that are faced within the system.
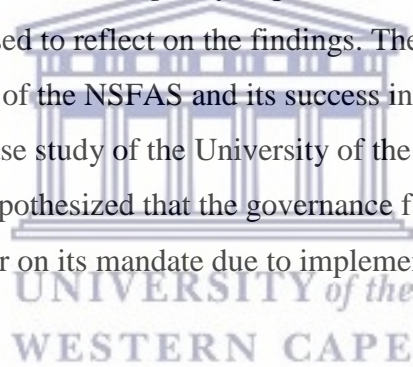
Table 1: Critical factors affecting the success of policy implementation

Factors affecting policy implementation	Definition
Elucidation/clarity of the aims and objectives	Be clear and specific about the aims and objectives of the policy. Clarification is essential to provide an understanding of the policy goals (Brynard, 2009, p. 558; Elmore, 1978, p. 195, cited in Paudel, 2009; Siddique, 2016, p. 107).

Stakeholder engagement	A process whereby an organization involves a group of people who may be affected or may influence the decisions of implementation (Lemke and Harris-Wai, 2015).
Commitment and cooperation	All key stakeholders must be committed to delivering the policy. This happens through the exchange of skills and knowledge that will have a positive impact on the outcome of the policy (Giacchino and Kakabadse, 2003, p.144).
Resources (skills and abilities)	The availability of highly skilled and resourceful individuals with complementary skills and expertise will have a positive impact on policy implementation (Giacchino and Kakabadse, 2003, p.144; Siddique, 2016, p. 109).
Financial administration	Good administration and use of the funds provided to implement the policy implementation is likely to facilitate the process of implementation, resulting in a success. This will cause good service delivery of the public policy (Ahmed and Dantata, 2016, p. 63).
Administrative capacity constraint	Be clear on roles and responsibilities among individuals to improve the process and allocation of resources. Sometimes the staff are unable to do their jobs because of lack of experience or there are inadequate facilities. Therefore, it is also important to put in place people with the necessary skills and experience (Ahmed and Dantata, 2016, p. 63; Siddique, 2016, p. 109).
Monitoring and evaluation	Stakeholders involved to gather and provide feedback on the progress of the policy

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	implementation process (Khan, 2016, p. 10; Mthethwa, 2012, p. 44).

Source: Compiled by author

3.6 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework that guided this study. The chapter explained the theory and showed the link that makes the theory relevant to this study. It discussed the policy implementation theory and how this can be operationalized in an analytical framework to explore potential underlying implementation issues in NSFAS concerning student food insecurity and hunger. The study used the factors of successful implementation theory listed in Table 1 to interpret the data collected for this study. The researcher presented her own compilation of the success factors affecting policy implementation. The next chapter presents the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design that was used, as well as the data collection methodology and tools used in this study. It also presents a justification of why a specific research methodology was used and concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and a chapter summary.

4.2 Research methodology

Research methodology and methods are often confused terms and, in most cases, used interchangeably. According to Kothari (2004), research methodology is a science that can be used to study how research is conducted. Research methodology is learning about different techniques that can be used to conduct a study, tests, experiments, and surveys, while methods are the specific tools and techniques that are used to collect data (Goundar, 2012). The main difference between the two concepts is that research methods refer to the tools used to collect data, such as doing surveys and tests, while research methodology is about learning about the different tools that can be used to conduct research.

There are two types of research methodology, namely: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount (Goundar, 2012). This method is used to "test hypotheses, look at cause and effects, and make predictions" (Apuke, 2017, p. 42). The type of methods used in quantitative methods includes surveys and questionnaires (Elkatawneh, 2016). Mohajan (2018) defines qualitative research as a form of social action that explains the way people interpret and explain their lived experiences to understand the social realities of individuals. This method is exploratory as it seeks to investigate how and why particular phenomena operate the way they do in a given context (Elkatawneh, 2016). The qualitative research method is used to get people's viewpoints and used to explain people's behavior.

Qualitative research use methods like open-ended interview questions, observation, document analysis, case study, and focus group (Mohajan, 2018). The difference between the two research methods is that quantitative methods focus on the number of things and people, while qualitative methods focus on the quality of things, people, and situations.

For the purposes of this study, a qualitative methodology was used to collect data. This methodology was used to collect data on NSFAS, the Student Representative Council (SRC) at UWC, and students' perceptions of the NSFAS system about food insecurity and student hunger. The reason for using this methodology is that this study aimed at understanding people's beliefs, experiences, and perceptions regarding social realities. According to Rahman (2020, p. 104), the "qualitative research approach produces the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions". By using this approach, the researcher was able to engage with the participants and obtain the detailed information needed for the completion of this study.

4.3 Sampling methods

To answer the research questions of any study, a sampling method should be selected. Sampling has been defined as a technique or a tool that is used by a researcher to "systematically select a relatively smaller number of representative items or individuals (a subset) from a pre-defined population to serve as subjects (data source) for observation or experimentation as per objectives of his or her study" (Sharma, 2017, p. 749). In simple terms, a sampling method is a process of selecting representatives of a population under study. There are two types of sampling: probability and non-probability techniques. Probability sampling means that each item in the population has an equal chance of being selected (Taherdoost, 2016). Types of probability sampling are simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling, and multi-stage systematic sampling (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique that is associated with qualitative research and uses non-randomized methods to select a sample (Showkat and Parveen, 2017). This method does not give the population an equal chance of being selected. The sampling techniques of this method include quota sampling, snowball sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling (Taherdoost, 2016).

This study used purposive sampling and snowball sampling, which fall under the category of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling, which can be used interchangeably with judgment sampling, is defined as a sampling technique where the researcher selects participants based on their judgment, to fulfil the purpose of the study (Showkat and Parveen, 2017, p. 8). In this technique, the sample is deliberately selected to provide the necessary and important information needed to complete the study and to obtain information that cannot be found in other sources. Snowball sampling is defined as "non-random sampling that uses

small cases to help encourage other cases to take part in the study, thereby increasing the sample size" (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 22).

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to select the participants who were either staff of NSFAS, or have worked with NSFAS, or were students who were beneficiaries of NSFAS funding. As an entry point based on her own knowledge and focusing on the nature of the study, the researcher knew some NSFAS officials as she was funded by NSFAS during her undergraduate studies. Additionally, she knows some of the SRC representatives who assisted in the selection of some participants in this study. These participants were selected based on the positions they held in their jobs and were able to give the researcher critical information related to the issues concerning NSFAS, food insecurity, and student hunger. The snowball sampling method was then used to extend the study to other potential participants who had the information needed for the completion of the study. This also applied to the students who were included in this study. The researcher knew some of them who were NSFAS recipients and had problems with NSFAS and used them as the entry point.

4.4 Data collection methods

Many tools and instruments can be used to collect data in the field of social sciences. Data is defined as a process of collecting and measuring information on variables in a systematic way that will enable the researcher to answer the research questions and evaluate outcomes (Kabir, 2016). Data collection is thus classified into two types: primary and secondary data. Primary data is data that has been collected first-hand for the first time and is authentic, while secondary data is collected from existing published sources (Kabir, 2016). This study used both primary and secondary data.

4.4.1 Document analysis

Document analysis is "a systematic procedure that is used to review and evaluate documents that are both printed and electronic" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). This is a form of qualitative research where the researcher looks for documentary sources that seek to answer the research questions. The researcher sought information regarding NSFAS and its challenges in addressing food security at South African universities from many written sources. These included academic sources, such as books, journal articles, as well as non-peer-reviewed

sources or grey literature, such as media reports, policy papers, and NSFAS website pages, as well as student welfare and university information webpages.

4.4.2 In-depth interviews

According to Boyce and Neale (2006, p. 3), "in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation". The in-depth interviews which fall under the qualitative method were used to enable the researcher to directly engage with the respondents and gain an in-depth understanding of the problem and their experiences. This type of research method was applied to the NSFAS officials, SRC representatives, and student welfare staff responsible for student affairs. Students who were NSFAS recipients were also interviewed to gather insights into their experiences with NSFAS. The data collected was centered on themes such as university student hunger, the failure of the provision of the food component of NSFAS, and other challenges facing the NSFAS offices in addressing student hunger. The interviews took on average 20–40 minutes and focused on the issues of student hunger and the challenges faced by NSFAS as regards the food budget. The in-depth interviews were applied to obtain more detailed data from the participants.

Using purposive sampling, the study targeted a sample size of 23 students at UWC who were NSFAS recipients (see Table 2 below). The researcher made a concerted effort to ensure that the interviewees varied in age, gender, and race. The first group consisted of students who lived on campus, while the second group consisted of students who lived off-campus. The researcher wanted to investigate the experiences of both these groups of students, to ascertain their experiences with the NSFAS system. Since NSFAS had changed its system from providing food vouchers to cash allocations directly to students, the researcher included students who were part of the previous system of NSFAS vouchers, and those who were part of the new system of cash allocations. This helped the researcher to find out the core causes of NSFAS challenges pertaining to the food budget. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed one NSFAS official, three UWC Financial Aid Office officials, five Student Representative Council members, and two Student Development Support Office officials (see Table 2 below).

Due to change of regulation as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, amendments to the data collection procedures were made to be in-line with the safety

regulations set by government. Data collection method was moved from face-to-face interviews and discussion to collection of data via the online Zoom platform as well as telephone calls. The researcher solicited participants via WhatsApp and emails and through snowball sampling technique. Once participants stated they would participate, they were sent all the necessary documents such as information sheet, ethics form, UWC permission letter, and a consent form to sign before the interview took place. The interviews lasted for 20-40 minutes and took place during the months of December 2020- September 2021. Interviews were recorded using a recorder and were then uploaded to a password-protected computer.

