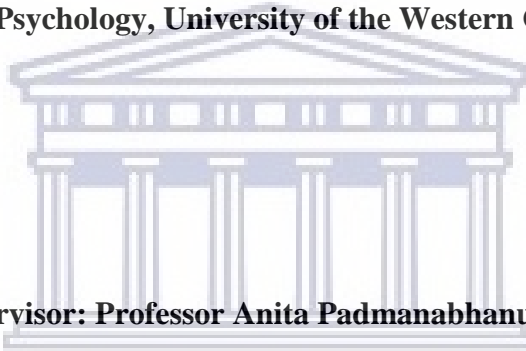


**Undergraduate Students' Motivation for Attending University and the Role of  
Demographic Factors in Influencing Motivation**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.Psych in the  
Department of Psychology, University of the Western Cape, Bellville**




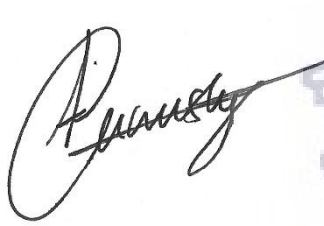
**Supervisor: Professor Anita Padmanabhanunni**

**UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE**

**May 2020**

## Declaration

I declare that *Undergraduate student's motivation for attending university and the role of demographic factors in influencing motivation* is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at another university, and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as comprehensive references.



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Nicolaas Adriaan Augustyn

UNIVERSITY of the  
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May 2020

## Abstract

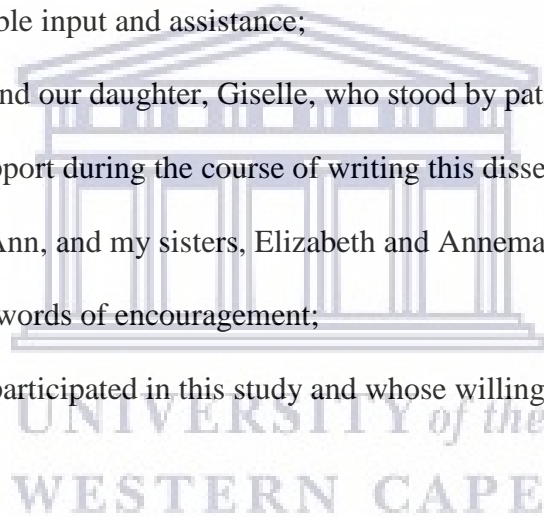
Previous studies on motivation of higher education students have predominantly focused on the role of motivation in academic achievement. The aim of this study was to identify what motivates students to attend university and to establish the connection of this motivational orientation to demographic correlates. A correlational research design was employed and data was analysed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Correlational analysis (Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ )) was used to determine the strength of the association between demographic factors and student motivations for attending university. ANOVA was used to compare groups (i.e. gender, generational status, year of study, primary caretaker's education/employment/unemployment, and socioeconomic status). Students from the University of the Western Cape ( $N = 220$ ), an historically disadvantaged higher education institution in South Africa, were recruited and engaged through questionnaires. The questionnaires utilised were the Demographic Questionnaire and the Student Motivations for Attending University Questionnaire–Revised (SMAU). Results showed that students were mostly motivated to help their families and that this motivational orientation was also associated with various demographic correlates. The implications of these results are discussed with a specific reference to the role of cultural orientation.

*Keywords:* age, demographic factors, gender, generational status, motivational orientation, primary caretaker, socioeconomic status, student motivation, undergraduate, year of study

## Acknowledgements

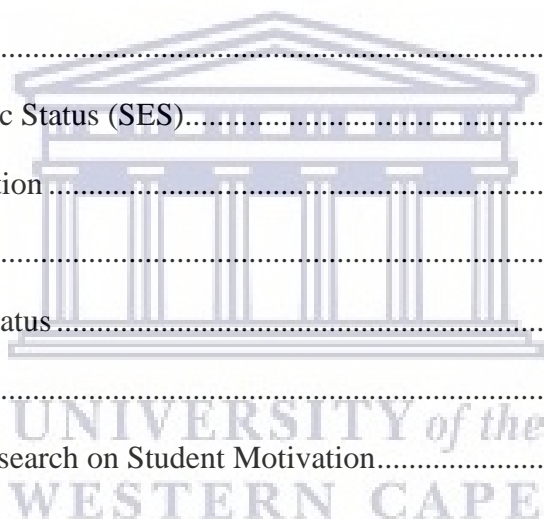
I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following persons for their important contributions, which allowed me to complete this dissertation:

- Professor Anita Padmanabhanunni, my supervisor, whose patient, consistent and committed guidance, support, and words of encouragement allowed me to persist and complete my dissertation;
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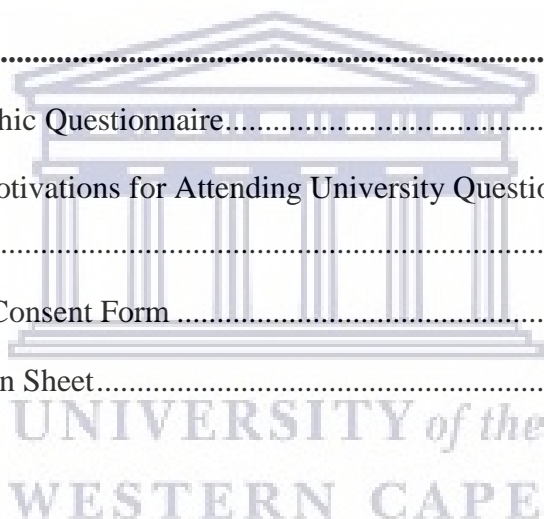


## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One: Overview .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. Aims and Objectives .....	9
1.2. Contribution of this Study .....	10
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. The South African Higher Education System .....	11
2.2. Students Motivations for Attending University .....	15
2.3. Students' Demographic Characteristics and Motivation to Attend University.....	16
2.3.1. Gender.....	17
2.3.2. Socio-Economic Status (SES).....	17
2.3.3. Parental Education .....	19
2.3.4. Age.....	20
2.3.5. Generational Status .....	20
2.3.6. Year of Study .....	21
2.4. South African Research on Student Motivation.....	22
<b>Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1. Research Design.....	26
3.2. Research Setting.....	26
3.3. Population and Sample.....	26
3.4. Instruments .....	27
3.5. Procedures .....	28
3.6. Data Analysis .....	29
3.7. Reliability and Validity .....	29
3.8. Ethical Considerations.....	29



<b>Chapter Four: Results and Discussion.....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1. Data Analysis .....	31
4.2. Discussion .....	41
4.3. Summary and Conclusion of Findings .....	42
4.4. Limitations and Shortcomings of this Study .....	42
4.5. Recommendations for Future Research .....	42
<b>References.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire.....	54
Appendix B: Student Motivations for Attending University Questionnaire–Revised (SMAU) .....	55
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form .....	57
Appendix D: Information Sheet.....	58



## Chapter One: Overview

This study examined student motivation for attending university and the association between student motivation and specific demographic factors. There has been an ever growing body of research on motivational factors contributing to student success in higher education institutions (Devlin, 2013; Dewberry & Jackson, 2018; Miller & Garcia, 2004; Roberts, 2018; Sadowski et al., 2018). To expand on this research, the current study focused on the relationship between demographic factors, which can be conceptualised as the characteristics of a population group (e.g. gender, age, socio-economic status, occupation, religion etc.) (VandenBos, 2015), and motivational factors for attending university. A considerable body of international research has revealed links between demographic factors and academic success and failure at institutions of higher learning. However, comparatively, less research on these factors have been undertaken in the South African context, resulting in a gap in the literature.