Table 2: Participants

Participants	Institution	Number
NSFAS Office	NSFAS	1
Financial Aid Office	UWC	3
Student Development Support Office	UWC	2
Student Representative Council members	UWC	5
Students	UWC	23
TOTAL		**34**

Source: Compiled by author based on participants interviewed (2020–2021)

4.5 Data analysis

This study used qualitative data analysis. The thematic analysis is a qualitative method that is used in research to "identify, analyze, organize, describe and report themes found within a data set" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). The researcher used thematic analysis to organize and analyze the data. One of the advantages of using thematic analysis is that it is a flexible method that can be used in different studies and provides more detailed data (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). This study used thematic analysis to identify important patterns and common themes and widen the understanding of the established relationship. The researcher also linked the themes to the factors for successful implementation within implementation theory and presented the qualitative data generated from the in-depth interviews, in the form of texts, diagrams, and quotations. The researcher transcribed the interviews and wrote notes from the document papers and arranged the information according to the factors described in the analytical framework.

4.6 Ethics

Before carrying out this research, the researcher sought approval from the University of the Western Cape Higher Degrees Board in the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty, as well as the Senate Higher Degrees Board (reference number: HS19/10/6 see Appendix A). The researcher was aware that important ethical issues to be considered when undertaking this study, include: avoid harming the participants; maintain the participants' right to anonymity and privacy; and allow the participants to withdraw from the study if they choose to at any stage of the research. The participants were asked to sign an informed consent form which was emailed to them prior to the interview and discussion. They signed and emailed back the consent forms to the researcher before the interviews and discussions was carried out. Only participants that signed the consent forms took part in the study (see Appendix B and C). The participants were also provided with the information sheet (see Appendix D and E). The information shared by the participants was treated with anonymity and was used only for academic purposes.

The researcher also sought permission from the university registrar to interview participants (reference code: UWCRP190521ZD; see appendix F).

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the research methodology employed in this study as well as the research methods used to collect data. From this chapter, it was revealed that this study made use of a qualitative research methodology. The sampling methods employed in this study included the purposive and snowball sampling from the non-probability sampling. This study used documentary analysis as secondary data and collected primary data using in-depth interviews. This chapter also highlighted how the ethical considerations were dealt with during the process of this study. In line with the design and the methodology discussed in this chapter, the next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the empirical findings of the data that was collected through documentary analysis and interviews. This chapter responds to the research questions of this study as mentioned in chapter one. The main research question is: *Why is there student hunger at the University of the Western Cape when the NSFAS exists to make allocations to the needy students to afford their tertiary studies, including an allowance for food?*

The first part of the chapter presents the demographic profile and characteristics of the interviewees. The second part of the chapter discusses the findings from the document reviews and participant interviews based on the objectives of the study. This section presents an analysis of the findings from policy document reviews and interviews, organized under various themes. These themes are the provisions made by NSFAS to reduce student hunger; NSFAS policies in principle and practice; the shortcomings of NSFAS regarding the food budget; and policy recommendations to improve food security in South African universities. Finally, the conclusion of the chapter is provided.

5.2 Participants' demographic profiles

The findings of this research were obtained from documentary analysis and different groups of participants. These groups are: one National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) official, two Student Development Services (SDS) officials, five Student Representative Council (SRC) members, three Financial Aid officials, and 23 students who are recipients of NSFAS. There is also data obtained from the document analysis. The demographics of the participants are presented in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Key informants

Participant	Gender	Race	Institution
NSFAS official	Female	Coloured	NSFAS
UWC Financial Aid official	Male	Black	UWC Financial Aid Office

UWC Financial Aid official	Male	Coloured	UWC Financial Aid Office
UWC Financial Aid official	Female	Coloured	UWC Financial Aid Office
UWC SDS official	Male	Black	UWC SDS office
UWC SDS official	Male	Black	UWC SDS office
SRC member	Male	Black	SRC
SRC member	Male	Black	SRC
SRC member	Male	Black	SRC
SRC member	Female	Black	SRC
SRC member	Female	Black	SRC

Source: Compiled by author based on participants interviewed (2020–2021)

Table 4: NSFAS-funded participants

Gender	Female	16
	Male	7
Race	Black	17
	Coloured	6
Place of residence	On-campus residence	7
	Private accommodation	5
	Home	11

Source: Compiled by author based on participants interviewed (2020–2021)

5.3 Provisions made by NSFAS to reduce student hunger

Prior to 2018, NSFAS funds were managed by the universities on behalf of NSFAS. This meant that the institutions received an upfront payment from NSFAS, then used the payments to grant loans and make payments to students, and then submit the claims to NSFAS for payments to institutions (NSFAS, 2017b). During this period, there was a variation in terms

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of meal allowances offered at the public institutions in South Africa. For example, the University of Cape Town (UCT) provided monthly allowances of R1,600.00 in 2016, while the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) provided allowances between R1,200.00 and R1,800.00 per month in 2016 (NSFAS, 2016b).

According to Dominguez-Whitehead (2017a, p. 149), the rising food costs and constant fee increments have resulted in students struggling to access basic needs such as food and accommodation. The rise of #FeesMustFall student protests in South African universities in 2015 and 2016 was a result of rising education fees (Dlamini, 2019). These protests rose soon after the announcement of a fee increase across South African universities (De Jager and Baard, 2020) and led to the discussions of free higher education in South Africa.

In December 2017, the then President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma announced free education in South Africa. Following the announcement of the President in 2017 and the confirmation by the National Treasury in February 2018, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) launched its new bursary scheme for 2018 that provides fully subsidized funding for poor and working-class students enrolled in public universities. (DHET, 2019, 2020, 2021). In other words, the bursary under NSFAS became a full-cost bursary covering fees, accommodation, allowances for books, travel, and food (NSFAS, 2016b).

One of the NSFAS officials stated:

> That is where the full-cost of study model came in to say, we cannot just fund students in terms of their tuition, they're going to fail if we do not support them in terms of their travel, their accommodation, their food and there's obviously the learning material allowance, and there's also a personal care allowance (NSFAS official).

As mentioned already, students across universities used to get different forms of food allowances. In some universities, students got food vouchers, in other universities they got the cash. But post-2018 all South African university students receive the same amount of food allowance in the form of cash. According to the NSFAS Annual Report 2019/2020 (NSFAS, 2020a, p. 2), after the receipt of registration for the year 2019, "NSFAS confirmed funding for 740,037 students, this is made up of 393,767 university students and 346,270 TVET college students, with 99% of bursary agreements generated accepted or signed by students".

In 2019, students who live at university residences who are not accommodated in catering residences received a living allowance to cover food and incidental expenses. This amount was R14,400.00 (DHET, 2019). All NSFAS recipients who live at university-accredited private accommodation used to get the same living allowance, given that they fall within the funding cap of returning students (DHET, 2019). Those students used to receive a food allowance of R14,400.00 annually (R1,400.00 per month for 10 months) which includes the incidental allowance of R2,750.00 (DHET, 2019). The students who lived in catered residences received an additional R275.00 a month of incidental expense to that living allowance (DHET, 2019). Those who live off-campus, at their homes could not be considered for a living allowance or an accommodation allowance. Those students received R10,000.00 traveling allowances annually (R1,000.00 per month for 10 months) (DHET, 2019). This amount also included the R2,750.00 incidental allowance (DHET, 2019).

In 2020, there was a slight increase in the allowances. According to the DHET guideline (2020), students who lived at university residences not accommodated in catering services received R15,000.00 to cover food and incidental allowances. All NSFAS recipients who lived at university-accredited private accommodation also got the same living allowance, given that they fall within the funding cap of returning students who registered for the first time prior to 2018 (DHET, 2020). The students who lived in catered residences received an additional R2,900.00 of incidental expenses towards that living allowance (DHET, 2020). The students living off-campus received two types of allowances from NSFAS – travel and living allowance. According to the DHET guideline (2020), they received R15,000.00 for a living allowance and R7,500.00 for transport annually, which amounted to R2,250.00 per month. In 2021, the allowances remained the same (DHET, 2021). Table 5 below provides a summary of what has been discussed above.

Table 5: Provisions of NSFAS funds

Accommodation type	Living allowance		Transport	
	2019	2020/21	2019	2020/21
On-campus residence (not accommodated in catered residence)	R14,400.00	R15,000.00	n/a	n/a

On-campus residence (catered residence)	R14,400.00 +R275.00 monthly	R15,000.00 +R2,900.00	n/a	n/a
Private accommodation	R14,400.00	R15,000.00	n/a	n/a
Off-campus/home	n/a	R15,000.00	R10,000.00	R7,500.00

Source: DHET (2019; 2020; 2021)

5.4 How NSFAS implements its policies (in principle)

This section serves to explain how NSFAS implements its policies. Also, NSFAS reviews its policies and bursary guidelines on an annual basis. This is discussed below.

Who qualifies for NSFAS funding?

NSFAS is a public entity that is available to fund all South African citizens who meet the eligibility criteria. One of the eligibility criteria used by NSFAS to fund students is that they must be South African citizens and must have been accepted to study at a public tertiary institution, and who meet the financial criteria set up by NSFAS (DHET, 2019, 2020, 2021).

Another eligibility criterion of NSFAS is that students who registered for the first time in 2018 receive a full-cost bursary of study, given that the income threshold of the students' parents/guardians is not more than R350,000.00 per annum (DHET, 2019, 2020, 2021). Students who registered at higher institutions prior to 2018, whose income threshold is not more than R122,000.00, and students who are recipients of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grants, also qualify for the funding (DHET, 2019, 2020, 2021). Students with disabilities who registered at a higher institution for the first time in 2018 qualify for a NSFAS bursary, their parents' combined income threshold must not be more than R600,000.00 (DHET, 2020, 2021). Those who registered prior to 2018 for the first time with an income threshold of R400,000.00 also qualify for the funding (NSFAS, n.d). In practice, empirical findings from this research show that the majority of students are fully funded by the bursary, which covers tuition, accommodation, book allowance, living, and travel allowance, given that they fall under the required household threshold for a NSFAS bursary.

Another policy of NSFAS includes the provision of allowances that are the same across universities. Prior to 2018, as discussed above, universities used to disperse allowances using different mechanisms. The allocation of allowances is determined by the current DHET

national rules and guidelines that are published annually. According to the Portfolio Committee of Higher Education and Training (Carolissen, 2019), there are two ways a student can access their allowances. For institutions that are capable of disbursing, the allowance is disbursed via the institution; for institutions that are not able to disburse, the alternative is mobile cash (Carolissen, 2019). Currently, all universities are using the same mechanism of delivering food allowances to students, which is via electronic funds transfer (EFT).