Essentially all behaviour, apart from the most basic of reflexes, are considered to be determined by motivation (Wagner, 2014). Motivation directing behaviour is generally thought of as having two parts: A part that invigorates and another that guides the behaviour in the direction of an aim or goal (Wagner, 2014). However, motivation as a construct can be conceptualised in many different ways, depending on the theoretical orientation employed (Wagner, 2014). For example, the 'why' informing human conduct was delineated by Maslow (1954) in a wide ranging theory that posits that human behaviour is driven by motivation in order to fulfil needs on a rank ordered scale, from the most important to the least important. Motivation as a construct in educational settings, on the other hand, is often articulated as time as well as effort invested in acquiring knowledge (Nieuwhof et al., 2004). Motivation as a construct in educational settings, however, extends beyond this and also pertains to what motivates students to pursue higher education as well as the associations of

this motivation with personal variables (Nieuwhof et al., 2004). The link between motivation and variable factors have a bearing on how motivation manifests as a drive to behaviour. As Maslow (1954) argues, “The study of motivation does not negate or deny the study of situational determinants but rather supplements it. They both have their place in the larger structure” (p. 29).

Models that may be helpful in understanding motivation include the Input-Environmental-Output (I-E-O) model developed by Astin (1993) and the Developmental-Contextualism model developed by Lerner and Kauffman (1985). Astin’s (1993) I-E-O model focuses on the influence that characteristics of students entering higher education settings have on motivation, known as the input, as well as the attributes of institutions, which is conceptualised as the output. Astin’s (1993) I-E-O model has been used extensively in research that seeks to determine the relationship between the effect of the environment on student outcomes. Studies that have used this model include a study conducted by DiRamio and Jarvis (2011) with military veteran students and empirical studies, such as Knight (1994), Astin and Sax (1998), Kelly (1996), and Campell and Blakely (1996) (as cited in Viveros, 2017). These studies used quantitative methodology, which delivered statistical regulation on input characteristics as well as forecasting and pinpointing correlations amongst environmental factors and outputs. The I-E-O model is seen to be well suited to studying data from students in order to perform correlational research because it enquires into external impacts (Viveros, 2017). Astin’s (1993) I-E-O framework ultimately provides a platform from which to consider various environmental factors while also providing for control.

Contextualism, as another theoretical model, focuses on the part that historical, social, and cultural factors play in shaping individual development (Lerner & Kauffman, 1985). This model received significant attention in the 1970’s as it provides a dispersive lens through which to view the variables under consideration. As Lerner and Kauffman (1985) explain:



A contextual perspective captures the complexity of a multilevel context (1) without ignoring the active role of the organism in shaping, as well as being shaped by, that context, and (2) without sacrificing commitment to useful prescriptive, universal principles of developmental change. These two foci are integrated within the contextual orientation at the level of the presumed relation between organismic and contextual processes. (p. 324)

The contextual theoretical perspective holds as a fundamental conception the interaction of an organism with the environment in which it finds itself. In other words, it acknowledges reciprocal relationships in multiple contexts (Lerner & Kauffman, 1985). Specifying context from this perspective is seen to be a key aspect in understanding psychosocial conditions, behaviour, and development. A further distinctive feature of this perspective is how it approaches time and timing, which lends it to opening up new theoretical, research, and intervention directions (Lerner & Kauffman, 1985).

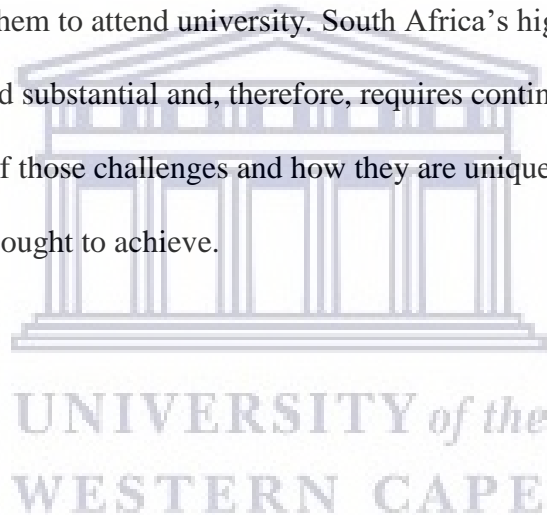
### **1.1. Aims and Objectives**

The primary aim of this study was to identify undergraduate students' motivation for attending university and explore the association of students' motivation with various demographic factors. The objectives of this study were:

- 1) to identify undergraduate students' motivations for attending university; and
- 2) to determine the associations between students' motivation to attend university and specific demographic factors, such as socioeconomic status (SES), gender, age, generational status, primary caretaker's education/employment/unemployment status, and year of study.

## 1.2. Contribution of this Study

By investigating what motivates students to attend university as well as the associated demographic correlates, this study contributes to the research field by expanding on an under researched area. According to Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2015) and Jung (2013), there has been limited information on the role and influence of demographic factors on students' motivation to attend university. This is particularly the case in developing countries, such as South Africa and authors, such as Imenda and Kongolo (2002), have explicitly encouraged researchers to investigate the broader topic. The resulting data of this study may assist in informing interventions as well as initiate structures and systems that may support students based on what motivated them to attend university. South Africa's higher education challenges are complex and substantial and, therefore, requires continued in depth research to illuminate the intricacies of those challenges and how they are unique to its context. This is something that this study sought to achieve.



## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### 2.1. The South African Higher Education System

Understanding the persistent challenges experienced by the South African education system requires a contextual appreciation of the impact of the apartheid regime on the higher education sector. Van der Berg (2007) referred to the most enduring legacy of apartheid as being that of inequality in education and the South African education system as a whole is still recovering from the consequences of the apartheid regime and its discriminatory policies. Human capital differentials in South Africa have been found to underpin the enduring poor education system and have been described as “footprints in the sand of poverty and inequality” (Simkins, 1998, p. 11). Therefore, the inherited unequal and pervasively dysfunctional education system remains a significant burden on the new and fledging democratic dispensation. The South African government has attempted to redress past inequalities and promote access to education, specifically in terms of policy and resource distribution, and the government continues to grapple with the complexity and sheer scope of the problems faced in this arena (Van der Berg, 2007).

Historically, social inequalities in South Africa have been intertwined and enmeshed and its fault lines remain clearly evident in all sectors of society. This is due to the historic and systematic exclusion of the majority of the black population (University of the Western Cape, 2020). Higher education in the country was not exempt from this exclusion, with social, economic, and political inequalities between race, gender, and class being utilised as tools to achieve oppression and subjugation (University of the Western Cape, 2020). South African universities under the apartheid system were made up of two groups: Disadvantaged black universities and advantaged white universities, where the disadvantaged higher

education institutions served student populations who largely came from working class backgrounds (University of the Western Cape, 2020).

The University of the Western Cape (UWC), as a historically disadvantaged institution, established a reputation for imaginative resistance opposing systematic subjugation, injustice, and systemic challenges, which were the order of the day in South Africa (University of the Western Cape, 2020). Its focus as an institution has been and remains orientated towards access, fairness, and excellence within the higher education sector. The roots of UWC's historical disadvantage go back to 1959, when legislation was adopted by Parliament to classify it as a constituent college falling under the University of South Africa (University of the Western Cape, 2020). As such, it was also established as an institution for people who were racially categorised as "Coloured", with the first group of one hundred and sixty-six students registered in 1960 (University of the Western Cape, 2020). The academic offering was limited and focused on providing education for lower to middle level employment in sectors providing service to segregated "Coloured" people. UWC was eventually categorised as a university in 1970 and, after protest action by academics and students, appointed its first black Rector in 1975 (University of the Western Cape, 2020). The university would go on to formalise an "open" admission policy, which saw it accepting more and more African scholars. This led to the first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, expressing the significance of its transformation as being "from an apartheid ethnic institution to a proud national asset" (University of the Western Cape, 2020).

The new democratically elected South African government set out to rectify nationwide inequalities and were committed to transforming the higher education sector as one of a host of broader social and economic structural changes (Badat, 2010). With the transition to democracy in 1994, the South African government took on a number of concurrent tasks to address the problems of access to education and a large part of the focus

was set on resource allocation. However, Van der Berg (2007) concludes that resource allocation has not been sufficient in itself in addressing the problems faced.

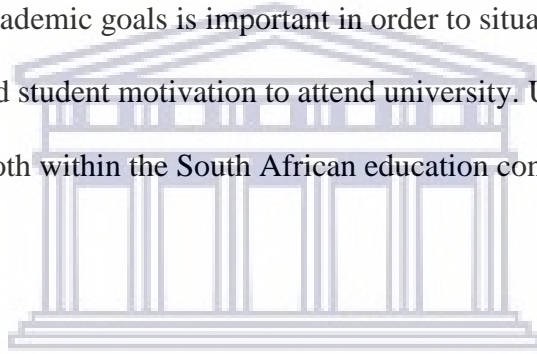
Amongst the host of transformation orientated approaches that the post-1994 government employed, one central focus has been on effecting institutional change (Badat, 2010). This led to prioritising and re-evaluating the function of higher education in the South African context, where this revaluation encompassed policy, implementation, academic configuration, funding, program development, consistency of quality, as well as novel laws and guidelines (Badat, 2010). The extent of these changes often stretched the ability of the government and that of the higher education sector to respond, thereby hampering the speed with which results were achieved (Badat, 2010). Central to the initiated attempts at changing higher education in the country, were directives set out by the South African Constitution in the 1996 and 1997 Act and White Paper (Badat, 2010). These instructed the government and stakeholder institutions in the higher education sector to effect the required far reaching changes to the education sector.

In addition to this, the Higher Education Act announced the ideal of establishing “a single co-ordinated higher education system”, where the focus was to reposition and overhaul “...programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic and developmental needs” (Badat, 2010, p. 3). Pivotal to this was changing “past discrimination” and guaranteeing “representivity and equal access” along with collaboration “to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international standards of academic quality” (Badat, 2010, p. 3). The act also stipulated that academic institutions were to embody freedom and autonomy in its relationship with the government. This, along with public accountability and the national need for scientific knowledge and cutting-edge skills, were seen to be of the utmost importance (Badat, 2010).

Even though the current government administration inherited a low functioning education sector, it is not remitted from accountability in the persisting poor state of affairs (Spaul, 2013). After 26 years of democracy, the majority of children in South Africa are born into socioeconomic settings rife with unemployment and poverty. This raises difficult questions about the capacity of the current administration. Insufficient education has led to a collective under-developed capacity to seize economic and employment prospects, which has had a significant impact on the psyche of young South Africans (Spaul, 2013). In turn, self-esteem and self-worth, having been eroded, have continued to perpetuate social disparities. It must also be acknowledged that one's social status has been inherited and is often permanent, regardless of motivation and capability (Spaul, 2013).

Spaul (2013) contends that an on-going crisis in the South African education sector has continued to unfold and, as a result, serious attempts at addressing the problems at the heart of South African education, regardless of the associated political or economic costs remains an imperative goal. Through an independently steered assessment of learners' accomplishments, it was concluded that the majority of South African learners are unable to read, calculate, or write (Spaul, 2013). Furthermore, with regards to educational outcomes, South Africa was considered to be the worst performer amongst middle-income countries taking part in cross-national valuations of scholastic attainment (Spaul, 2013). Even more concerning was that South Africa, as a middle-income country, performed lower than a host of low-income countries. Figures, such as only twelve out of every one hundred learners progressing on to university studies, were also found to be a reality. Recent improvements in learner achievements along with policy innovations was noted as having had a positive impact. However, ineffectuality remains at the heart of the education system of South Africa. As Spaul (2013) argues, "the South African education system is grossly inefficient, severely underperforming and egregiously unfair" (p.3).

Despite official assertions of improved performance, it is largely believed that higher education in South Africa is failing to produce the required mix of proficient graduates to serve the country in terms of both equitable outcomes and providing cutting-edge skills to support the full spectrum of the development demands of South African society (Scott, 2018). Concerning statistical data of deficits in the educational system remain. For example, in 2017 the Department of Higher Education and Training found that half the students who enter universities in South Africa do not graduate (Scott, 2018). South Africa's higher education challenges are substantial and complex and demands sophisticated and considered interventions which prioritise student success. Looking at factors that motivate students to pursue higher education academic goals is important in order to situate the roles of demographic correlates and student motivation to attend university. Understanding these dynamics are important, both within the South African education context as well as within the global context.



## **2.2. Students Motivations for Attending University**

In a Canadian study, student motivation was investigated and linked to the following constructs with similar characteristics: self-concept, autonomous academic motivation, and academic achievement (Guay et al., 2010). Self-concept as a construct was conceptualised as a descriptive and evaluative appraisal by students of themselves and which they embarked on while experiencing and making sense of their educational situation (Marsh & Craven, 1997; Shavelson et al., 1976). Guay et al. (2010) also note that research with regards to academic self-concept and autonomous academic motivation has evolved separately. In other words, they found that a limited number of studies linked these constructs and, as result, in proposing different conceptual models, they found “that autonomous academic motivation

mediates academic self-concept- academic achievement relation” (p. 644). Self-determination and self-concept theories were used to contextualise the discussion of this result.

In an Australian study, academic motivation and self-concept was found to forecast the attitudes that learners had towards high school. Green et al. (2012) noted that their study had a vital bearing on educational research in that important aspects of the self-system model were broken down into particular dimensions. The study provided important considerations in relation to the self-concept and motivation constructs within educational research. Green et al. (2012) conclude that “These findings demonstrate a complementary and synergic role of motivation and self-concept in student academic trajectory” (p. 1120). Although this study pertained to high school students, it carries important implications in conceptualising the construct of motivation and the role it plays in motivating students to attend university. The self-system model, with regards to motivational advancement, pertains to context, self, engagement and outcomes (Skinner et al., 2009; Skinner et al., 2008).

Academic performance has been seen as a vital consideration in terms of motivation research and has received growing empirical attention in the field of Education Psychology (Green et al., 2012). Motivation as a construct has been linked to academic achievement, environmental and interpersonal factors, academic motivation, achievement goals, autonomous academic motivation, and academic self-concept. Furthermore, autonomous academic motivation has been found to play a mediating role in terms of academic self-concept and achievement (Green et al., 2012).

### **2.3. Students’ Demographic Characteristics and Motivation to Attend University**

With respect to international literature, existing studies have investigated a range of demographic factors linked to student motivation and the roles they play in academic success and failure. A study by Porchea et al. (2010) identified that demographic correlates ranging



from age, gender, socio-economic status, and parental education levels, are associated with student motivation. These correlates were found to play a significant role in what motivated students to attend higher education institutions, as well as whether they succeeded in their academic pursuits or not.

### **2.3.1. Gender**

Gender has been found to be strongly associated with motivation amongst students. Nora et al. (2005), considering American educational data, found that female students graduated at significantly higher rates than their male counterparts. Similarly, Ayub (2010), in a study with Pakistani students, concluded that there were significant differences in the types of motivation between male and female students to attend university, as well as the attainment of academic success. Male students were found to be more extrinsically motivated, whereas female students were found to be more intrinsically motivated. Ayub (2010) argues that this was due to the influence of traditional gender roles, where male students were expected to be the main breadwinners. For female students, motivation for attending university and pursuing academic goals was associated with self-exploration and internal satisfaction.

### **2.3.2. Socio-Economic Status (SES)**

Kennett et al.'s (2011) study in Canada found that first-generation students mostly came from families in lower socio-economic positions. These students faced unique challenges adjusting to higher education institutions and faced distinctive motivational challenges throughout their higher education engagement. Some of these challenges pertained to gaining respect, achieving social standing, and leaving parental homes. This research is particularly relevant to the South African context, with its high rate of first-generation students in higher education institutions (Moodley & Singh, 2015).

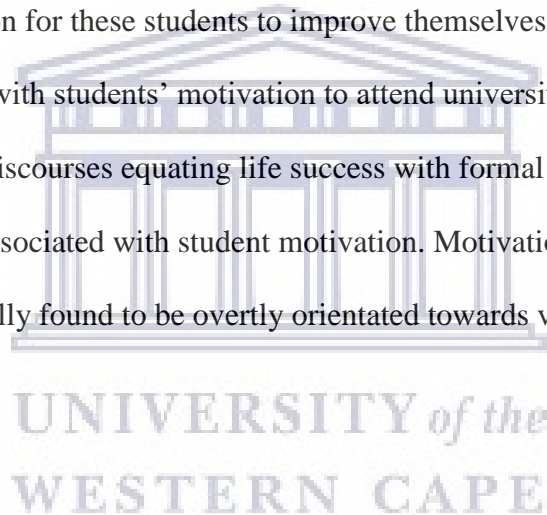
A study involving students (N = 2520) at the University of Rochester in New York revealed that intrinsic needs for competence and autonomy were significantly associated with student motivation (Guiffrida et al., 2013). This association was underpinned by moderating demographic factors, with SES and parental education identified as strongly related to student motivation, persistence, and success. SES was the strongest moderating demographic factor associated with student motivation, as it was found that students from low socio-economic backgrounds did not benefit from motivational factors associated with student success as their counterparts from higher socio-economic backgrounds did (Guiffrida et al., 2013).