One interviewee commented:

> There's one way of distributing allowances which means that it's in line with the principles of the scheme because the scheme is trying to alleviate the gap between all of us. So, when we are at university and we are receiving NSFAS we should be having a similar experience, we should not have different experiences from someone at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) whereas you are both NSFAS recipients. For example, if you are using Bank Sector Education and Training (SETA), all bank SETA students have similar experiences across institutions; it does not say if you are bank SETA at UWC, this is what happens. No, bank SETA is bank SETA; it gives you allowances the same way (SRC member).

NSFAS releases DHET guidelines and an annual report that covers what the system has achieved and some of the challenges the system faces. The DHET guidelines also indicate if there are any changes to be implemented in that current year of study.

One NSFAS official commented:

> So, the NSFAS Act is our main legal framework. Then it is supported by annual rules and guidelines that are released by the Department of Higher Education and Training every year, which goes into much more detail on whether the specific rate for particular allowances, for example whether it be in the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system or in the university system, whether there might be changes to the rates in different allowances categories (NSFAS official).

While the system was able to put its policies into action, empirical evidence suggests that NSFAS policies are not inclusive. The "missing middle" is excluded. The "missing middle" is a concept that has gained popularity within the education sector. It refers to those students who are from the working class who are too rich to qualify for government funding – which

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is NSFAS in this case – at the same time they cannot afford higher education (South African Government News Agency, 2021). As previously mentioned, NSFAS provides funds for students from households that have a threshold of R350,000.00 annually. This "missing middle" falls within the income household of more than R350,000.00 annually but less than R600,000.00 and is considered not being able to afford university fees, but also does not qualify for NSFAS (ISFAP, 2021). So, according to some of the participants of this study, the funding criteria of NSFAS are very exclusionary as they do not cater for the students from a middle-class home; it makes no provision for the "missing middle".

Commenting on this issue, one SRC representative noted:

> Of course, they are in line with their rules, right? But I think we should rephrase the question: Are their rules inclusive, and are their rules cognizant of the reality of many Black students in the country? In this instance, it is not right (SRC member).

Another participant from the SRC commented:

> Policy itself is in line with the scheme, but I'm of the view that a policy should be reviewed and it should be expanded to cater for more people. Again, the middle class, like we keep on going back to the middle class; what about the middle class? (SRC member).

One participant from the SRC commented further that the scheme is not doing what it is mandated to do. The main objective of NSFAS is to provide funding for higher education attainment. However, the scheme stopped funding some students at the beginning of 2021. This point is discussed further below. This act of defunding students – according to the participants – is not in line with the main objective of NSFAS.

From the empirical research that was conducted, it was found that NSFAS does indeed implement its policies the way it is explained in the documents. However, some of the participants were of the view that the policy is not inclusive of the students from the middle class.

5.5 Shortcomings of NSFAS regarding the food budget

In this study's review of policy documents and interviews, it was found that there are contrasting views. It was found that the challenges faced by NSFAS in relation to the food budget are: shortage of funding; inadequate monthly allowances; late payments;

miscommunication; NSFAS centralization; and financial mismanagement. These shortcomings/sub-themes are elucidated below.

5.5.1 Shortage of funding

According to the Ministerial Report of 2016, NSFAS has less than half of the funds it needs to fund all qualifying students. Although NSFAS receives more than R1.6 billion annually from the government's national budget, the scheme's overall budget remains inadequate to fund the number of demands (McKay et al., 2018). The number of students entering the institutions of higher learning has increased since 1994, which means that there are more students in need of NSFAS assistance than the scheme can provide (Dibela, 2018). In addition, Mabuza (2020) contends that the increase in the number of university students has overtaken the rate that the funds are provided by the government. At the beginning of 2021, the Minister of Higher Education and Training confirmed that the scheme had a funding shortfall which was meant to fund the new students for that year (Macuphe, 2021). Among the reasons for the shortage of funds were the COVID-19 pandemic, the cutting of budgets across government departments, and some students who did not qualify for NSFAS funding the previous year, now qualify (Ngqakamba, 2021). Many of these internal problems affecting NSFAS have a direct impact on students, particularly regarding food insecurity.

Additionally, NSFAS stopped funding certain courses (Hammond, 2021). Study participants confirmed this to be the case:

> They don't (fund certain courses), because if you look at this year, there are certain programs that were defunded by NSFAS. That means that there is not enough money to cater for students and give them allowances (SRC member).

Commenting on the previous quote, the students who are defunded by NSFAS are likely to be food insecure. The students will be vulnerable to being food insecure and hungry, given the reality that most students receive little to no supplementary income from their families.

Contrary to what has been discussed above, some of the participants were of the view that the South African government has sufficient money to provide tertiary students with free education. But the problem is that there is no political will and there is a misuse of money (on the part of government).

One participant commented:

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The money that goes to NSFAS, for example, its billions of Rands, which is money that we know that could carry students throughout their tertiary year to undergrad, even PhD level. But because there is a lack of political will to really commit … (SRC member).

Another participant stated:

The country's got enough money, but obviously the misuse of money leads to the problems we are facing (SRC member).

The findings show that the participants had contradictory views on the issue of whether there is a real shortage of funding within the system.

5.5.2 Inadequate monthly allowances

Drawing from the literature, it is evident that NSFAS has been criticized for dispersing inadequate allocations of allowance per student to cover monthly food, toiletries, and necessary expenses (Drewett, 2018; Visagie, 2019). In the interviews conducted for this study, some NSFAS recipients felt that the current monthly allowance given to students living on campus was enough, while another group of participants regarded the money as being inadequate.

A certain group of participants during the interviews stated that the money that is provided by NSFAS is enough to get the student through the month. In one interview where the participant was asked about the satisfaction with NSFAS in terms of addressing student hunger and food insecurity, one participant stated the following:

For me, I don't really have a problem with it because I don't only depend on the allowances each month to eat (NSFAS recipient).

When asked about how they spend their NSFAS allowance, one participant answered:

I buy groceries with the whole R1,500.00 and then my parents give me pocket money for the month (NSFAS recipient).

Some of the participants who regarded the monthly allowance as being adequate, stated it would be up to a student how to utilize the money monthly. Some of the respondents stated that some students would misuse the money. This point is discussed in the last theme of this section.

During the interview, some participants were of the view that the NSFAS allowance was not enough to cover the students' needs for a month. Another point that arose from the participants was that the NSFAS allowance did not increase in 2021; it remained the same as in 2020. The participants felt it was unfair as the world faced a pandemic, which resulted in the loss of jobs among their parents. Also, there was an increase in food prices, and there was food inflation. This aligns with Adeniyi and Durojaye (2020), who maintain that the allowance dispersed to NSFAS students is inadequate, as NSFAS does not acknowledge factors such as inflation, increase in VAT, and transportation costs, which make food unaffordable for students. The R1,500.00 and R2,250.00 from 2020 not changing in 2021, are the reasons that the participants stated for the allowances not being enough. This is because if inflation goes up the following year, the value of the allowance from the previous year will be less. Students maintained that they cannot survive on R1,500.00 every year.

Some participants stated that due to inflation and expensive food, some resorted to buying "no-name" food products, while others stated that the only vegetables they could afford were mixed vegetable packets. According to Dominguez-Whitehead (2017a; 2017b), students who experience food purchase challenges, tend to buy food that lacks nutrition; this is because healthy food – like fruit and vegetables – is expensive. It was also noted during the interview that the money is not adequate to buy nutritious food with the increase in food prices.

One participant stated:

> My experience with NSFAS based on food insecurity – it's been very bad because the money is not enough for the food that I need to eat. I have to sacrifice and get whatever I can, and that's not really healthy (NSFAS recipient).

Another participant commented:

> There's a component that is uncontrollable, especially from institutional level – the issue of food prices. Food prices are not regulated by institutions of higher learning; food prices are not regulated by NSFAS; but the money that is issued per student on a monthly basis, they think that it's enough, but it's not enough (SRC member).

During the interview, it was noticed that in some institutions the NSFAS monthly allowance would be topped-up by the university to help combat hunger. This would differ where institutions of higher learning have historical and economic differences, some institutions provide money to to-up, others do not. In the interview, one participant stated:

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I understand the historical and economic differences between these two institutions (UCT and UWC), but by virtue of the UCT top-up – obviously, NSFAS gives you R1,500, the university tops up with R500.00 to make it R2,000.00, because they see that this is not enough. Even that R2,000.00 is not enough (SRC member).

During the interviews, some of the participants in positions of authority stated that the money is enough for students to buy nutritious food. One participant commented:

If students are saying the money is not enough, we need to quantify. Full fees are being paid; NSFAS is paying a transport allowance for a student of R7,500.00 for 10 months – it's R750.00 for transport per month. And let me ask you: are the students coming to campus? (Financial Aid official).

Another participant in a position of authority commented:

It's a difficult thing to talk about – what is enough, because from an organizational perspective we are here to implement the policy, and if the guidelines are R7,000.00 or R10,000.00, then we cannot exceed those amounts (NSFAS official).

From the responses, it was evident that the participants had different views on whether the monthly allowance was adequate or not. It was noticed that some of the participants who were satisfied with the money, received financial support from family, and those were mostly Coloured participants. On the other hand, the majority of those who were not satisfied with the amount, were Black students, and they did not receive financial support from home. Instead, they were the ones who sent home a portion of their monthly allowances. Those who live at home help their families buy food and necessities like electricity. Students who receive funding, send some remittances back home and skip meals (Rule and Jack, 2018). UWC is a historically Coloured university, but post-1994 it has become a multiracial institution; its majority intake of students are Blacks from disadvantaged backgrounds. As discussed in the literature review, South Africa is food insecure at a household level (Mothae, 2017). Chakona and Shackleton (2019) state that about 20% of South African households have inadequate access to food. This, therefore, pertains to the situation of black students supporting their families. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where many households lost their income. According to Sabi et al. (2018), it is the students from poor backgrounds who are more likely to suffer from food insecurity, while receiving NSFAS funding.