A study by Phinney et al. (2006) revealed that students from ethnic minority groups, who were from lower SES backgrounds, were mostly motivated to attend college to help their families. In these families, parents tended to have no higher education achievements themselves. Adolescents from these backgrounds were, therefore, generally less likely to attend higher education institutions due to the significant obstacles they had to overcome. When they did attend higher education institutions, such as university, they had more to gain should they succeed (Phinney et al., 2006). The parents of these families were found to have consistently pointed out the hardships they endured because they did not achieve higher education qualifications. Related to this, children from these families, due to having witnessed their parent's struggles and economic hardships, were motivated to help their parents. Students' low SES, having been found to be a motivating factor and variable of the motivation to attend higher education, also appeared to be independent from their ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Phinney et al., 2006).

White and Perrone-McGovern (2017) found financial stress to be more significant than generational status in relation to academic self-efficacy amongst students. Financial distress was seen as a proximal contextual factor and, therefore, more prominent with regards to its impact on student's motivation. Similarly, in a study conducted in California, Bui

(2002) pointed out that first-generation students who came from lower SES contexts were mostly motivated to help their families financially. Parents of these students were, generally, not English first-language speakers and/or had not been recipients of higher education themselves. First-generation students from these families were found to be motivated by fears of failure and these students felt that they had to work harder than their non-first-generation counterparts in order to succeed.

Lehmann (2009), in a qualitative study interviewing first-generation working-class Canadian students, identified strong vocational and utilitarian orientations associated with attending university. Class habitus and habitus-specific lenses, such as how the experiences of parents create motivation for these students to improve themselves, were identified as further factors associated with students' motivation to attend universities. Furthermore, persistent and consistent discourses equating life success with formal education in families were identified as being associated with student motivation. Motivation amongst working-class students were generally found to be overtly orientated towards vocational pursuits (Lehmann, 2009).



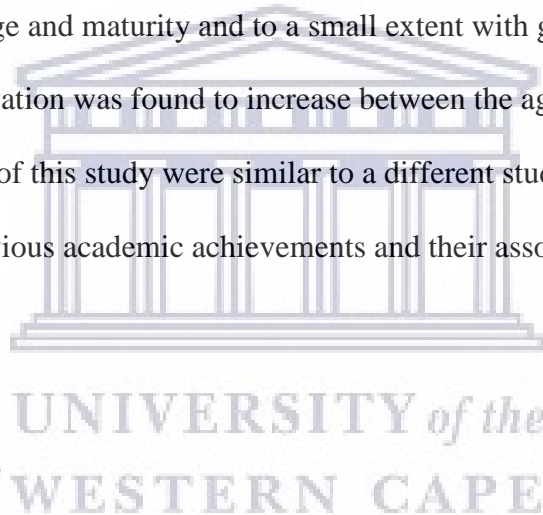
### ***2.3.3. Parental Education***

Schlechter and Milevsky (2010) found a positive correlation among parental education levels and students' choice to attend higher education institutions. Societal expectations and paternal education were found to be independently predictive as motives to pursue higher education. Particular reference was made by the authors to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which stipulates the importance of considering how different levels of a student's context influences their development as a whole (Schlechter & Milevsky, 2010). In addition, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which argues that the most essential information is transmitted through social interaction, was offered as further explanation of the effect that

parental levels of education have on their children (Bandura, 1989). Intergenerational influences on education, specifically that of higher levels of education of parents has also been found to generate expectations, which played a significant role in the decision students made to pursue higher education (Schlecher & Milevsky, 2010).

#### **2.3.4. Age**

Kusurkar et al. (2010), in a quantitative study investigating motivation and demographic factors amongst medical students, found age to be the primary and most influential predictor. The researchers concluded that “Strength of motivation appears to be a dynamic entity, changing primarily with age and maturity and to a small extent with gender and experience” (p. 303). Strength of motivation was found to increase between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. The findings of this study were similar to a different study that also compared medical students with previous academic achievements and their associated motivation (Wilkinson et al., 2004).



#### **2.3.5. Generational Status**

A paucity of research was found in the research literature on generational status. In a study conducted in the United States of America, Horn and Nunez (2000) discovered that half of the students they surveyed, who had parents that had never attended higher education institutions, were from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In contrast, White et al. (2017) found significant differences between academic and career self-efficacy in relation to financial stress, but not in relation to generational status. Academic self-efficacy was described as a student’s attitude towards their personal ability and academic engagement, while career decision self-efficacy was described as pertaining to a student’s conviction of their personal ability related to career path decisions (White et al., 2017). Financial stress,

linked to these forms of self-efficacy, was conceptualised as a proximal contextual factor and generational status as a distal contextual factor. Self-efficacy as a construct, therefore, was regarded as being closely related to the construct of motivation as it “can influence a student’s decision to stay enrolled in college, transfer to another institution, or withdraw” (Brown et al., 2008, as cited in White et al., 2017, p. 39). In other words, students in this study achieve academic and career goals despite the educational achievements of their significant others of preceding generations.

### **2.3.6. Year of Study**

Pan and Gauvain (2012) found that autonomous learning motivation declined as higher education students’ advanced in their years of study. Variables contributing to a changing pattern of motivation over years of study were considered and found to be positively predictive of autonomous learning motivation. Factors influencing autonomous learning motivation considered were: the student’s choice of their major and whether this was the student’s own choice or not, group differences, and perceived institutional support (Pan & Gauvain, 2012). Critique of the trait-oriented approach, which considers individual variances of academic motivation and treats motivation as a fixed trait, was highlighted as not considering the motivation of students across time.

Few studies have attempted to investigate the developmental trajectory of college students’ learning motivation. In reality, however, students’ learning experience may not be solely an individually-based predetermined process. Rather, it is a dynamic process between the student and the surrounding environment that has the potential to change over time. (Owens et al., 2010, as cited in Pan & Gauvain, 2012, p. 92)

Motivation in these terms is not considered to be a fixed construct, but rather continuous and changing over time. Research, therefore, that focuses on understanding the changing

trajectory of student's motivation is important in that it may highlight differences of motivational trajectory amongst individual students. Another critique of the trait-orientated approach is that it does not consider the impact of social interactions on student motivation (Pan & Gauvain, 2012). Social relatedness from a self-determination theory (SDT) lens is deemed to play a vital part in the process of incorporating autonomous motivation. Social interaction amongst higher education students can therefore be seen as intimately linked to student motivation and is, essentially, an imperative factor of student's experiences of autonomous motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

#### **2.4. South African Research on Student Motivation**

Comparatively, few South African studies have focused on what motivates students to attend university. A study regarding high attrition rates in South Africa, conducted by Bokana (2010) at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, shed light on what motivated students to attend university. Attending university amongst this group of students were found to be associated with improving familial SES. This resulted in high numbers of first-generation students from historically disadvantaged groups attempting to improve their and their family's SES. Unfortunately, the same factor motivating these students to attend higher education institutions played a role in them withdrawing from their studies (Bokana, 2010). The motivating factor of improving SES, therefore, plays a dual role in attending and dropping out of university and this finding provides valuable insight into the complex nature of the underlying demographic variables associated with student motivation. Demographic factors underpin student motivation and are a rich source of information of the complex and underlying dynamics associated with what motivates students to attend university.

Similarly, Letseka and Maile (2008), in their writing on higher education in South Africa, found that demographic correlates amongst South African students were associated

with both motivation and withdrawing prematurely from university studies. Demographic correlates presented as a double-edged sword in terms of student success and failure.