5.5.3 Late payments

One thing that emerged from the interviews is that some of the participants stated that they had no problem regarding the distribution of allowances. However, the participants did state that usually at the beginning of the year they would wait until mid-March to April to receive their allowances. It was during that period they would experience food insecurity and hunger. From the literature, Adeniyi and Durojaye (2020) state that the management of NSFAS – that is inefficient and poor – causes delays in distributing funds to qualifying students, resulting in hunger. According to the NSFAS Annual Performance Report (NSFAS, 2021), the strength of NSFAS is direct payments of allowances to students, and the weakness is that there are delays in the finalization of the funding decision. Some students of UJ waited for months to get their allowances from NSFAS (Sobuwa, 2018). Students from the Central University of Technology (CUT) also raised similar concerns about delays when it comes to the distribution of allowances (Madlalane, 2021). From the study, some students had to wait even longer periods than others. One participant stated:

> But usually, my allowance will come after June, I always get it late, so I'll get a bulk (amount) (NSFAS recipient).

Another point that emerged is that there is an inconsistency when it comes to the distribution of NSFAS. Some participants stated that they received the NSFAS payment on different dates every month. This would disturb the participants' budgeting as they are not sure of what date the money will be in. So even though there are means being provided by NSFAS to combat hunger, those means do not reach the beneficiaries on time and they are inconsistent.

During the interview with UWC Financial Aid officials, a question of where the problem lies between NSFAS and Financial Aid when it comes to distributing allowances to students on time. One university official answered:

> The delays are on NSFAS's side. You see, basically we as the Fin Aid office, once we receive the data from NSFAS to say that the student is funded, then automatically we will send out the forms to be completed by the students. But because we don't have a full report of funded students, we get dribs and drabs each week; it's being updated. And that's basically the delaying in the allowances (Financial Aid official).

Again, this would draw us back to the question of NSFAS having the capacity to manage the administrative part of their roles.

5.5.4 Miscommunication

Miscommunication is another factor that was raised in the interviews. The participants stated that there was miscommunication between NSFAS and the Financial Aid Office, where they would get different answers from both offices about one inquiry.

One participant stated:

> There is no communication between NSFAS and the student. Even in both circumstances – university with NSFAS – there is no proper communication. UWC will tell you this, while NSFAS will tell you a different story (NSFAS recipient).

It also emerged that NSFAS staff are unable to deal with student queries, so they would refer them to their respective institutions for answers. One university official elaborated:

> And you must understand, they don't want to deal directly with students; not at all. Even if you copy in the consultant that works with UWC funding, they send an email and what she does is that she automatically sends it to Financial Aid. She does not respond to that email; it is expected of us to respond to the queries (Financial Aid official).

This speaks to the capacity constraints faced by NSFAS to attend to the student queries. This is stated in the NSFAS Annual Performance Report (2021) that there is a lack of appropriate skills to deliver on the mandate. In addition, there is a lack of communication between NSFAS and the Financial Aid Office, which results in students not being registered because NSFAS has not yet sent the list of students being funded, or you would find that a student is not on the final list of NSFAS-funded students.
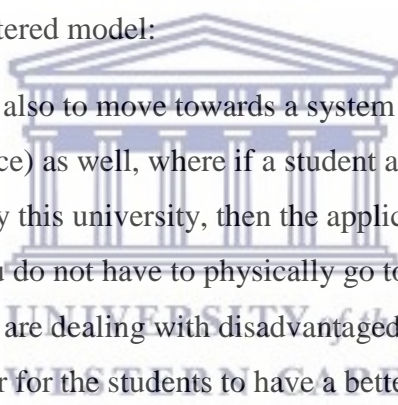
One UWC official stated:

> Okay, we will only be in a position when a student who has been informed by NSFAS that is funded. We will first clear that student to be registered, and then after that student has been registered in order to be able to give that student allowances, that student now must be on the list that we have also received from NSFAS that says this student is funded. You can get the information from the NSFAS portal that says the university must submit your documentation, but if your name is finally not on the list of the funded students, Ms XX in the office won't be in a position to load the student on the list of these funded students in order for NSFAS to receive (Financial Aid official).

There is also a lack of accountability, and poor incorporation and flow of information in the department and within the business units (NSFAS, 2021). This breakdown of communication also leads to students not receiving their allowances on time, meaning that those students who solely depend on the funding for food will go hungry. Most of these NSFAS recipients do not receive any supplementary income from family members, but are the ones sending contributions to their families. Consequently, this will make the situation worse for them.

5.5.5 Centralization of NSFAS

The student-centered model was introduced to shift the NSFAS operating system from a decentralized system where students applied directly to the university, to a centralized one where the students applied directly to NSFAS (NSFAS, 2020b). In the student-centered model, it is NSFAS that manages the selection process, and one of the advantages of this model is that the students will know their funding statuses before registration (NSFAS, 2017b). Another advantage of this new model is that the student only applies once, for one course of study (NSFAS, 2017b). During the interview, the NSFAS official explained why NSFAS moved to a student-centered model:

> The other aspect of it was also to move towards a system where you put a central application system (in place) as well, where if a student applies to one university and they maybe are rejected by this university, then the application can still go to the rest of the other universities. You do not have to physically go to each and every university because we also know we are dealing with disadvantaged students many times, and we are trying to make it easier for the students to have a better experience and application process (NSFAS official).

However, according to the NSFAS Strategic Plan document (NSFAS, 2020b), the scheme has had challenges in delivering according to its mandate since it introduced the student-centered model. It was noted during the interview that participants stated that the move to a student-centered model put the students at a disadvantage in a way that it takes them long to get their allowances or to even get registered at their university, because of "miscommunication" between Financial Aid and NSFAS. This finding suggests that the funding decisions of NSFAS are not communicated in time to students; hence, they usually receive their allowances late. As stated above, it is NSFAS that makes the selection of funded students, unlike prior to 2016 when it was the university that was responsible for that function. Financial Aid Offices now have limited information regarding student funding and queries.

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One participant acknowledged that there are problems with both NSFAS and Financial Aid but said it was better when UWC's Financial Aid Office managed the funding of NSFAS because they are the ones who have the current number of students registered. One participant stated this when asked about the implementation challenges of NSFAS:

> When the universities were handling that, it was better because universities had the number of people. They would administer everything from their level … so the problem fundamentally is how then the change in administration to decentralization (SRC member).

Another participant commented:

> But the thing is when they introduced the decentralizing or centralisation, I'm not sure but one of the two centralizing, that's where they started communication, when NSFAS would tell you this, and the university would tell you that. At Wynberg they tell you there's this so-and-so person; when you get there, you do not find that person (NSFAS recipient).

The NSFAS Board Chairperson, Ernest Khoza admitted that the scheme is not aligned with the student-centered model (South African Government News Agency, 2021). In addition, the student-centered model was the cause of major delays in appeals processes, disbursement, and student accommodation, among other things (Mofokeng, 2021). Resultantly, the new administration system of NSFAS is one of the major causes of the issues raised above. According to Sobuwa (2018), the students at UJ were not paid their allowances for months by NSFAS. UJ had to use its R200 million budget to assist the students (Sobuwa, 2018). Similar cases were also reported from the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) as students had to live off each other as NSFAS and the Funza Lushaka Bursary delayed making payments to students (May, 2018). Some of the UJ students resorted to buying food with their textbook allowances (Mpofu, 2018). Students from CUT in Bloemfontein also raised complaints in 2021, as they cited the delays of NSFAS allowance that they did not receive for July that year (Madlalane, 2021).

In response to the question if NSFAS has enough capacity to manage all the expected duties, one UWC official responded:

> For example…, a funded report of NSFAS is at all the universities. There's about 600 and something or a thousand students – that's just the university side – then you still

have your TVET side. Yeah. So, I don't know how they think it's possible (Financial Aid official).

Another participant commented:

All the universities in South Africa, all queries are going straight to Wynberg. So, they don't have the capacity to actually cater for all student needs, and that is the reality that we need to look at (SRC participant).

In the Department of Higher Education and Training paper published in May 2020, it is noted:

NSFAS underestimated the magnitude of the processes and timelines required to implement the new model effectively. In addition, NSFAS did not have the requisite capacity and technical knowledge required for a successful student financial aid administration from the start of the applications process to successfully funding students (DHET, 2020).

The centralization also contributes to food insecurity among university students. This is because there are delays in students getting registered and receiving their allowances. The delays are caused by a lack of administrative capacity to deal with funding processes, among other things.

5.5.6 Financial mismanagement

According to Sabi et al. (2018), studies in South Africa have reported that students from low socio-economic backgrounds who have financial support, are at high risk of food insecurity because of financial mismanagement. Financial mismanagement contributes to the misplacing of priorities where students will use the allowance they get from the funding to buy unnecessary things, rather than buying healthy food.

According to Gwacela (2013), students who live in university residences are at liberty of spending their money the way they wish, and most likely spend it on luxury items. This is perhaps because the students do not have good financial management. One of the respondents from the interview stated this as an example:

You tell me: someone who's not coming from an affluent family, who never used to get pocket money, how will that person now manage R7,000.00 per month? That's what has been happening (Financial Aid official).

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Letseka (2009) found similar results in students where a large number of students – mainly first-years – spent the funds on designer clothes and alcohol, and attended parties. One NSFAS recipient also responded that sometimes they misuse the money on unnecessary things such as alcohol. To buttress the misuse of the NSFAS money, a respondent (see quote below) mentioned an incident that happened when they were striking at Brackenfell late last year. This is what the recipient said during the interview:

> Then we went to strike, my sister, it was fun. And then around 3-4 pm it was the first-time people who are using Capitec (Capitec is a South African Bank) received their money. They usually receive money at around that time. People left the strike … so, as the money came in, we realized that, let's go and get drunk, of which now the plans that we had with the money were limited, you see (NSFAS recipient).

During the interview, it was found that some students use the money to support families back home. Rule and Jack (2018) state that students send some of their allowances back home as remittances. The financial challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where many families lost jobs. In response, several students mentioned that they support their families with the NSFAS money. It was also found that these particular students do not receive financial support from family; they depend solely on NSFAS funding, and so do their families.

In response to an interview question if the student has suffered from hunger and food insecurity and what could have been the reasons for that, this was the student's response:

> For me, I would say it was not enough (R2,250.00), because I have said (at the) beginning of COVID, I had to share with my family as well, and it's a family of five … even when I was still at res, some of the portion, like R500.00, would go back home and I'll be left with R1,000.00 (NSFAS recipient).

One of the Financial Aid officials disagreed with this response, stating that the government has introduced some measures to help families who are struggling to make ends meet. In a response to a comment made by the researcher that the students were supporting their families with the NSFAS allowances, the university official responded:

> Then they cannot make it a problem of NSFAS; that's a government problem. And for that matter, if those parents have lost their jobs, there are processes in place for the parents to see to it that they get those things (Financial Aid official).

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It was noted during the interviews with NSFAS recipients that while others admitted to misusing the monthly allowances, some stated that they help at home. One student explained how she spends her monthly allowance:

> I buy food, I also buy clothes for my siblings when they are short of them, I also buy electricity (NSFAS recipient).

The Managing Director of South African Book Sellers' Association (SABA), Mr Stephanus Erasmus, stated that it could be possible that the students were misusing money or sending it back home (Shange, 2019). Students who are exposed to food insecurity are those from low-income households who depend on child support, old-age pensions, and wage employment (Building, 2021). Students who receive funding send some remittances back home and often skip meals (Rule and Jack, 2018).

5.6 Policy recommendations to address food insecurity

Participants were asked to give their suggestions on how they would like the issue of student hunger to be resolved. These suggestions are discussed below.

5.6.1 Increased monthly allowance

Some of the participants suggested that the monthly allowance should be increased. This was due to inflation that was exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic. One participant who is a NSFAS recipient stated that the same amount of money is given to all students without realizing that students have different backgrounds.

5.6.2 Re-introduction of food vouchers

From the interviews, some of the participants who are NSFAS recipients suggested that the food vouchers should be reinstated. According to these participants, the voucher should not be limited to one specific grocery store, but to any grocery store. Some even suggested that the NSFAS allowance be split into two – cash and voucher. This was because it was evident that some students misuse the money, and end up not buying food, so the vouchers would somehow force the students to buy food.

5.6.3 University contribution to food security program

Some participants from the SRC group suggested that the university should also play a role in combating food insecurity. These participants acknowledged that even though the university is not the bursary provider, it should take responsibility for its students. It is well-known that

students do not receive their allowances at the beginning of the year, when the university has just opened. That is when the university could assist, in terms of providing food vouchers for students while they wait for their NSFAS allowances. An SRC participant suggested that 1% of the university income be made available to address the issue of food insecurity and student hunger. This 1% can also be in the form of a monthly food voucher for needy university students.

5.6.4 Use of UWC dining halls

One participant from the Financial Aid Office suggested that the dining halls could be used to provide food to students. This could be done by loading money on students' cards, thereby enabling students to make a prior booking for a meal.

5.6.5 Food programs run by NSFAS

Some participating NSFAS recipients were supportive of the idea of NSFAS introducing food programs run by the scheme. These food programs would be an addition to the existing allowances distributed to students on a monthly basis. One student participant even suggested that these programs include food parcels containing nutritious food like vegetables.

5.6.6 Involvement of other stakeholders

Two participants from the SRC suggested that there should be more stakeholders involved in addressing student hunger. It was acknowledged that UWC has Student Development Services (SDS) and Tiger Brands that play a role in reducing student hunger. However, these participants suggested that there should be more stakeholders from agriculture and business. Furthermore, it was suggested that at UWC, the Centre of Excellence – Food Security (CoE-FS) and the Dietetics Department can play a role in terms of managing the Foodbanks on campus, advising on the type of food required and how they roll out food to students. These relevant departments can also educate students on the importance of nutritious food. These participants were of the view that a collective approach such as this can play a pivotal role in addressing food insecurity.

5.6.7 Financial literacy training for students

From the findings, it was discovered that there are misplaced priorities when it comes to the spending of monthly allowances. NSFAS officials suggested that there should be awareness programs that would educate the students in financial literacy and teach students to be more financially responsible.

5.6.8 NSFAS offices at universities and regional NSFAS offices

Some of the participants were of the view that NSFAS does not have adequate facilities to perform the expected duties. In addition, there is a lack of communication between NSFAS, the Financial Aid Office, and students. They therefore, suggested that there should be at least one NSFAS office at each tertiary institution. It was also discovered from the findings that NSFAS has only one office in Wynberg, that participants regarded as ineffective. In this regard, some participants suggested that there should be satellite or regional offices of NSFAS in each province in the country that has a public tertiary institution.

5.7 Chapter summary

The findings of this study provided an understanding of some of the reasons why NSFAS fails to address food insecurity among UWC students. From the findings under theme one, both old and new systems of disbursing the living allowances were discussed. Theme two discussed how the NSFAS system put its policies into practice. The findings showed that even though the policies of NSFAS were put into action, they are not inclusive. Students acknowledged the pivotal role played by NSFAS in affording them access to tertiary education. Although that might be the case, according to the SRC participants, access to tertiary education is still a challenge to students of the middle class. Based on the findings, some of the participants, particularly from the SRC were of the opinion that NSFAS does not take into consideration the students categorized as the "missing middle".

Under theme three, participants had contradictory opinions. Under sub-theme one, some of the students stated that the government has a shortage of funds to fund higher education, while some stated that there is sufficient money, there is just no political will in the country. Under sub-theme two, which pertains to inadequate monthly allowances, some students stated that the monthly allowance is sufficient for the month, while others were of the view that it was not sufficient. Some of those who were fine with the monthly allowance, received supplementary allowances from home, while those who disagreed, did not receive financial support from their families. Instead, their families experience financial challenges, prompting the students to send a portion of their allowances back home. The situation was also exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where some households lost income, resulting in students who are NSFAS recipients supporting their families financially.

Participants also highlighted the late payments, usually at the beginning of the year. Participants mentioned that they usually receive their allowances after March, while the

university opens in early February. It was also found that there is inconsistency in the payment dates of the monthly allowances from NSFAS.

Miscommunication and centralization were also sub-themes that emerged from the study. Participants flagged the miscommunication between NSFAS and universities. That loophole causes students to register late, which means that they would receive their allowances late, leading to food insecurity and hunger. The centralization of NSFAS would also lead to increased food insecurity, due in large part to the capacity constraints, since NSFAS is managing all the administrative duties.

Financial mismanagement by the students also emerged as a sub-theme where students, instead of using their allowances to buy food, would use them on other unimportant things. Finally, the participants suggested some of the changes that can be implemented by NSFAS to curb the problem of food insecurity at UWC and other universities. From the observations, it is evident that NSFAS does not have the capacity to manage the expected responsibilities of the related administrative duties. Ultimately, all of that will lead to students' queries being attended to late, students registering late, and receiving their allowances late.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to identify the challenges faced by the NSFAS administration with regard to providing food allowances to students. Even though participants had different opinions, the data suggests that food insecurity among students is influenced by NSFAS's implementation and administration challenges.

Policy implementation might be seen as a straightforward process, that is, simply putting aims and objectives into action. However, it is more complex to put aims and objectives into actionable policies and practices. Bullock and Lavis (2019, p. 1) state that "while policy implementation has been acknowledged as critical in filling the gap between policy promises and policy outcomes, the process itself is complex and multi-faceted and has yet to be well-understood". The policy implementation process does not always produce the expected outcomes. This was confirmed by the results of this study, that showed that some of the participants are not satisfied with how the NSFAS policies are being implemented and that some of the policies that the NSFAS system has, still exclude the middle class. The literature review enabled the researcher to identify the general challenges facing the implementation of NSFAS policies. This study's findings also highlighted specific aspects of NSFAS that limit its contribution to food insecurity among tertiary students.

This chapter discusses the findings, examining the factors that affect good policy implementation as set out in implementation theory, namely: elucidation; stakeholder engagement; commitment and cooperation; resources (skills and abilities); financial administration; and monitoring and evaluation (see Table 1 in chapter three – section 3.5 – for more details). Below is the discussion on each factor in relation to the relevant literature. In other words, the chapter links the collected empirical findings and policy documents with policy implementation theory. These factors are used as a discussion guideline, connecting trends between the literature and the research findings.

6.2 Elucidation

According to Elmore (1978, cited in Paudel, 2009), elucidation means that the aims and objectives of a policy must be clear. Siddique (2016) further states that clarification is important to provide the understating of the policy goals.

 In the NSFAS policy documents, the main objectives are clearly stated – that the system aims at providing post-school funding for South African citizens who qualify to study at any public South African tertiary institution, given that their income threshold is not above R350,000.00 annually. There is also a funding guideline, released annually by the Department of Higher Education Training (DHET), listing all the information concerning the bursary rules for that specific year from tuition to living allowances (DHET, 2019; 2020; 2021). Although the policies and rules around student allowances are easy to understand, some of the participants were of the view that they are not inclusive of the middle class.

6.3 Stakeholder engagement

According to Lemke and Harris-Wai (2015), stakeholder engagement is a process whereby an organization involves a group of people who may be affected or may influence the decisions of implementation. NSFAS has different stakeholders who are also funders of the scheme and are involved to ensure that the scheme provides funding for students. These stakeholders include the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Social Development, among others (NSFAS, 2016a, p. 11). The other NSFAS stakeholders are the universities, university student leaders, and the recipients of NSFAS funding, the students.

One of the reasons NSFAS exists is to provide financial support to students who would not otherwise afford tertiary institution. That already indicates that the students are from disadvantaged backgrounds where they fall under the new NSFAS family income threshold of R350,000.00 annually. This research study found that some recipients share a portion of their allowances with their family members; the situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic where most families lost income. These findings align with Gwacela (2013) who states that students have the responsibility of setting aside money and sending it back home to support their families. In a study conducted by Van den Berg and Raubenheimer in 2015, they found that the students at the University of the Free State supported their families financially. Although the scheme provides allowances, it does not take into consideration the

burdens students have; this is because there are no engagements between NSFAS and the students – there is unwillingness to engage.

Another issue that was raised from the results is that NSFAS did not increase the living allowance for 2021; it was the same as the one for 2020. Some of the participants stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was inflation and food prices went up. According to Sulekha et al. (2019, p. 8), inflation "also influences the living standards of individuals as it reduces the real values of money, reduces the purchasing power of money, creates unemployment in the economy, shortage in good job opportunities, leads to the shortage of manufactured goods, increases price of the commodities". This, therefore, means that, for example, the living allowance of R1,500.00 in 2020, does not have the same value it did in 2020, as food prices are currently going up. Some participants noted that they would resort to buying food that is not nutritious. This is supported by Kassier and Veldman (2013) who acknowledge that fruits and vegetables are expensive. This has also been stated by Dominguez-Whitehead (2017a; 2017b) that students with financial challenges tend to buy food that is not nutritious because vegetables are expensive. Besides that, this issue was highlighted by the participants – that the money is not enough. These findings either imply that the NSFAS is not aware of these issues, or that there are limited resources to increase the allowances.

From the interviews it was also noted that there is a miscommunication between NSFAS, Financial Aid, and the students; there is no good flow of information and there are no engagements between the three parties. Students do not have the direct engagement and communication with NSFAS representatives; if they do get a representative from the office, they are told a different story from what Financial Aid told them. Resultantly, students are unable to obtain information regarding their funding statuses or monthly allowances. Another factor causing a problem is the fact that there is only one NSFAS office for all the public universities and TVET colleges in the country. This also contributes to the scheme not being able to solve all student queries and leads to late payments, which contributes to food insecurity. There is no effective communication between NSFAS and students, no engagement. Students from the study indicated that they struggle to have direct contact with NSFAS.

6.4 Commitment and cooperation

According to Brynard (2009), commitment is the political and administrative will to deliver the policy to the beneficiaries. Commitment from all relevant stakeholders is very important to ensure the success of the implementation of the process. This means that all authorities, whether at the political or managerial level, should show commitment before the implementation of the policy (Skhosana, 2019). All key stakeholders must be committed and work in cooperation to deliver the policy. This happens through the exchange of skills and knowledge that will have a positive impact on the outcome of the policy.

NSFAS was initially introduced to redress past injustices and to ensure equal representation of race in institutions of higher learning (NSFAS, 2016b). As stated in their policy documents, NSFAS's mandate is to ensure that all qualifying South African citizens who wish to pursue tertiary education are afforded that opportunity. That is even enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, that "everyone has the right – (a) to basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (NSFAS, 2016a, p. 29; 2016b, p. 10). In terms of this mandate, NSFAS has been fairly committed to providing funding to disadvantaged students to enter tertiary education, covering not only tuition and accommodation but also providing a book allowance and a food allowance (DHET, 2021; 2022).

In principle, this shows that the scheme is committed to making education affordable to all qualifying citizens who wish to pursue their education. However, that is not how the NSFAS beneficiaries in the current study felt. Some of the participants noted that the policies of NSFAS are exclusionary of middle-class students, as it does not fund students from middle-income households. This finding supports the work of Adeniyi and Durojaye (2020) who also state that NSFAS "ignores" the "missing middle" by not providing financial assistance to them. This somehow does not show the commitment of the scheme to funding all students who cannot afford tertiary education, which was the primary objective of the scheme when it was initiated.

Additionally, the majority of the study participants flagged the administrative challenges faced by NSFAS. Participants noted that NSFAS is challenged in delivering the services such as food allowances, which it promises to deliver to the beneficiaries on time. One of the reasons mentioned by the participants was the miscommunication between NSFAS and the

institutions. This breakdown of communication contradicts the principle of cooperation to carry out the implementation process.

Furthermore, the transition to a decentralized system has contributed to the already existing problem of miscommunication. Resultantly, the ineffective service delivery has negative consequences for the beneficiaries it aimed to assist. This results in students registering late at their institutions, and receiving their living allowances late, contributing to food insecurity, given that the majority of NSFAS recipients are from disadvantaged backgrounds. All of this is a result of poor cooperation and commitment between NSFAS and the financial aid offices. The decentralization system of NSFAS has caused financial aid offices at universities to have little information on funded students, as it is NSFAS that deals with selecting the funding processes and adjudicating the appeals of students.

6.5 Resources (skills and abilities)

Ali (2018) states that resources such as human resources, equipment, and infrastructure play an important role in the success of a policy's implementation. The availability of highly skilled and resourceful individuals with complementary skills and expertise will have a positive impact on policy implementation (Giacchino and Kakabadse, 2003). The skilled individuals must have characteristics such as experience, training, and relevant qualifications to fulfil the expected duties (Brynard, 2009, p. 558; Siddique, 2016, p. 112). Policy implementation requires good infrastructure and adequate facilities to provide good service delivery. Two types of resources, namely human resources and facilities are discussed below.

6.5.1 Human resources

This study's participants were not questioned on the NSFAS staff's qualifications and training, and therefore did not comment on whether the staff is qualified or trained. However, judging in terms of capacity and the visible challenges students face, it is evident that there is an issue of capacity constraint. From the findings, some of the participants mentioned that NSFAS is facing capacity constraints, as it is difficult for them to manage their expected duties.

Skhosana (2019, p. 28) states that the effectiveness of the implementation of public policies is dependent on effective staff tasked to perform the expected duties. However, in the interviews most students mentioned that they were confused when they enquired about anything concerning their funding, because they would go to NSFAS offices, and would be

reverted back to their universities. One participant from the UWC Financial Aid Office stated that a NSFAS consultant would forward the email they received from students to UWC financial aid offices; they never respond directly to students. This is quite concerning as the system has taken all the administrative work from the universities, but then again, they are unable to deal with the administrative work. In addition, NSFAS is now in charge of managing all universities and colleges. Some participants from the SRC and Financial Aid thought this approach was ineffective. This is what would lead to student queries being attended to late and distributing allowances to students late. Again, in the interviews, it was mentioned that the new student model of NSFAS where students no longer apply at universities but directly to NSFAS, was also causing the delay in attending to students' queries. Some of the NSFAS recipients stated that they usually receive their allowances late at the beginning of the year, and that is the period they experience hunger and food insecurity. According to Mofokeng (2021), this new centralization model of NSFAS is behind the delays in the student appeals processes, disbursement, and student accommodation. Technology is also one the most significant pieces of equipment in an organization. The findings show that NSFAS online platforms are slow and ineffective.

According to Mthethwa (2014, p. 16, cited in Skhosana, 2019), in dealing with challenges of policy implementation policies, the staff must have the necessary skills to implement the government policies. This means an organization must be well equipped with the necessary skills to manage their job duties. The NSFAS Board Chairperson, Ernest Khoza admitted that the scheme is not aligned to the student-centered model (South African Government News Agency, 2021). This speaks to one of the factors of implementation theory, namely administrative contrarians. According to this factor, sometimes the staff are unable to perform the expected duties due to a lack of experience (Ahmed and Dantata, 2016), and it is well-known that staff perform well when they are trained to do the job. According to some participants, prior to 2017, it was better when UWC's Financial Aid Office was in charge of student funding, but now with the new model with NSFAS dealing with student funding, things have deteriorated. Based on what has been discussed above, even though it is not known if NSFAS staff receives training, it is evident that the staff is inefficient to carry out the required duties. With proper skills and experience, the scheme would be in a better position to implement the policies and be willing to adapt, which leads to proper implementation.

6.5.2 Infrastructure/facilities

Employees in an organization need a conducive space to be able to work effectively on their jobs. From the empirical evidence of this study, it was flagged that the NSFAS has inadequate facilities to manage students' queries. From the evidence, three out of five participants from the SRC group stated that NSFAS has only one office in South Africa, that is managing all tertiary institutions' queries – both universities and TVET colleges. In South Africa, there are 26 public universities and 50 public TVET colleges. Participants were of the view that one office is inefficient to manage all the administrative duties of resolving student queries across the country. They cited that as one of the reasons why the issue of miscommunication between NSFAS, university financial aid, and students exists.

This all goes back to capacity, because NSFAS manages all university and TVET queries in one office; there is clearly a lack of capacity. This is evidenced by participants' narratives that student queries are answered late in the year because the scheme is dealing with a lot of administrative work. Some of the SRC members suggested the establishment of satellite or regional offices in each province that reports directly to the NSFAS Wynberg main office in the Western Cape. This would ease the delays and late payments of some students who find themselves in such situations, and their queries will be attended to timeously. One Financial Aid official mentioned that currently, the only person who is able to lodge a query about their funding is a student who resides in Cape Town in the Western Cape, who is able to go to the NSFAS office in Wynberg. However, some UWC NSFAS beneficiaries stated that they went to Wynberg to enquire about their funding and would be asked to return to the university because they are funded, only to learn from university financial aid services that they are not funded. This miscommunication mentioned by the participants between the two offices would negatively affect students. In this regard, if the infrastructures are not adequate, it will be difficult to implement the policy implementation successfully and deliver the services to the beneficiaries on time.

6.6 Financial administration

According to Signé (2017), having access to funds is a prerequisite for the success of policy implementation. In addition, funding is not a result of the implementation; however, without funding other aspects of implementation would not be able to function (Signé, 2017). Ali (2018, p. 42) also states that a project might get stuck or delayed if there are not sufficient

funds or "the required budget is not allocated, and the effective utilization of the budget in a timely manner is very important for successful implementation".

As regards the NSFAS overall budget, the Minister of Education earlier in 2021 had announced that the scheme is falling short of its funds. As a result, the scheme did not have enough funds to fund the new first-year students of the 2021 academic year (Macuphe, 2021). Some of the contributing reasons for the shortage of funds are the national budget cuts on government departments due to the current economic conditions, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ngqakamba, 2021). The year 2021 also saw NSFAS defunding some of the courses such as the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (Hammond, 2021). In addition, the living allowances of university students are still the same as the previous year, according to the students and the DHET guideline (DHET, 2021). This also proves that the DHET, which provides funding for NSFAS, is short of funds. Apart from the disastrous consequences for unpaid students – notably food insecurity – this study also uncovered at least one instance of the serious impact of the shortage of funds at a South African university. As discussed in chapter five (section 5.5.5), UJ had to use its R200 million budget to assist the unpaid students and possibly avert more dire consequences for the food insecure students.

From the results of this study, some of the participants were of the view that funding for higher education is inadequate. This has long been stated that NSFAS funds fall short to fund all qualifying students (Van den Berg and Raubenheimer, 2015; Ministerial Report, 2016). While enrollment in South African universities has increased, government funding has declined from R20,187.00 in 1994 to R16,764.00 in 2014 (Dell, 2015, cited in Matukane and Bronkhorst, 2017). Rule and Jack (2018) further state that financial aid may not be enough, creating a gap between the money students receive and what they need to survive and thrive. This will cause food insecurity. Even now, that is still the case as already mentioned above. On the contrary, some of the participants were of the view that there is enough money to fund higher education, but there is just no political will from the government to do so. Regardless of the opposing view, NSFAS is not providing enough funds to the students, as evidenced by the living allowances that did not increase, as well as the exclusion of the middle-class students.

6.7 Monitoring and evaluation

According to Mthethwa (2012), stakeholders who are involved must provide feedback on the progress of the policy implementation. Monitoring and evaluation of a policy could be

through formal data collection. This process is done to track the organization's progress in terms of reaching its specific objectives. In terms of this factor, NSFAS does publish a review report and DHET guidelines on an annual basis to trace the progress and some shortcomings the scheme faces. Although there are annual reviews of NSFAS, the component of food security is overlooked, as there are small to little increments on the living allowances they provide to students. For example, the living allowance of students did not increase for the year 2021. This undermines the financial strains caused by COVID-19. such as the loss of parents' jobs and high food prices.

6.8 Chapter summary

This study set out to identify the administrative challenges faced by the NSFAS system which contribute to student food insecurity. One of the key findings is that NSFAS has implementation challenges such as lack of funds, inadequate staff, and miscommunication that leads to student food insecurity. This puts the scheme in a position where it is not able to deliver according to its mandate. Even though NSFAS assists students who would not be able to afford tertiary education, the scheme is faced with challenges that affect the students. Also, the study's findings indicate that the NSFAS policies exclude middle-class students. The current family income threshold is not in realistic alignment with the students who are considered to be from the middle class. The issue of food insecurity among students can be reduced by having NSFAS regional offices, where the workload would be offloaded from the administrators. This way the students' queries and allowance payments would be processed more efficiently. Also, the income threshold placed on families by NSFAS should be adjusted to accommodate the students of the middle class.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study contributes to the discourse on NSFAS in relation to student food insecurity. This study focused on examining the NSFAS system at an administrative level, in trying to understand some of the administrative challenges the system faces that make it difficult to deliver the mandate on time, thereby contributing to student food insecurity. From the discussion of the literature from the international to the national levels on university student hunger, it was discovered that there is still a dearth of research on this topic. In addition, the studies are available to focus on food security and academic performance, and drop-out. But there is little to none that focus on the administration of NSFAS and how it contributes to student food insecurity. Therefore, further research is needed to explore this aspect, even at a national level.

The main finding from this study is that the NSFAS system is faced with administrative challenges, which undermine the distribution of student allowances. One of the examples is the funding dilemma the scheme is faced with – there are not enough funds to fund all qualifying students; also, the monthly allowance was regarded as being inadequate by some participants. Also, the conversion to a centralized system caused several problems, such as delays in processing student applications, tardy disbursement of monthly allowances, and miscommunication between students with NSFAS officials and financial aid staff of the relevant universities. This is because the staff of NSFAS does not have the capacity to implement the new model of a centralized system. The facilities of NSFAS were also flagged as being inadequate to manage all South African universities' queries. Financial mismanagement of funds by students was also highlighted by participants. It was also noted from the study, that participants were of the view that NSFAS fails to implement its policies as mandated by the NSFAS Act and the South African Constitution. However, participants were optimistic that the policies can be adjusted to accommodate the students currently categorized as the "missing middle".

7.2 Limitations

This study had limitations. The participants of this study were from the University of the Western Cape, with only one external participant (an NSFAS official). It was a challenge to

get participants from the NSFAS offices – only one participant was available from their office. As the study collected data from UWC participants only, it, therefore, makes it difficult to generalize the findings at a national level. In addition, NSFAS is a national system but the study did not study other nearby universities which also have NSFAS beneficiaries.

7.3 Recommendations

1. The Department of Higher Education and Training is the main funder of NSFAS. Therefore, the department needs to ensure that there is sufficient funding allocated to NSFAS students, so that more students will be financially supported. In this way, NSFAS will be able to increase the monthly allowance on an annual basis.

2. Financial literacy training for students at universities will minimize the students' behavior of mismanaging the monthly allowances they receive from NSFAS.

3. NSFAS should establish regional offices at least in each province that has a public university. This would minimize the lack of communication and delays in processing students' bursary applications and payments to be paid on time.

4. From the study it was highlighted that the delay of monthly allowances from NSFAS contributes to student food insecurity and hunger. The UWC and other stakeholders need to form more food programs and foodbanks for students that will provide food to students who are affected by food insecurity. This can save the students from food insecurity when their monthly allowance from NSFAS is delayed. Centers in the university such as the Centre of Excellence in Food Security and the Dietetics Department can also play a role in terms of managing and advising on the foodbanks on campus, pertaining to the type of food as well as the logistics of rolling out a food-provision system to students. These relevant departments can also educate students on the importance of nutritious food.

5. The NSFAS family income threshold excludes middle-class students. Many students from the middle class need NSFAS financial assistance. This study therefore, suggests that there should not be a blanket approach to funding, but instead apply case-to-case consideration for students in determining eligibility for full bursaries.

6. This study attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge with regards to the administration of NSFAS and how that contributes to student food insecurity, at UWC. The study suggests that more formal research on the direct impact of NSFAS administration on student food insecurity is conducted. Such research would enable researchers to secure better cooperation from the NSFAS office and its staff through

interviews, and to get more depth and understanding of the implementation challenges of the NSFAS systems, to provide higher-level recommendations.

The findings on this study demonstrate that food insecurity is adversely associated with inadequate monthly allowances and NSFAS administrative challenges. It is therefore suggested that the Department of Higher Education who is the main funder of NSFAS to allocate sufficient funds. In that way NSFAS would be able to increase and provide monthly allowances on an annual basis. In the study it was also revealed that NSFAS has only one national office, located in Cape Town, Wynberg. This study therefore suggest that scheme should have regional offices to in each province. In this way they will be able to reduce the workload and will be able to deal with student queries and bursary processing and allowances more efficient than now. The Scheme can also do a national study in all South African university to evaluate if the current monthly allowances they provide address student food security issue. Then those findings can be used to inform the policies and calculations when allocating funds to South African universities. In that way, the scheme will be aware of the extent of food insecurity and address it appropriately.

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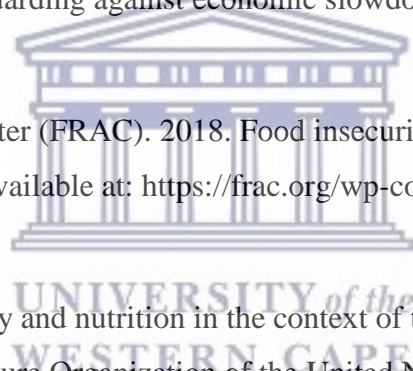
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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics clearance approval letter

Appendix B: Consent form (NSFAS, UWC Financial aid, UWC SRC, UWC SDS)

Appendix C: Consent form (UWC students)

Appendix D: Information sheet (NSFAS, UWC Financial aid, UWC SRC, UWC SDS)

Appendix E: Information sheet (UWC students)

Appendix F: Letter of permission to interview UWC community

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11 March 2021

Ms Z Dlabatshana
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Faculty Economic and Management Sciences

HSSREC Reference Number:	HS19/10/6
Project Title:	The role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food insecurity at South African universities.
Approval Period:	18 February 2021 – 18 February 2024

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.

The permission to conduct the study must be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

NHREC Registration Number:
HSSREC-130416-049

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa
Telephone: 021 959 3858/6 Fax: 021 959 3865
E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za or mdinbabo@uwc.ac.za

Letter of consent: In-depth interview (NSFAS, UWC Financial Aid, and SRC authorities/SDS)

I ...., have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving reasons.

I am aware that the information I provide in this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name will not be used.

I understand that my signature on this form indicates that I understand the information on the information sheet regarding the structure of the questions.

I have read the information about this research has been explained to me that this study is about the challenges faced by NSFAS in addressing food insecurity and hunger at South African universities, focusing particularly at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and nearby universities.

I agree to answer the questions to the best of my ability.

I understand that my name will not be used anywhere else along the process of the present research or later on, except on this Consent Form.

I agree for this interview to be tape-recorded. I understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for getting information regarding the purpose of this research, which is to find out the challenges faced by NSFAS system in addressing food insecurity. I understand that no other use will be made of the recording without my written permission, and that no one outside this research team will be allowed access to the tape recording.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.

By signing this letter, I give free and informed consent to participate in this research study.

Name of participant	Date	Signature

Principal Investigator	Date	Signature

This research is being conducted by **Zikhona Dlabatshana**, a student at the University of the Western Cape. Her contact details are as follows:

Cell: 061 031 7553 Email: 3534084@myuwc.ac.za

If you have any questions about the research itself, you are free to contact Zikhona's supervisor, Dr Camilla Adelle, at The School of Government, University of the Western Cape, **her telephone number is +27 (0)83 2604703, her email is cadelle@uwc.ac.za.** Should you require further information concerning your rights in the participation of the study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Prof. Mulugeta Dinbabo
Director
Institute for Social Development
School of Government
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988,

E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

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E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za or mdinbabo@uwc.ac.za

Letter of consent: In-depth interview (UWC NSFAS Recipient students)

I ...., have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving reasons.

I am aware that the information I provide in this interview might result in research which may be published, but anonymity will be granted.

I understand that my signature on this form indicates that I understand the information on the information sheet regarding the structure of the questions.

I have read the information about this research has been explained to me that this study is about the challenges faced by NSFAS in addressing food insecurity and hunger at South African universities, focusing particularly at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and nearby universities.

I agree to answer the questions to the best of my ability.

I understand that my name will not be used anywhere else along the process of the present research or later on, except on this Consent Form.

I agree for this interview to be tape-recorded. I understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for acquiring the information needed for this research, from which I would not be personally identified. I understand that the information shared in this interview will be used for academic purposes of this research and no other research outside of this study.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.

By signing this letter, I give free and informed consent to participate in this research study.

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DEVELOPMENT

Name of participant	Date	Signature

Principal Investigator	Date	Signature

This research is being conducted by **Zikhona Dlabatshana**, a student at the University of the Western Cape. Her contact details are as follows:

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E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

Information sheet for in-depth interviews with NSFAS/UWC FINANCIAL AID/SRC/SDS

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa
Telephone :(021) 959 3858/6 Fax: (021) 959 3865
E-mail: **pkippie@uwc.ac.za** *or* spenderis@uwc.ac.za

Project Title: The role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food insecurity at South African Universities

Student conducting the study: Zikhona Dlabatshana

Study Contact telephone numbers: 061 031 7553

Study Contact email: 3534084@myuwc.ac.za

To be read (aloud) and offered to consenting participants to take home with them.

What is this study about?

This research project is being conducted by Zikhona Dlabatshana, a student at the University of the Western Cape. It is an academic research conducted in partial fulfilment of a Master's Degree in Development Studies. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food security at the South African universities, focusing at the University of the Western Cape and other nearby universities. This research will look at the challenges faced by NSFAS from the governance perception focusing at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and other nearby universities

What is the purpose of the Study?

The purpose of this study is to is to investigate the challenges faced by NSFAS system in addressing student hunger and food insecurity in trying to understand why there is still the issue of student hunger and food insecurity given that there is a food component provided by the NSFAS. The researcher is interested in also finding out how the NSFAS system plays out their policies in practice.

Therefore, I am interested in your personal experience as well as your existing knowledge on the issue of student hunger as you are part of the NSFAS authorities.

What is the interview about?

The Interview seeks to investigate your experiences of the issues discussed above and in particular your insights on the effectiveness of NSFAS in addressing student hunger. The researcher believes that NSFAS officials, university staff and some students will be able to provide the researcher with valuable insights from their firsthand experience of the NSFAS scheme in practice.

Information from your interview will be used for academic purposes only and may form part of a published academic thesis and /or journal article.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?
Your participation in this study will remain anonymous as we will not reveal the names or particulars of the people who take part in our research. As a participant you are asked to sign a consent form before taking part in this study to indicate your willingness to take part and also to protect your anonymity. All that will be discussed between you and the interviewer will be confidential.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no anticipated risks to the participate in this study.

What are the benefits of this research?

Research is done to find new knowledge. There are no direct benefits for the participants. However, the information obtained in this study may be used to improve the system of NSFAS in terms of addressing food insecurity and hunger at South African Universities.

Do I have to complete the interview or may I withdraw from the process at any time?

Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study anytime without a given reason.

How long will you be in the study?

The full interview session will take about twenty to forty minutes.

Do I need to bring anything to the interview?
You do not have to bring anything.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?
There are no negative effects that could happen from participating in this study.

What if I have questions?
You have the rights to ask and be answered any questions you may have about this study. If you have questions please contact Zikhona Dlabatshana. Her contact number is 0610317553, her email is 3534084@myuwc.ac.za

If you have any questions about the research itself, you are free to contact Zikhona's supervisor, Dr Camilla Adelle, at The School of Government, University of the Western Cape, **her telephone number is +27 (0)83 2604703, her email is cadelle@uwc.ac.za.** Should you require further information concerning your rights in the participation of the study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.
HSSREC, Research Development, UWC, Tel: 021 959 2988,
E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988, E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

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Information Sheet for In-depth Interviews with NSFAS Recipient students

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa
Telephone :(021) 959 3858/6 Fax: (021) 959 3865
E-mail: **pkippie@uwc.ac.za** *or* *spenderis@uwc.ac.za*

Project Title: The role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food insecurity at South African Universities
Student conducting the study: Zikhona Dlabatshana

Study Contact telephone numbers: 061 031 7553

Study Contact email: 3534084@myuwc.ac.za

To be read (aloud) and offered to consenting participants to take home with them.

What is this study about?

This research project is being conducted by Zikhona Dlabatshana, a student at the University of the Western Cape. It is an academic research conducted in partial fulfilment of a Master's Degree in Development Studies. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food security at the South African universities, focusing at the University of the Western Cape. This research will look at the failures of NSFAS from the governance perception focusing at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and other nearby universities.

What is the purpose of the Study?
The purpose of this study is to is to investigate the challenges faced by NSFAS system in addressing student hunger and food insecurity in trying to understand why there is still the issue of student hunger and food insecurity given that there is a food component provided by the NSFAS.

Therefore, I am interested in your personal experience as well as your existing knowledge on the issue of student hunger as you are one of the NSFAS recipients and has been on the previous system of food voucher and the new one of cash transfer.

What is the interview about?
The aim of this interview is to explore the personal experience with the system of NSFAS in terms of the food component

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

Your participation in this study will remain anonymous as we will not reveal the names or particulars of the people who take part in our research. As a participant you are asked to sign a consent form before taking part in this study to indicate your willingness to take part and to protect your anonymity. All that will be discussed between you and the interviewer will be confidential. Only the number of the interview will be used to identify the interview.

What are the risks of this research?
There are no anticipated risks to the participate in this study. However, the researcher understands that the focus on the research pertains to student hunger, the students that may suffer from trauma will be referred to on campus assistance available, both counselling services and those to help hungry people.

What are the benefits of this research?

Research is done to find new knowledge. There are no direct benefits for the participants. However, the information obtained in this study may be used to improve the system of NSFAS in terms of addressing food insecurity and hunger at South African Universities.

Do I have to complete the interview or may I withdraw from the process at any time?
Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study anytime without a given reason. The financial assistance you receive from NSFAS will not be affected by your decision on whether to participate in the study or not.

How long will you be in the study?

The full interview session will take about twenty to forty minutes.
Do I need to bring anything to the interview?
You do not have to bring anything.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?
There are no negative effects that could happen from participating in this study. However, if they occur, the researcher will refer you to on campus assistance available, for both counselling services and those that help hungry students.

What if I have questions?
You have the rights to ask and be answered any questions you may have about this study. If you have questions, please contact Zikhona Dlabatshana. Her contact number is 0610317553, her email is 3534084@myuwc.ac.za

If you have any questions about the research itself, you are free to contact Zikhona's supervisor, Dr Camilla Adelle, at The School of Government, University of the Western Cape, **her telephone number is +27 (0)83 2604703, her email is cadelle@uwc.ac.za.** Should you require further information concerning your rights in the participation of the study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Prof. Mulugeta Dinbabo
Director

APPENDIX E

Institute for Social Development
School of Government
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535

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HSSREC, Research Development, UWC, Tel: 021 959 2988,
E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988, E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

APPENDIX F

The University of the Western Cape is a Public Higher Education institution established and regulated by the Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997 (Republic of South Africa), with the language of instruction being English. The University is duly accredited by the Council on Higher Education and its degrees and diplornas are registered on the National Qualifications Framework in terms of the South African C!ualifications Authority Act, No. 58 of 1995.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

This serves as acknowledgement that you have obtained and presented the necessary ethical clearance and your institutional permission required to proceed with the project referenced below:

Name of Researcher
ZIKHONA DLABATSHANA

Research topic
The role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in addressing food insecurity at South African universities

Period permission is valid for
19 May 2021- 18 February 2024
(or as determined by the validity of your ethics approval)

Reference code
UWCRP190521ZD

Ethics reference
University of the Western Cape HS19/10/6

You are required to engage this office in advance if there is a need to continue with research outside of the stipulated period. The manner in which you conduct your research must be guided by the conditions set out in the annexed agreement: *Conditions to guide research conducted at the University o(the Western Cape.*

Please be at liberty to contact this office should you require any assistance to conduct your research or require access to either staff or student contact information.

Yours sincerely

DR AHMED SHAIKJEE
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN

1. ACCOUNTABILITY

1.1. The University reserves the right to audit the research practices of the researcher/ investigator to assess compliance to the conditions of this agreement.

1.2. Data collection processes must not be adapted, changed or altered by the researcher/ investigator without written notification issued to the authorising office.

1.3. The University reserves to right to cease research if any proposed change to the data collection process is found to be unethical or in contravention of this agreement.

1.4. Failure to comply with any one condition in this agreement may result in:

    1.4.1. Disciplinary action instituted against a researcher/investigator employed or registered at the University;

    1.4.2. The contravention reported to the organisation employing or registering the external researcher/ investigator.

2. GOVERNANCE

2.1. Approval to conduct research is governed by the Protection of Personal Information Act, No 4 of 2013, which regulates the entire information life cycle from collection, through use and storage and even the destruction of personal information and it is incumbent on the researcher/investigator to understand the implications of the legislation.

2.2. The researcher/investigator must employ the necessary measures to conduct research that is ethically and legally sound.

3. ACQUIRING CONSENT & RIGHTS OF PARTICIPANTS

3.1. It is incumbent on the researcher / investigator to clarify any uncertainties to the participant about the research.

3.2. Written consent must be obtained from participants before their personal information is gathered and documented.

3.3. Participation in the research must be voluntary and participants must not be pressured or coerced.

3.4. Participants have the right to access their personal information, obtain confirmation of what information is in the possession of the researcher / investigator and who had access to the information.

3.5. Participants have the right to withdraw from the research and insist that their personal information not be used.

4. DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

4.1. Due diligence must be afforded by the researcher/investigator to:

    4.1.1. Mitigate any risks that could compromise the privacy of participants before

    4.1.2. during and after the research is conducted;

    4.1.3. Collect only information that is relevant to the aim of the research;

    4.1.4. Verify all personal information collected about a participant if the information is supplied by a source other than the participant;

    4.1.5. Refrain from sharing participant information with a third party;

    4.1.6. Apply for an exemption if the identity of participants should be revealed in the interest of the research aims.

4.2. The researcher/investigator must employ appropriate, reasonable and technical measures to protect, prevent loss of and unlawful or unauthorised access of research information.

Should you have any questions relating to this agreement please contact:

ashaikiee@uwc.ac.za. or researcheerm@uwc.ac.za

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