Demographic correlates considered in their research were low SES as well as intergenerational deprivation and both were found to play a dual role in motivation and dropout (Letseka & Maile, 2008). Therefore, exploring specific correlates associated with student motivation to attend university has the potential to provide valuable insights, specifically in terms of establishing support systems based on what motivates students to choose to attend university.

Sikhwari's (2014) study on student motivation at the University of Limpopo found significant correlations between student motivation, self-concept, and academic achievement. The demographic factor of gender was found to be significant and indicated that female students were more motivated than their male peers. The findings from this study were based on data received using a self-constructed questionnaire with one hundred and ninety-three second year students (83 males and 110 female). Comparing motivational scores of male and female students showed that female students had higher motivation scores than male students. This is in line with findings from international studies: Brophy (2013) found that male students tend to place less importance on academic engagement compared to female students. Awan et al. (2013) found higher motivation levels in female students, which resulted in female students being identified as higher achievers as a group. Eymur and Geban (2011) found that female students consistently out-performed male students in their academic studies and female students tended to achieve higher scores on motivational subscales. In Sikhwari's (2014) study, self-concept, defined as the way in which students view themselves and include ideas and attitudes about themselves, and motivation were recognised as interdependent factors. Self-concept, therefore, can be placed on either the positive or negative end of the



spectrum. In other words, students who viewed their academic self-concept in a negative light were at a disadvantage due to it impacting negatively on their levels of motivation.

A study conducted by Berg and Coetzee (2014) from the University of South Africa, using Self-Determination Theory, found significant correlations between student self-concept, motivation, and academic success. These results were found to be dependent on the year of academic enrolment. Motivation was conceptualised in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as amotivation (i.e. the lack of motivation). This is corroborated by Yilmaz (2014) in an international study finding that a positive self-concept was both a motivational and personal variable contributing to academic achievement.

Drawing on the work of Rodriguez (2009), Berg and Coetzee (2014) emphasised the importance of self-concept and motivation not being understood as separate parts, but rather as interdependent aspects. Academic self-concept was also seen to fulfil a regulatory function in relation to learning and, as a result, the motivational orientations of students (Berg & Coetzee, 2014). Pather et al. (2017), in a South African study, found that:

...students' preuniversity non-academic factors played a significant role in the way they engaged with institutional support initiatives. One such factor included students' motivation and resilience to succeed and the key role it played in enhancing their engagement with peers and lecturers at the university. (p. 161)

The authors of this study went on to highlight important demographic variables and the importance of understanding these variables and the role they play in shaping students motivation to attend and succeed at university (Pather et al., 2017). Emphasis was also placed on the predominance of studies in South Africa that focus on how students engage once they arrive at university (Strydom & Mentz, 2010).



Norodien-Fataar (2016), in a qualitative study on pre-university access pathways in the Western Cape, highlighted how motivation linked to a familial hope to escape poverty played a role in student motivation to attend university. Drawing on the work of Yosso (2005) on critical race theory, Norodien-Fataar (2016) expressed this as memories and histories of disadvantaged students' families, which in turn spurred students to embark on a university education. As such, discourses in families about university and the importance of acquiring qualifications were found to be an influential motivational dynamic (Norodien-Fataar, 2016).



## Chapter Three: Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

A correlational research design was employed for this study. Correlational research pertains to identifying associations amongst variables in either the same or different populations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). A notable benefit of correlational research is its ability to shed light on future directions of study and to establish the substance of variables that have been found to correlate in previous studies (Curtis et al., 2016). The current study employed secondary data collected between 2017 and 2018 as part of a broader research project that focused on the association between student motivational orientation and lecture attendance. A survey design was used for the original study and ethical clearance was obtained in 2017.

### 3.2. Research Setting

This study was conducted at UWC, a historically disadvantaged black institution. The university, therefore, has a longstanding history of serving students from historically disadvantaged groups as well as creatively opposing oppression, disadvantage, and discrimination. UWC, amongst academic institutions in South Africa, is considered to have been at the forefront of driving historical changes, as it played a unique and distinctive role toward creating a more just, dynamic, and fair society in ensuring “access, equity and quality of higher education” (University of the Western Cape, 2020).

### 3.3. Population and Sample

The broader study employed non-probability convenience sampling. In this method of sampling, the target population is identified through practical criteria, such as ease of accessibility, geographical accessibility, availability at a certain time, and willingness to

partake (Etikan et al., 2016). The sample for this study consisted of undergraduate students (N = 220) attending UWC and were recruited from the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences.

### 3.4. Instruments

The instruments that were employed to gather data for the original study included:

- 1) A Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix A), which was used to obtain information pertaining to parental/caretaker's employment status and education level, as well as the participant's generational status, year of study, gender, language, socio-economic status (SES), and age; and
- 2) The Student Motivations for Attending University Questionnaire–Revised (SMAU) (Appendix B).

The SMAU scale was originally designed by Côte and Levine (1997) and later reworked and updated by Phinney et al. (2006). The SMAU is a thirty-three item scale and consists of seven subscales that measure seven broad motivations for attending university. The subscales are: Career/personal, humanitarian, default, expectation, prove worth, encouragement, and help family.

In the SMAU scale, the career/personal subscale involves viewing university attendance as a means of gaining money, status, a career, success, prestige and knowledge. Examples of career/personal items were: “opportunity to study and learn”, “to develop myself personally”, and “to understand the complexities of the world”. The humanitarian subscale involves assisting others and making meaningful changes. Examples of the humanitarian items were: “To help people that are less fortunate”, “to contribute to the welfare of others” and “improvement of the human condition”. The default subscale relates to exploring alternatives, a lack of academic stimulation, limited options, and lack of choices. Examples of

the default subscale were: “Better than the alternatives”, “ask myself why I’m at university”, and “no choice but to come to university”. The expectation subscale involves disappointment and pressure amongst others. Examples of the expectation subscale were: “I am expected to get a degree”, “owe it to parents to do well”, and “would let parents down”. The prove worth subscale involves proving one’s self-worth. Examples of the prove worth subscale were: “To prove wrong those who thought I was not university material” and “to prove to others I can succeed”. The encouragement subscale involves encouragement and belief. Examples of the encouragement subscale were: “was encouraged by mentor” and “someone I admire encouraged me”. The help family subscale involves supporting family members. Examples of the help family subscale were: “to help family financially” and “allow me to help parents financially”.

The authors of the SMAU have reported sound internal consistency with reliabilities which range between 0.70 to 0.87 (Norvilitis & Reid, 2012). The SMAU has also been employed in diverse contexts, such as in Canada by Côte and Levine (1997) and in Finland by Korhonen and Rautopuro (2012) (as cited in Korhonen et al, 2019).

### **3.5. Procedures**

During the academic year of 2017, undergraduate students at UWC were invited to participate in the original broader study. After one of their regular classes, students were provided with information regarding the study (Appendix D) and invited to participate. Those that were interested were asked to remain in the lecture theatre to complete the questionnaires.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (IBM SPSS 25). Descriptive statistics, such as standard deviations, means, and percentages, were utilised to summarise and categorize the responses to the SMAU. ANOVA was used to compare group differences and, where these differences were significant, Scheffe's post-hoc analysis was used to determine differences between subgroups. T-tests were used for those demographic variables with only two levels (i.e. gender and first generation status).

### **3.7. Reliability and Validity**

Cronbach's alpha was utilised to examine internal consistency and to establish subscale replicability. The original study used a valid and reliable measure, which had sound internal consistency and reliability. The methodology of the study was clearly articulated, which provides for replicability.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical guidelines as set out by UWC were strictly observed while conducting this research. Ethical consent was obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). The study used secondary data, which resulted in it being non-reactive. All participants were provided with informed consent forms (Appendix C), which were duly completed. In addition, participant information was captured anonymously and securely for the original study and all data acquired during this study has been kept on password secured laptops and external hard drives. Access was only granted to researchers directly associated with the study.

The raw data from the original study was captured in 2017 and will be retained for a period of five years. After this time, the data will be permanently deleted and, therefore,

destroyed. During the dissemination of findings of this study, no identifying information of participants will be revealed and, as such, preserving the anonymity of participants in this study also safeguards the confidentiality of their personal information. The raw data for this study will be retained for a period of five years, after which it will also be permanently deleted.



## Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Data Analysis

The aims of this research study were twofold, namely:

- 1) to identify undergraduate students' motivations for attending university; and
- 2) to determine which demographic factors are associated with student motivation.

The descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the various subscales of the SMAU as well as the means, standard deviations, and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) are provided in Table 1 below. An acceptable Cronbach's alpha threshold for establishing reliability has been determined as 0.70. (Devellis, 2016; Helms et al., 2006; Nunnally, 1978).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Reliability*

Sub-scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Reliability
Career/Personal	38.94	4.67	.66
Humanitarian	14.37	2.97	.71
Default	15.15	3.50	.49
Expectation	16.04	4.19	.76
Prove Worth	7.87	3.26	.82
Encouragement	10.14	2.58	.63
Help Family	8.23	1.88	.74

Descriptive statistics, as seen in Table 1, indicate that the following subscales have acceptable internal consistency, as calculated using Cronbach's alpha. They are in order from

the most significant: “Prove worth” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.82$ ), “Expectation” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.76$ ); “Help family” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.74$ ) and “Humanitarian” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.71$ ). The “Career/Personal” and “Encouragement” subscales at (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.66$ ) and (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.63$ ) respectively, although below the threshold of (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.70$ ), are not deemed to be significantly so. The “Career/Personal” and “Encouragement” subscales are, therefore, considered to be within the acceptable range.

**Table 2**

*Description of Sample*

Demographic/Background	N	%
<b>Year Level</b>		
First Year	77	34.5
Second Year	123	55.2
Third Year	20	9.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	51	22.9
Female	161	72.2
<b>Who Provides for You at Home</b>		
Single Parent	95	42.6
Both Parents	94	42.2
Other	31	13.9
<b>Education Level of Parents/Guardian</b>		
School	110	49.3
University	83	37.2
Other	25	11.2



First One in Family at University

Yes	82	36.8
No	138	61.9

Table 2 indicates that the majority of participants (55.2%) were in their second year of undergraduate studies, followed by those in their first year (34.5%). In terms of gender, the majority of participants were female (72.2%), with a much smaller proportion being men. The participants were relatively equally split in terms of who provided at home, with most participants responding that they were provided for by a single parent (42.6%), followed by those provided for by both parents. The majority of participants (49.3%) had parents who had obtained a high school education, followed by those whose parents had a university education. In relation to being the first to attend university, the majority of participants (61.9%) indicated that they were not first generation students.

**Table 3**

*Percentage of agreement with items on the SMAU*

Item	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Career/Personal			
Opportunity to study and learn	2.2	4.9	92.8
To get into a satisfying career	1.8	10.3	87.9
To understand the complexities of life	13.5	41.3	45.3
To achieve personal success	2.7	9	88.3
To develop myself personally	3.6	16.6	78.9
To obtain the finer things in life	22	34.1	43.9
To help me earn more money	10.3	21.1	67.3

To improve my intellectual capacity	4.5	12.6	81.6
To achieve a position of higher status	23.3	28.3	48
To understand complexities of the world	17	38.6	43.5
Mean %			67.75
<b>Humanitarian</b>			
To help people that are less fortunate	16.6	34.5	48.4
To contribute to the welfare of others	15.7	30	54.3
Improvement of human condition	10.8	25.1	64.1
To make meaningful changes	13	35.9	50.7
Mean %			54.38
<b>Default</b>			
Better than the alternatives	21.1	30	48
I don't get anything out of my courses	88.8	6.3	4.5
There were pressures from friends	78	14.3	6.7
Few other options	39	32.7	27.8
Ask myself why I'm in university	41.3	24.3	32.7
No choice but to come to university	60.1	20.2	18.8
Mean %			23.08
<b>Expectation</b>			
I am expected to get a degree	31.8	29.1	37.7
Parents would be disappointed	40.8	24.2	34.1
Owe it to parents to do well	9.9	18.4	71.3
Pressures from parents/family	49.8	23.8	23.8
Would let parents down	20.2	26.9	52
Mean %			43.78

<b>Prove Worth</b>			
To prove wrong those who thought I was not university material	63.2	14.3	21.5
To prove wrong others who expected me to fail	54.3	22.9	22.9
To prove to others I can succeed	40.4	30.5	27.8
<b>Mean %</b>			<b>24.07</b>
<b>Encouragement</b>			
Was encouraged by mentor	33.6	29.1	37.2
Someone believed I could succeed	10.8	23.3	64.6
Someone I admire encouraged me	27.8	25.1	45.7
<b>Mean %</b>			<b>49.17</b>
<b>Help family</b>			
To help family financially	9.4	11.7	78
Allow me to help parents financially	8.1	18.4	72.6
<b>Mean %</b>			<b>75.3</b>

Table 3 indicates that the primary motivation for attending university was to “help family” (75.3%). This was followed by subscales “Career/Personal” (67.75%), “Humanitarian” (54.38%), “Encouragement” (49.17%), and “Expectation” (43.78%). Few participants endorsed the “Prove worth” subscale and the least number of participants endorsed the “Default” subscale.

**Table 4***Subgroup Differences in Terms of Subscales*

Demographic	Career		Humanitarian		Default		Expectations		Prove Worth		Encouragement		Help Family	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Year of Study	F = 0.38, p > .05		F = 0.15, p > .05		F=1.85, p > .05		F=0.24, p >.05		F=6.31, p < .05		F=0.94, p > .05		F=1.89, p > .05	
1 <sup>st</sup>	39.32	4.50	14.5	3.06	15.09	3.22	16.16	4.28	8.64*	3.73	9.92	2.70	8.48	1.77
2 <sup>nd</sup>	37.73	4.78	14.37	3.00	14.94	3.52	15.90	4.08	7.17*	2.83	10.19	2.62	8.17	1.95
3 <sup>rd</sup>	38.80	5.04	14.2	2.55	16.55	4.20	16.59	4.82	8.95	2.98	10.80	1.79	7.58	1.77
Who Provides	F=0.79, p> .05		F=2.46, p > .05		F=1.14, p > .05		F=1.91, p > .05		F=0.50, p > .05		F=1.01, p > .05		F=4.05, p < .05	
Single parent	38.49	4.58	14.4	2.93	15.37	3.42	16.10	4.15	7.76	3.09	10.09	2.34	8.62*	1.74
Both parent	39.31	4.72	14.06	2.94	15.22	3.47	16.41	3.93	8.13	3.29	10.39	2.70	7.85*	1.94
Other	39.30	4.83	15.42	3.01	14.29	3.81	14.69	4.98	7.53	3.75	9.63	2.92	8.29	1.85
Education other	F=2.48, p> .05		F=1.13, p> .05		F=1.05, p> .05		F=2.61, p> .05		F=0.55, p> .05		F=0.53, p> .05		F=11.68, p < .05	
School	38.49	4.58	14.40	2.93	15.37	3.42	16.10	4.15	7.76	3.09	10.09	2.34	8.69*	1.74
University	39.31	4.72	14.06	2.94	15.22	3.47	16.42	3.93	8.13	3.29	10.39	2.70	7.49*	1.94
Other	39.30	4.83	15.42	3.01	14.29	3.81	14.69	4.98	7.53	3.75	9.63	2.92	8.76	1.85

Gender	t=-0.41, p> .05		t=-1.64, p> .05		t=1.04, p> .05		t=-0.29, p> .05		t= 0.70, p> .05		t=-0.31, p> .05		t=0.93, p> .05	
Male	38.71	5.11	13.82	2.77	15.59	3.01	15.94	4.01	8.16	3.27	10.00	2.60	8.45	2.02
Female	39.02	4.57	14.60	3.01	15.01	3.60	16.13	4.28	7.79	3.31	10.13	2.59	8.17	1.83
First at University	t=-0.37, p> .05		t=1.09, p> .05		t=-1.75, p> .05		t=-1.91, p> .05		t=0.21, p> .05		t=-0.79, p> .05		t=3.43, p< .05	
Yes	38.81	4.76	14.68	2.89	14.62	3.33	15.32	4.29	7.95	3.61	9.98	2.47	8.80 <sup>++</sup>	1.52
No	39.05	4.63	14.23	3.01	15.48	3.58	16.46	4.10	7.85	3.07	10.26	2.65	7.92 <sup>++</sup>	1.98

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\*pairs of means significantly different p < 0.05

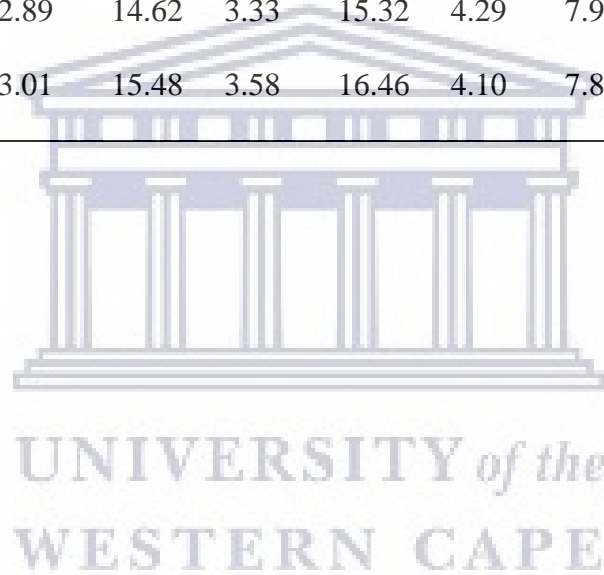


Table 4 indicates that, in terms of agreement with the SMAU questionnaire, “help family” was found to be the primary motivation for attending university amongst the sample. “Help family”, through ANOVA analysis of the demographic factors and SMAU subscales, emerged as the primary motivational factor amongst the sample. The “help family” subscale was also found to be associated with various demographic factors as follows: “Who Provides”; “Education other” and “First at university”. This gives insight into the complexity of motivational orientations for attending university amongst South African students.

In terms of “who provides”, the results indicate a significant difference with regard to “helping family” ( $F=4.05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as a motivation for attending university. Students from single parent families obtained a score of ( $M=8.62$ ) on the “help family” subscale, while students with both parents obtained a score of ( $M=7.85$ ). Scheffe’s post-hoc indicated that students with single parents who provide for them were more motivated to “help family” compared to students with both parents who provided for them. An explanation for students with single parents being more motivated to “help family” may be that these students are more aware of the sacrifices that single parents have made to support them. Studies similar to this study were found in the research literature.

A study by won Kim et al. (2017) looked at socio-economic status amongst parents in China and the effect of this on the motivation and educational attainment of their children. It was found that children from “poorer” parents showed higher levels of motivation than those who had “wealthier” parents. This was attributed to these students attempting to attain upward mobility by using academic attainment as a means to achieve this. Another study by King and Ganotice (2015) of Filipino university students looked at the effect of family obligation on student motivation, engagement, and wellbeing. It was found that higher academic outcomes were attributed to students who had a greater sense of familial obligation, which was believed to improve their autonomous motivation. The collectivist cultural orientation of these

students was also discussed in terms of what motivated them while highlighting that collectivist cultures regard family as central to the lives of individuals (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Fuligni & Zhang, 2004; Uba, 1994, as cited in King & Ganotice, 2015). Students from collective cultures have been found to view academic achievement as a means of giving back to their parents (Bernardo et al., 2008). Other studies have found students from collectivist cultures being more accepting of parental influence with regards to their academic strivings (Bernardo, 2010).

In terms of the education of students' parents/guardians, the results indicate a significant difference with regard to "help family" ( $F=11.68$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as a motivation for attending university. Students whose parents had a school level education obtained a score of ( $M=8.69$ ) on the "help family" subscale, while students whose parents had a university education obtained a score of ( $M=7.49$ ). Scheffe's post-hoc indicated that students whose parents only had secondary education were more motivated to "help family" compared to students whose parents had a university education. An explanation of this result pertains to SES. Families with parents who have attained only a secondary school education are most likely to come from lower SES than those with parents who attained tertiary education. As such, students from these families may see tertiary academic attainment as a means for improving the family's collective SES.

Research has revealed differing views with regards to the influence of parental educational attainment on student motivation. Studies conducted by Choi and colleagues, Kniveton, and Phinney and colleagues (as cited in Mogan, 2011), have found parents setting an example with their educational attainment is a strong influencing factor on their children. Specifically, higher parental educational attainment in studies such as these are understood to relate to greater educational aims amongst their children. In contrast, parental expectation in non-educated families has been found to play a significant role, regardless of academic

achievements within the family (Berzin, 2010). Morgan (2011) found family expectation to be the most pronounced motivating factor amongst a diverse British sample and concluded that the family as a whole is the most influential source of motivation leading children towards higher educational aspirations. It is important to note, however, that these studies were conducted in developed nations.

The results indicate a significant difference for first generation students in terms of “helping family” ( $t=3.43$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as a significant motivator for attending university, compared to students who were not the first in their families to attend university. First generation students obtained a score of ( $M=8.80$ ) on the “help family” subscale, while students with family that had attended university obtained a score of ( $M=7.92$ ) on the “help family” subscale. An explanation for this result may be that first generation students are likely to come from families of low SES (Gofen, 2009). These students are, therefore, motivated to improve their and their family’s SES. Students hoping to help their families have also been shown through research to be a part of a collective family effort in which education is prioritised as a path to success. (Gofen, 2009).

There was no difference between male and female students for any of the motivations for attending university.

In terms of year of study, results indicated a significant difference in relation to “prove worth” ( $F=6.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as motivation for attending university. First year students obtained a score of ( $M=8.64$ ) on the “prove worth” subscale, while second year students obtained a score of ( $M=7.17$ ). Scheffe’s post-hoc indicated that first year students were significantly more motivated by proving their worth compared to second year students. An explanation for first year students scoring higher on the “prove worth” SMAU subscale may be that first year students are motivated by a desire to establish themselves on merit and so



solidify their transition from school to university. Similar findings were found in a study conducted by Nadelson et al. (2013), who explored the expectations of first-year students.

#### **4.2. Discussion**

Being motivated to help their families emerged as the most significant motivational factor to attend university amongst the sample of students in this study. This motivational orientation was also associated with various demographic correlates. Considering this result, it is important to take into account the influence of cultural factors. In other words, students' motivation to attend university are also influenced by cultural values, which are ubiquitous and pervasive. These cultural orientations may either be individualistic or collectivist.

Various researchers have suggested that individuals with collectivistic cultural orientations are motivated to achieve in order to meet the demands and the expectations of others, particularly family members. Those with individualistic cultural orientations, on the other hand, are found to be motivated more by personal reasons (Bernardo, 2010; Bernardo et al., 2008; King et al., 2012).

The findings of this study suggest that South African students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds and who are more likely to come from collectivist cultural backgrounds may have their motivational orientations influenced by their cultural orientations. There is also evidence in the results of this study to suggest that some students, who are motivated by personal reasons, such as a need to prove their worth as represented in the SMAU, tend to attend university to give expression to this personal motivation. The results of this study may be further explained by South Africa being made up of both collectivist and individualistic cultures, as well as the influence of acculturation within the country.

Even though a small sample of South African students were represented in this study, the results have provided tentative insights into the sources of motivational influence, as well as its link to demographic correlates of students attending a historically disadvantaged university.

#### **4.3. Summary and Conclusion of Findings**

In conclusion, demographic correlates in this study were most significantly associated with the “help family” followed by the “prove worth” subscale. The most significant factors motivating students to pursue a university education were, therefore, to assist their families and to establish themselves on merit.

#### **4.4. Limitations and Shortcomings of this Study**

A limitation of this study was the small sample size employed as well as the sample being skewed towards female students and recruited from only one university.

#### **4.5. Recommendations for Future Research**

It is recommended that future studies investigating the role of demographic correlates to the motivation to attend university use bigger sample sizes. It is also recommended that the scope of research into the influence of different cultural orientations on motivation be expanded. This expansion may consist of diversifying the sample across different university campuses in South Africa. It is also suggested that the construct of motivation be reviewed and clarified, as it appears that it is described in different ways within the research literature, which might be a cause of confusion.



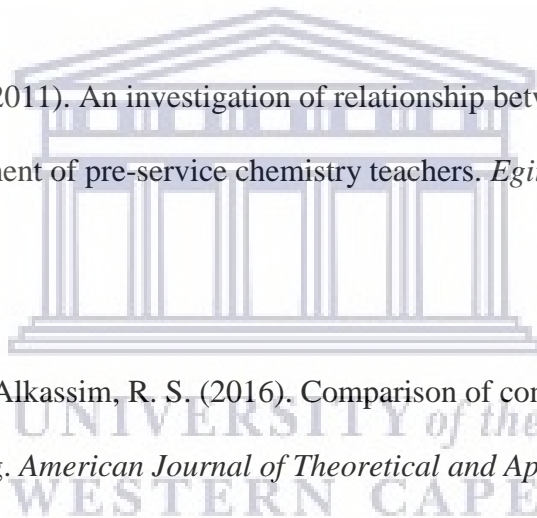
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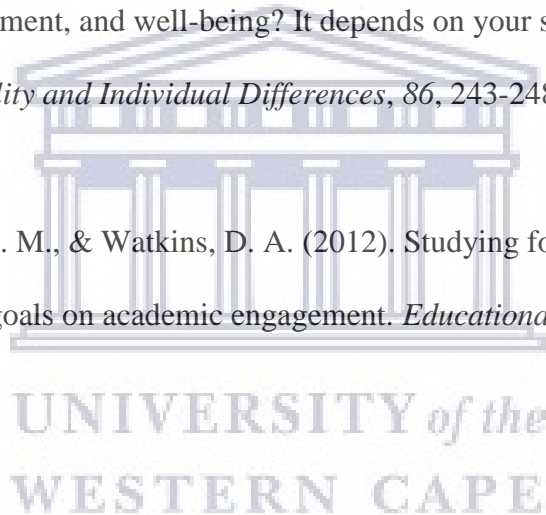
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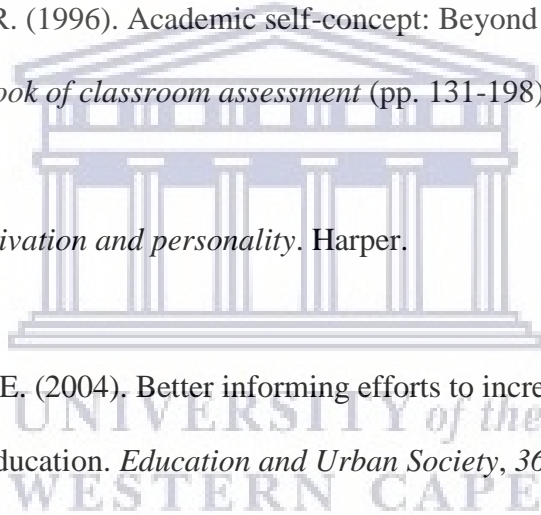
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions:

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your current year level (1st, 2nd or 3rd year): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you male or female? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How would you describe yourself? Black/Africa Coloured Indian White Other
5. What is your home language? Isi-Xhosa Isi-Zulu English Afrikaans Other (specify)
6. Are you the first person in your family to go to university? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What type of work does the head of your household do? a. Employed b. Unemployed

8. Who mainly takes care of you at home?

Both my parents

Mother only Father only

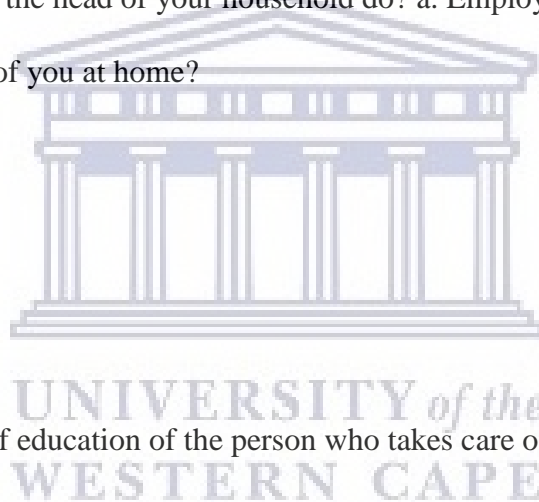
Grandparent(s)

Other (specify)

What is the highest level of education of the person who takes care of you at home?

Please tick the appropriate box

- Less than high school
- High school
- Some university (no degree or diploma)
- Undergraduate university degree (e.g., BA, BSc, etc.)
- Professional degree (e.g., law, medicine, etc.)
- Post-graduate degree (e.g., Master's, PhD)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B: Student Motivations for Attending University Questionnaire–Revised

(SMAU)

**Instructions:** *Please rate the following statements in terms of how important you think they are in explaining your reasons for attending university. Do so by placing a circle around the number provided beside each statement according to how much you agree or disagree with it.*

<b>6 = Strongly Agree</b>
<b>5 = Agree</b>
<b>4 = Slightly Agree</b>
<b>3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>
<b>2 = Slightly Disagree</b>
<b>1 = Disagree</b>
<b>0 = Strongly Disagree</b>

1. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	I don't really get anything out of university, but it beats the alternatives.
2. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	My education should enable me to help people who are less fortunate.
3. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	My education should help me to understand the complexities of life.
4. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	I intend to make sure that my education will be useful in contributing to the welfare of others.
5. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	University is a practical means for me to achieve personal success.
6. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	University is satisfying because it gives me the opportunity to study and learn.
7. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	My parent(s) would be very disappointed in me if I didn't get a university degree.
8. <b>0 1 2 3 4 5 6</b>	I don't get anything out of my courses.

9. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	University will help me to obtain the "finer things in life."
10. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	There were considerable pressures on me from my friends to get a university degree.
11. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	I intend to use my education to contribute to the improvement of the human condition.
12. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	Through my education, I believe I can make meaningful changes to the "system".
13. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	University is a way to learn specific skills that can help me to earn more money.
14. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	I am in university basically because there are few other options.
15. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	University is a setting that allows me to improve my intellectual capacity.
16. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	University is a way by which I can achieve a position of higher status in society.
17. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	I often ask myself why I'm in university.
18. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	University should enable me to understand the complexities of the modern world.
19. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	I basically had no choice but to come to university.
20. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	There were considerable pressures on me from my family to get a university degree.



## Appendix C: Informed Consent Form



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*Tel : +27 21-959 2842/3095 Fax : 27 21-959 3050*

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

**Title of Research Project:** The motivational orientation of undergraduate students' and its relationship to lecture attendance/non-attendance

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

**Participant's name**.....

**Participant's signature**.....

**Date**.....

## Appendix D: Information Sheet



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*Revised: September 2014*

**Project Title:** The motivational orientation of undergraduate students' and its relationship to lecture attendance/non-attendance.

#### **What is this study about?**

This research project is being conducted by Dr. Anita Padmanabhanunni at the University of the Western Cape. The research project focuses on investigating the reasons students decide to attend university. Currently, limited information exists in South Africa on what motivates students to attend university. By participating in this project you will be adding to the body of knowledge in this area.

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

If you agree to participate in this project, you will be requested to complete three questionnaires: a demographic questionnaire, Student Motivations for Attending University questionnaire and a questionnaire about your attendance at lectures.

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

<http://etd.uwc.ac.za/>

All information that you share in the questionnaire and interview will be kept confidential. The survey is anonymous and will not contain any information that may personally identify you. To ensure your confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used in all reports. If a report or article about this research project is written, your identity will be protected.

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

All human interactions and talking about self or others carry some amount of risk. Sharing your reasons for attending university may not necessarily be uncomfortable. Nevertheless, minimise I will act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

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

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about students' motivations for attending university. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of students' motivations.

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

Participation in the research is not a course requirement. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

**What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by *Anita Padmanabhanunni* at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Anita Padmanabhanunni at the Department of Psychology (UWC), 0219592842, [apadmana@uwc.ac.za](mailto:apadmana@uwc.ac.za)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee. (REFERENCE NUMBER: *to be inserted on receipt thereof from SR*)



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE