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EXPLORING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION ON UP-WARD SOCIOECONOMIC MOBILITY: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

LEIGH FRANTZ

3421152

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Supervisor: Dr Coretta Jonah

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is still under construction, with the aftermath of apartheid still lingering in the South African education system and in societal constructs amongst families of colour with low socioeconomic status backgrounds. For more than two decades since South Africa has been declared a democratically free society, education has been at the forefront as a means to socioeconomic liberation with movements such as #FEESMUSTFALL bringing to light the inequality that still lingers around access to higher education. Using human capital theory and socioeconomic mobility as a framework, the study aims to explore, describe and determine the perceived impact of university education on students from a low socioeconomic status using the case of the University of the Western Cape. A mixed method approach was used for this study, applying both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the specific design being a sequential explanatory design. From the 4329, only 300 students were needed to make the survey representative of the UWC final-year student population. The quantitative element of this study used an online and face-to-face paper-based survey to collect demographic and socioeconomic data from students. This was followed by qualitative data collection. The qualitative research was done through in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions as a means of triangulation. The data share the views of students at tertiary education institutions on the influence of university qualifications on socioeconomic status. It determines the perceptions of students at tertiary education institutions on how tertiary education may impact their individual socioeconomic mobility and that of their families. Furthermore, it brings an understanding from the point of view of students which roles tertiary institutions are expected to play in enhancing their socioeconomic mobility. The study reveals the multifaceted nature of socioeconomic status and the complexities of attaining the goal of socioeconomic mobility.

The results of the study reveal that education is a critical component in contributing to socioeconomic status. Yet great complexity exists in terms of how it truly makes an impact on an individual's ability to experience up-ward socioeconomic mobility. The ultimate conclusion of this study was that a bachelor's degree is a good starting point for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds to launch their journey for socioeconomic mobility but there are many components, both social and economic, that

impact on the nature of the journey for up-ward socioeconomic mobility, both intergenerational and intragenerational. The study demonstrates that individuals are able to experience changes in socioeconomic status but that it does not guarantee socioeconomic mobility movement because of the multifaceted nature of socioeconomic status and mobility.

Key words:

higher education crisis, social mobility, higher education, universities in South Africa

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled *Exploring student perceptions on the influence of a university education on up-ward socioeconomic mobility: A case study of students at the University of the Western Cape* is my own work, that all sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference list, and that it was not submitted for any other degree at any institution.

Name: Leigh Frantz   Date: 18 October 2021

Signed:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Proverbs 3:5-6, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. I would like to honour and thank my Lord and personal saviour Jesus Christ for the privilege of being able towalk this journey of obedience with and in Him. Without God I am nothing, but through his grace, mercy and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I have been able to manifest this thesis.

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To the Student Development Centre, thank you for the amazing job you do. You truly are extremely professional in your services and your heart for student growth and development is beyond words. Thank you for bringing hope into situations that may seem hopeless, I salute you.
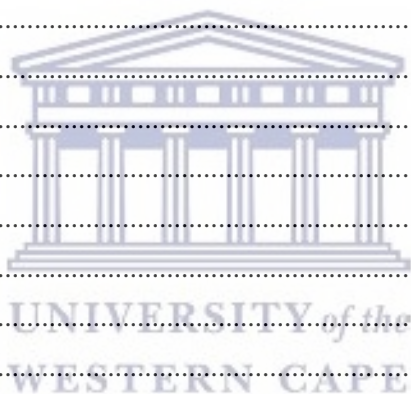
Finally, to my fiancée, Carlie Kelly Abrahams, thank you for doing life with me and dealing with the ups and the downs that it has to offer. May we continue to grow in God and achieve all that He has set out for us. I love you.

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Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the chapter

In this chapter, the researcher introduces the context and basis of the thesis, which explores the views of student perceptions on the influence of a university education on up-ward socioeconomic mobility: a case study of students at the University of the Western Cape. In addition, the researcher formulates a problem statement about the experiences of how students view the perceived impact of university education on socioeconomic status of graduates and their families. The concepts are defined, and the key aspects of the study are introduced. The aim, research question, objectives, significance of the study, research methodology, scope and limitations are also described in this chapter, which then concludes with an outline of the chapters for the rest of the thesis.

1.2. Context

Education is one way of escaping the poverty trap and presents a tool that can be utilised to elevate people from low socioeconomic status (SES) into higher categories of socioeconomic status. According to Okioga (2013), SES is the combined economic and sociological measure of an individual and their family's work experience, economic position and social position relative to others. Socioeconomic status can be divided into three categories, for example, high, middle or low socioeconomic status. The socioeconomic status and background of an individual and the impact it has on their academic performance has been a major focus area in academic literature. Tomul & Polat (2013) in their study conducted at the University Of Suleyman Demirel Turkey, performed a correlation analysis between the relationship of students' socioeconomic structure of their families and student selection examination weighted quantitative composition (SSEWQC) and discovered that a positive relationship exists among these factors. This indicates that the socioeconomic status has an effect on academic outcomes of individuals. This means that in order to create and perpetuate a positive society, increasing and improving the socioeconomic condition of individuals, will assist in improved academic outcomes, which in turn can generate a positive cycle between academia and better socioeconomic structures.

Furthermore, Ogunshola & Adewale (2012) report that the SES of parents as a whole had no significant impact on the academic performance of students. Although research has found that the

educational qualification of parents and the health status of students specifically were significant factors that affect students' academic performance (Ogunshola & Adewale, 2012). Contrary to the above, Walpole (2003) found that students from low SES backgrounds who attend four-year courses at colleges and universities work more, study less, are less involved, and report lower GPAs than their high SES peers. Thus it is evident that literature presents contrasting views on the impact of socioeconomic background on academic performance.

Although this discrepancy exists, students and graduates are impacted significantly by higher education as it is viewed as an agent of social change in society. A student experiences an individualistic impact when they proceed through and complete the higher education journey. According to Hill, Hoffman & Rex (2005), higher education provides individuals with great value that results in them obtaining their qualification. There are both financial and non- financial benefits to individuals as a result of a higher education qualification, which are both contributors to socioeconomic mobility. The financial benefits look at an individual's earnings and how it is strongly related to educational attainment which both Hill, Hoffman & Rex (2005) and Baum & Payea (2004) agree has positive income results. Descy & Tessaring (2004) state that the non-financial benefits of a higher education for an individual can include improved health, quality of life, social and cultural participation, personal wellbeing, activity, life expectancy and chances of marriage, to name a few. These can all be seen as benefits that are dependent on an individual's preference. Thus the impact of education on the individual is a key motivator that could influence socioeconomic status.

It is also perceived that most successful nations have a well-functioning higher education system that is able to impact society in different ways. In South Africa, various policies over the past decade have guided the higher education sector and how it should be impacting society. The Education White Paper 3 titled "A programme for the transformation of Higher Education in South Africa" (1997) highlighted that higher education must contribute to the process of societal transformation and "address the development needs of society and provide the labour market" (Department of Education, 1997, p. 3). One of the key objectives of the more recent National Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2011) is to ensure that by 2030,

South Africa's education system produces highly skilled graduates that will contribute to the needs of its economy and society. It has been recognised via the NDP that higher education is not only the knowledge driver to build the economy but that higher education is also important to build good citizenship and improve the quality of life of individuals. Thus the impact of higher education on society is a key objective of government.

1.3. Problem statement

South Africa is still under construction, with the aftermath of apartheid still lingering in the South African education system. During the apartheid era in South Africa, post-World War II till 1994, the education system was racially divided into two sections. The first section was for whites only and the other was for non-whites, who represented the majority of South Africans (McKeever, 2017). The central piece of legislation that changed the education system for majority of South Africans was the Bantu Education Act of 1953. The intention behind the Act was to organise a federal education system controlled by the state with community participation to ensure that all students receive an education. With construction of the Act under an apartheid-run government, the foundations of the Act were designed to cripple the progress of non-white citizens.

This Act was later renamed the Black Education Act of 1953 which preceded the Coloured Education Act and the Indian Education Act in the 1960s. The initial positive of these Acts was to increase schooling attendance but the ultimate outcome was inequality of educational attainment by race (McKeever, 2017). In 1959 the Extension of University Education Act, Act No 45 of 1959 was passed (Thaver & Thaver, 2010). A clear and distinct difference existed in the mandatory education of white and non-white citizens, with non-white standards and requirements being lower. Beyond the creation of racially separated schools there were also significant inequalities in regulations, curriculum and funding. White schools emphasised academic subjects more, while schools for Africans had much lower academic expectations, and focused more on "practical" subjects that prepared their pupils for blue-collar (manual labour in industry) work futures.

More than two decades after the end of apartheid, literature suggests that there has been little transformation in the higher education sector, though gains have been made (Higgs, 2016; Thaver & Thaver, 2010). This, despite the fact that many citizens at the end of apartheid, expected universities to promote the goal of social mobility to make it possible for anyone with ability and motivation to succeed. Previously disadvantaged institutions generally continue to perform their role of providing education for students from poor and/or low socioeconomic status while the top tiered more research-oriented institutions continue to provide education for members of the top socioeconomic groups. The reasons for this are numerous since the cost of investing in education and access to information around university education means that the poor are still unable to access university education equally.

While the inequalities in access to education persist, government policies have consistently attempted to use education generally and tertiary education specifically to improve the socioeconomic status of

the poor and disadvantaged groups (Brynard, 2011). Policy makers and researchers have placed an expectation on higher education to transform the lives of individuals and their families as may be observed from the fact that all national development plans and policies post-apartheid have placed strong hopes on tertiary intuitions as engines of transformation. Such policies have meant the investment of public funds in universities across the nation, however persistent high levels of poverty and inequality (May, 2010) and the evident lack of transformations in the structure of many of these universities (Thaver & Thaver, 2010) confirm little progress has been made.

In addition, despite being direct beneficiaries of policies aimed at using education for social upliftment very little mention has been made of the views of the students of university education and what the actual expected impact of a university education has been on their socioeconomic mobility. This study will allow us to gain an understanding of how students view the perceived impact of university education on socioeconomic status of graduates and their families.

1.4. Aims of the study

The aim of the study is to explore, describe and determine the perceived impact of a university education on students from a low socioeconomic status using the case of the University of the Western Cape.

1.5. Objectives

• To describe the socioeconomic background of students from the University of Western Cape;

• To determine the views of students at a tertiary education institution on the influence of university qualifications on socioeconomic status;

• To determine the perceptions of students at a tertiary education institution on how tertiary education may impact their individual socioeconomic mobility and the socioeconomic mobility of their families;

• To understand from the students' perspective the role a tertiary institution is expected to play in enhancing their socioeconomic mobility; and

• To understand the student experience and how it affects their potential socioeconomic mobility

1.6. Research questions

• To describe the socioeconomic background of students from the University of Western Cape;

• To determine the views of students at tertiary education institutions on the influence of university qualifications on socioeconomic status;

• To determine the perceptions of students at tertiary education institutions on how tertiary education may impact their individual socioeconomic mobility and the socioeconomic mobility of their families;

• To understand from the students' perspective the roles tertiary institutions are expected to play in enhancing their socioeconomic mobility; and

• To understand the student experience and how it affects their potential socioeconomic mobility

1.7. Significance of the study

The impact of university education as a tool to elevate students into higher socioeconomic status is an important phenomenon to consider as it has been identified as a means to improve the knowledge economy of a country, thus influencing economic growth and development, and more specifically, improving standard of living. The study will provide an in-depth understanding of the expectations of students from low socioeconomic households in obtaining university degrees, and the potential impact tertiary education has on their lives and that of their family. This information will allow administrators in the higher education sector to make informed decisions about academic programmes offered at higher education institutions. This information could also assist the policymakers in higher education in their decision-making process regarding free education.

1.8. Research methodology

A mixed method approach is used for this study, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The specific design is a sequential explanatory design. Mixed methods research is formally defined here as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). The sequential explanatory design collected quantitative and qualitative data in two phases. The two distinct phases are: quantitative followed by qualitative. In this design, quantitative (numeric) data is collected and analysed using a survey. Based on initial findings, qualitative instruments were modified when required. The qualitative data were then collected and analysed second in the sequence and helped to explain, or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase (Ivankova, Cresswell, & Stick, 2006). The quantitative element of this study used an online and face-to-face paper-based survey to collect demographic and socioeconomic data from students. This was followed by qualitative data collection which will further explain and

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interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. The qualitative research was done through in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions.

1.9. Scope and limitations

This study will explore, describe and determine the perceived impact of a university education on students from a low socioeconomic status using the case of the University of the Western Cape. This will allow us to gain an understanding of how students view the perceived impact of university education on socioeconomic status of graduates and their families. The research is limited to final-year undergraduate students, specifically at the University of the Western Cape. It primarily looks at the role of perceived impact of education on low socioeconomic status students and not at other levels. An online survey was initially used, but due to the nature of the questions in the survey, some part-time students struggled to answer the questions effectively.

1.10. Organisation of chapter

Chapter One encompasses the foundation upon which this study was based. The researcher explains the aim, objectives, as well as the significance of the study and outlines the problem that was identified. The manner in which the study proposes to minimise this obstacle is also presented.

Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework on which the study is based. The researcher differentiate between two theories and explains its significance with regard to the study. This chapter serves as the foundation for the literature review chapter to follow and the nature of theresearch that was conducted. The research adds value to theoretical context and locates the study in the greater body of research which assists in the contribution to knowledge in research.

Chapter Three comprises a literature review of all available literature that supports and validates the need for this study. The literature accessed provides evidence of the need for a study of this nature, as well as the importance of conducting this study. The literature review, therefore, adds value to this research project and highlights its difference and contribution to new knowledge in the world of research.

Chapter Four comprises of the methodology that was used to conduct this study. It explains the reasoning for using the research design implemented. The population sampling, data collection tools, data collection, data analysis, and the reliability and validity of this study are also presented.

Chapter Five contains the presentation and discussion of the findings/results. The chapter highlights the data, the analysis and explains the findings of the study. In this chapter, the themes and categories

that were identified from the qualitative data are discussed. This discussion is based on the objectives of the study, and compared to and contrasted with the literature discussed.

In **Chapter Six**, the research study is summarised. The researcher offers short-term and long-term recommendations, as well as a conclusion

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Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

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2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that will be used in this study regarding the influence of a university education on up-ward socioeconomic mobility. Through discussion of the literature, the researcher aims to clearly define the theoretical lens through which this study will be articulated. The theories that are discussed is socioeconomic mobility, human capital theory and the contribution of social capital in human capital theory.

2.2. Perception

The psychological process in which humans make sense of stimuli is called perception. It is during this process that one is able to identify certain things regardless of which of the individual senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) are triggered (Privitera, 2018). This influences an individual's ability to detect an external stimulus.

Perception, according to De Fleur, Kearney, and Plax (1993, p.19), is "seeing, hearing, or feeling something (with the senses) and then identifying what it is within the interpretations learned from one's language and culture". Kagan and Havemann (1968, p.154) define perception as "the process through which we become aware of our environment by organizing and interpreting the evidence of our senses"

Singer (1987, p.9) tells us, "the process by which an individual selects, evaluates, and organizes stimuli from the external world". According to Wood (2012, p. 75) "Perception is the active process of creating meaning by selecting, organizing, and interpreting people, objects, events, situations, and other phenomena." Perception is an active process because we do not passively receive what is in the world but instead we actively work to make sense of interactions, ourselves and others. Gamble and Gamble's definition (1996, p.77), "Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data in a way that enables people to make sense of our world."

Understanding what perception is and the process of perception is important in this study. This provides the reader with the understanding that individuals process information through

different lenses that have been developed over their lifetime. Through perception meaning is created and decisions are made through the process of selecting, organising and interpreting the given information of particular situations. In this case, the perceived role of an undergraduate degree from

a university in the upward socioeconomic mobility of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds is the information that is being processed.

Perception consists of three processes: selecting, organizing, and interpreting. These processes are continuous, so they blend into one another. They are also interactive, so each of them affects the other two (Wood, 2012; Qiong, 2017). The three-step process according to Wood (2012) and Qiong (2017):

2.2.1.1. Selection

Selection is the first stage in the process of perception, during which we convert the environment stimuli into meaningful experience (Qiong, 2017) . Wood (2012) states that selection is made to attend to certain stimuli based on a number of factors. It is important to note that individuals differ in how they perceive people and situations. This is down to factors such as physiology, expectations, age, culture, cognitive ability and self. Singer (1987, p.9) explains that "we experience everything in the world not as it is—but only as the world comes to us through our sensory receptors."

The selection process narrows an individual's attention down to what is personally defined as important and the surrounding things become less focused. This allows individuals to focus and attend to specific things and not everything making a selection on what is important at particular moments (Wood, 2012).
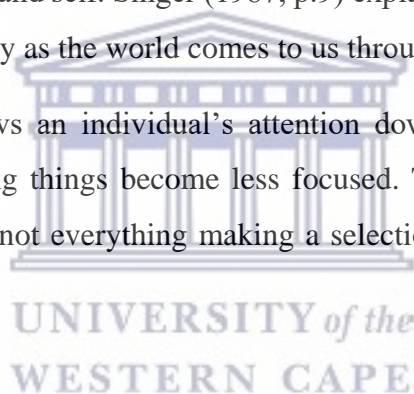
2.2.1. Organisation

From selecting, we move onto the second stage in the process of perception, which is organisation. After selecting specific information from external stimuli, there's a need to organise what was captured through finding certain meaningful patterns (Wood, 2012) . Qiong (2017) states that what is noticed is organised and meaning (stage 3, interpreting) is attached to it. This is accomplished through putting people and things into predetermined categories. In this stage of perception, the social and physical events or objects we encounter will immediately have character (Wood, 2012) .

A useful theory for explaining how we organize experience is constructivism, which states that we organize and interpret experience

by applying cognitive structures called schemata (Burieson & Rack, 2008). We rely on four schemata to make sense of interpersonal phenomena: prototypes, personal constructs, stereotypes, and scripts (Hewes, 1995; Kelly, 1955). Prototypes, personal constructs, stereotypes, and scripts are cognitive schemata that humans use to organize perceptions of people and phenomena.

2.2.2. Interpreting

The third and final stage of perception which refers to the process of attaching meaning to the selected stimuli is interpretation (Wood, 2012). Qiong (2017) reveals that once organising has taken place and individuals have selectively perceived phenomena and used cognitive schemata to organize perceptions, what they mean is still unclear until meaning is attached.

There are no intrinsic meanings in phenomena. Once the information or stimuli has been categorised into a stable and structured pattern, the next stage of the process comes into being

by trying to make sense of the patterns that have been formulated through assigning a meaning or meanings to the patterns. The reality is that different individuals are able to receive the same external stimuli but have different interpretation (Wood, 2012; Qiong, 2017). To interpret the meaning of another's actions, we construct explanations, or attributions, for them. With interpretation differences arise because "Culture provides us with a perceptual lens that greatly influences how we interpret and evaluate what we receive from the outside world" (Samovar, Porter, & Stefani, 2000, p. 57) . According to Qiong (2017) "In the meaning-attribution process, people from cultures that are close will have similar store of past experiences and knowledge, so they will probably attribute similar meanings to the same stimulus, thus similar perceptions."

The steps are fundamental to understanding student perspective. It highlights that the perceptions bring into focus what is seen as important to students through the step of selection. The predetermined categories or schemata helps with categorising of the information which is affected by factors such as physiology, expectations, age, culture, cognitive ability and self. The meaning-attribution process which is done during the interpretation phase is impacted by prior knowledge, experience, advice, understanding and culture which holistically impacts perspective and as a result decision making.

This concept of perception and the process of perception is important as the study unfolds the insights of different individuals' perceptions.

2.3. Socioeconomic Mobility

The socioeconomic condition, status and position of people change from time to time for various reasons. The reasons for these changes in social and economic status may be more intrinsic such as effort, education or even superior intellect (Nazimuddin, 2014). Education is often pushed as a means to change positions of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Primary examples of this being the poor and women.

2.3.1. Defining socioeconomic mobility

Types of changes which are observed in the social status, class, economic condition and standard of life of a person are referred to as social mobility or socioeconomic mobility. One's socioeconomic mobility is related to a socioeconomic status shift which is defined as, "a range of social and economic differences among people based largely on educational and occupational achievements" (Quine & Lancaster, 1989, p. 510). Literature reveals that there are various definitions for socioeconomic mobility. These definitions highlight key concepts and various components of socioeconomic mobility. There are two main ways of viewing socioeconomic mobility which is either the single approach that generally focuses on an employment component only or the multifaceted approach that highlights two or more components. According to Sorokin, "Social mobility is any transition of an individual from one position to another in a constellation of social groups and strata." (Nazimuddin, 2014, p. 176). Whereas Bogardus describes social mobility as "any change in social position, such as occupational changes where persons move up or down the occupational scale, or relation to office whereby a follower becomes a leader, or a leap from a low economic class to a high one, or vice-versa." (Nazimuddin, 2014, p. 176). In addition, social mobility can be defined as, "a change in social status or social position of individuals, families, or groups in the hierarchy of society" (Paramitha, Supriyadi, & Zuber, 2018, p. 165), with Aldridge (2001, p. 2) describing social mobility as, "the movement or opportunities for movement between different social groups, and the advantages and disadvantages that go with this in terms of income, security of employment, and opportunities for advancement etc." Considering the above diverse definitions, it is clear that social mobility encompasses a shift or transition from one level to another. This can be taken with a single approach or a multifaceted approach. Sorokin describes social mobility in Nazimuddin (2014) more broadly, looking at the general shift or transition from one level to another. If we have a look at Bogardus's definition, there is a focus on occupation, office relation or leadership which is an employment-based single approach view. Aldridge on the other hand looks at a multifaceted approach that takes income, security of employment and opportunities for advancement into consideration. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) hold the view that social mobility is multifaceted and should take into consideration earnings/income, educational attainment, health and occupation (OECD, 2018). Education being included in the OECD view of social mobility is not common as other definitions of social mobility do not include an education dimension. However, despite the perspective from which one views socioeconomic mobility it is clear that education plays a critical role in impacting many determinants of social

mobility. Hence a multifaceted approach would be more suitable for this study rather than a single approach.

2.3.2. Types of socioeconomic mobility

The concept of social mobility simply refers to the phenomenon of shifting from one social position to another, either in comparison with family background or with previous employment. Family background refers to intergenerational social mobility, and studies the transmission of social status from parents to children (life chance, social justice, social inequalities), whereas previous employment often named intra-generational social mobility or occupational mobility, investigates individuals' employment history over their life course (Falcon & Joye, 2013). Nunn's (2011, p. 13) definition for intra-generational mobility is as follows, "the movement of individuals between different socioeconomic groups, income, wealth or status categories during their own lifetime." Similarly, the OECD (2018, p. 1) defines intra-generational as, "the extent to which people's social or economic situtations changes over

their life course". Nunn (2011, p. 13) also gives a definition of inter-generational mobility as, the comparison of the achieved social position of an adult with that of their parents. In comparision, the OECD (2018, p. 1) defines inter-generational mobility as, "Gains or losses in economic or social status between parents and their children". The context of the research in question does not permit for an intragenerational mobility investigation but focuses on impacts, effects or influence of intergenerational mobility of students.

2.3.3. Determinants of socioeconomic mobility

Aldridge (2001) states that the determinants of social mobility are not well understood. The potential factors or determinants are as follows: educational attainment, childhood poverty and associated psychological and behavioural development. The list continues with the strategies families adopt to support their children through access to financial capital, access to social capital and access to cultural capital (Aldridge, 2001). This list is a much broader range of determinants than most scholars seem to use. This differentiation between the broader and narrower scope of determinants will be revealed at a later stage (Duncan, Daly, McDonough, & Williams, 2002; Nunn, 2011).

According to Arifin (2017), there is a positive correlation between the level of earnings and education. Individuals who hold higher education qualifications usually have higher earnings and more opportunity upward mobility (Becker 1994; Schultz 1961). There is also believed to be a family background factor that significantly affects educational achievement and graduates' employment in the labour market. Therefore, obtaining a higher education credential is no longer guarantee of

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employment, higher earnings, or most importantly, upward social mobility. Higher education attainment is an important determinant of social mobility (Arifin, 2017). The standing of people's socioeconomic status can be attained through different measures according to Duncan et al (2002). The most common are social class, occupational status, individual earnings and family income (Duncan et al 2002). Nunn (2011) takes a completely different angle on the determinants of social mobility and categorises the determinants into three categories: social structure, family-related influences and policy/institutional influences. This indicates that determinants of social mobility can be attributed to a wide array of components but the study of the influence of the individual components provides researchers with information on the importance of these various components in their contribution towards social mobility; more specifically, education in this study, in a South African context.

2.3.4. Evidence regarding socioeconomic mobility in South Africa

Existing studies on social mobility in South Africa are very limited. Using data from 1995, Lam (1999) addresses the issue of intergenerational transfer of educational status but without analysing mobility dynamics. Case and Deaton (1999) show that having a household head who completed secondary schooling may raise a child's educational attainment by more than a quarter of a grade per year relative to children who live in households headed by individuals who have only completed primary schooling which later in life assists in the child's ability to climb the social mobility ladder.

Considering the wrongs in the South African society resulting from the apartheid regime, inequalities exist with regard to parent schooling in South Africa. The reality of vast inequality, during the course of 2015 and 2016, erupted as frustrations resulting from increasing cost of tertiary education, wide socioeconomic inequalities, and the slow pace of transformation of the tertiary education sector culminated in national student protests for free higher education in South Africa (Mandyoli, 2019). Within these protests under the banner of #FeesMustFall, multiple layers of advantage and disadvantage, of access and non-access, of inclusion and exclusion (among and between various groups) became apparent – making evident the need for a much deeper understanding of individuals' and various groups' experiences of socioeconomic inequalities (Case, Marshall, Mckenna, & Mogashana, 2018).

The realities of socioeconomic inequalities in South Africa, extend well beyond mere differences in income distribution. This is made clear in Potgieter (2016), with the variety of inequalities including the above-mentioned access to education as one of them. In addition, the struggle of basic services is a constant battle for many in South Africa. The high unemployment and underemployment also

contribute to inequality, which at times can be linked to physical separation from economic activities and opportunities, which in itself is an inequality issue. A deeper and more prominent factor which has been a stumbling block in South African history is the apartheid regime, which continues to have an impact even post 1994, when it ended. The race gap still remains between non-white (more specifically blacks and coloureds) and white indviduals, with intraracial inequality also being a major factor, with the rise of the black middle class. These serve as just a few examples of the complex socioeconomic environment in South Africa where unequal outcomes and unequal opportunities are evident.

According to Kesswell, from his paper Education and Racial Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa (2004), equality in the acquisition of education has seen modest improvements; the translation of educational opportunities into labour market gains has diverged for Africans and whites over the last decade. Unlike the case during apartheid, the direct effect of race on earnings is no longer a strong factor in generating wage differentials between individuals. Rather, race now plays a strong role in determining how educational attainment comes to be valued in the labour market. With this we find that there is room for social mobility in a South African context and that more research into the matter will bring clarity to policy makers and implementers to bring a change in South Africa.

2.4. Human capital theory:

2.4.1. Definition and origin of the theory:

Human capital has been viewed as a main driver in gaining economic progression of nations. Among the identified factors of production, labour was treated as a variable cost while the cost involved in physical capital as an investment in the production function (Devadas, 2015). Devadas (2015) further states that characteristics of human capital can be described as non- tradable and no market exists that would permit the exchange of human capital assets (except in the case of slavery); it has both a qualitative and quantitative aspect; can be either general or specific; and contains external effects from the social environment and the institutional context in which they live, which continually shapes its acquisition. Schultz (1961) agrees with (Devadas, 2015) when he states that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is a capital and is a substantial part of deliberate investment. It has grown at a faster rate than conventional capital or non-human capital and its growth is the most distinctive feature of an economic system and increase in national output can be largely attributed to this form of capital (Schultz, 1961). As a result of human capital investment, there are financial and non-financial benefits that can be reaped which benefit individuals, economies and societies (Becker, 1994).

2.4.2. Constructs and the concepts in the theory

All this being said, human capital can be presented as the investment that people make in themselves that improve their productivity. The human capital theory rests on the assumption that education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). It is understood that human capital theory provides a basis for education in developed and developing countries globally. An emphasis is placed on how education increases the efficiency and productivity of workers by increasing the level of intellectual capability of individuals for economic purposes which is a result of essential abilities and investment in human beings. This provision of formal education is seen as a productive investment in human capital.

It is further stated that the role of education in an economy is of great significance (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). The result of this belief is that education expenditures are found to be a form of investment rather than just general expense. This enhances human capital and results in a greater output for society and improves the earning for an individual. In turn, this increases the chances of employment in the labour market for individuals and allows for these individuals to reap a monetary and non-monetary return. In addition, there are more opportunities in job mobility (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

The foundational studies of the human capital theory is based around the work done by Jacob Mincer (Mincer, 1958), Solomon Fabricant (Fabricant, 1959), Gary Becker (Becker, 1960), and Theodore Schultz (Schultz, 1961), according to (Sweetland, 1996). Beyond the foundations of the human capital theory there are two custodians which stand out, Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz who are the most pronounced with regard to the human capital theory and have established a firm foundation for many scholars.

Schultz (1961) credited the economic activity that resulted from education as a manner of human capital forming, and this human capital forming resulted in economic growth which is a contributor to economic development. Theodore Schultz further added that the knowledge and education that serve as contributors toward economic growth are significantly associated with schooling (Schultz, 1961). He determined that the largest component of cost schooling was endured by students who were receiving this education and their personal return is higher than the social return associated with schooling. Increases in national output at the time of research was larger than increases in land, man hours and physical reproducible capital. Investment in human capital seemed to be the major explanation for the difference in national output and the missing variable to all the other components to get that sort of output (Schultz, 1961). Schultz's research on the investment in human capital was

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broken down into four compents. Firstly, understanding the reasons why economics have shied away from the explicit analysis of investment in human capital. Secondly, the capacity of such investment to explain many a puzzle about economic growth. Thirdly, and the main component of his research, the scope and substance of human capital and its formation. His final component takes into consideration the social and policy implications of this theory. This great piece of literature, alongside Becker (1964) with the revisited version in (Becker, 1994) served as foundational frameworks for many researchers to date.

2.4.3. Criticisms or Limitations of the theory:

2.4.3.1. Application of the theory

Becker (1994) diverged from the total returns approach that had been used by previous scholars to explore internal rates of return on investments in education and training (derived from the economic return to education investments to cost of education). Becker (1994) then calculated an internal rate of return (private/personal) in education investment to be maintained by a country as more than 10 per cent. He further showed the need of calculating a rate or estimation of social effect in education except to the personal/private rate of return on education.

In Becker (1962), he started his analysis with his focus largely looking at on-the-job training. An emphasis was placed on on-the-job training, justifying it's importance amongst the various types of human capital and the transferability of this analysis for other forms of human capital. He did a detailed investigation into the economic decision-making process that regulates the quantity of training and the time spent in training, which links to work of Mincer (Teixeira, 2014). He later introduced what has become a classic distinction between specific and general human capital. General human capital is a type of training that increases the marginal product of the worker in other firms, the firm would have no incentive to bear any of its cost and would pass it to the worker. In addition, this type of human capital training increases future earnings, regardless of the firm they were working with (Teixeira, 2014). A discussion of assessing the rate of return to investment in human capital was done by Becker, which was analysed in many earlier human capital studies. This became foundational in the economics of education. Other research of Becker, involves the impact of mass higher education on rates of return, was also an important issue and an empirical analysis in the first edition of human capital regarding the profitability of investment in schooling was a rather optimistic one, especially in respect of college level. This converged with other pieces of research being published around that time (Teixeira, 2014). All of this served as a major contribution to the study of human capital and Becker's value in this field is irreplaceable, considering the fact that his research is part of the cornerstone of human capital theory.

According to Olaniyan & Okemakinde (2008), the rationale for human capital investment is based on the following three arguments. Firstly, the appropriate parts of knowledge that have already been obtained by previous generations should be passed down to new generations. Secondly, the new generation should be educated on how the knowledge that already exists is able to be utilised in the development of new products, to introduce new methods of production, to introduce and implement new processes and social services. Finally, people must be encouraged to develop and produce completely new products, ideas, methods and processes through creative approaches. These three arguments incorporate all forms of education that stems from a formal foundation to empower individuals to be creative, productive, effective and efficient in their outputs as a result of human capital investment with the outcome expected to be growth and development in national economies globally.

The input of Becker (1994) and (Schultz, 1961) is enhanced when Olaniyan & Okemakinde (2008) further state that there are four major capacities that a proper educational strategy can provide. Firstly, the development of a trend that is favourable for economic progress. This has a reference to social mobility that results in an increase in literacy need for improved communication. Secondly, the development of complementary resources for factors which are relatively plenty and substitutes for scarce resources. Educated individuals will be more adaptable for varying production needs. Thirdly, education investment is understood to have a greater durability than other non-human reproductive capital. Finally, education is an alternative to consumption, transferring the resources into a long-term capacity that would otherwise be instantly consumed. The importance of educational investment to enlarge capacity for economies and individuals is crucial. This aids individual development and growth which stimulates the growth and development of economies.

Considering the above discussion, in every theory there will always be flaws that will appear. In perfect circumstances, the fulfilment of this theory would take place without challenges, unfortunately, the nature, needs, challenges and desires of various nations differ, so the strategy and processes need to differ for success. The output based on the above theory has not always been in alignment with its nature and assumptions. At the individual level, it has become controversial whether or to what extent education or other forms of human capital investment are directly related to improvement in occupation and income (Khaemba, Sakwa, & Wachilonga, 2014). Bronchi (2003) asserts that raising the level of education in a society can under certain instances increase the inequalities in income distribution. Khaemba, Sakwa, & Wachilonga (2014) found that even though governments may implement educational plans that align with their specific strategies and developmental goals, there is no complete certainty that the output of it will correspond with the

expected goals or intentions. There is a political component in every nation that brings a distortion in outcomes as a result of their political agenda in goal setting. Consequently, it is a major risk to assume that education is the greatest solution or remedy that will result in attaining the developmental objectives of a country.

The above theory will allow the writer to explore whether tertiary education (university education) enables graduates to improve their socioeconomic mobility, by promoting them in the socioeconomic status pyramid, specifically, those from the low socioeconomic status level to the middle socioeconomic status level.

2.4.4. The contribution of social capital in human capital theory

Pierre Bourdieu distinguishes between three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital but does not speak to the concept of human capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986, p.248-249) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word." Bourdieu employs the concept to demonstrate a mechanism for the generational reproduction of inequality. He further points out that the wealthy and powerful use their "old boys' network" or other social capital to maintain advantages for themselves, their social class, and their children.

Coleman (1988, p.98) defines social capital as "a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors...within the structure". Social capital is anything that facilitates individual or collective action, generated by networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust, and social norms (Portes, 1998). In Coleman's conception, social capital is a neutral resource that facilitates any manner of action, but whether society is better off as a result depends entirely on the individual uses to which it is put (Foley & Edwards, 1997). Coleman (1988) highlights that there's an important effect that social capital has on human capital creation in the generations that follow the current one. Social Capital in the family and the community play a significant role in human capital development.

The theory of rational choice views social capital as a promoter of individual action that can result in social mobility. Individuals invest in their relationships with others assuming that they will also benefit from such investments (Rogošić & Baranović, 2016). The framework of rational choice theory explains ways in which social capital promotes social mobility (Mikiewicz, Torfi,

Gudmundsson, Blondal, & Korczewska, 2011). A large number of studies relying on Coleman's concept of social capital have confirmed the role of social capital in establishing social mobility (Lopez, 1996; Morgan, 1999; Sun, 1999; Dika, 2003)

Bourdieu's theory focuses more on the socioeconomic status and cultural capital of an individual in attaining educational achievements than on his/her social capital; the latter is therefore much less elaborated in Bourdieu's work than in that of Coleman. What stands in favour of Bourdieu is the fact that economic capital is significantly and positively related to educational achievements (Bidwell & Friedkin, 1988; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2009). Thus for this study human capital theory was chosen with the understanding that the knowledge we have gained from previous generations impacts and influences our decision making as we move forward.

2.3. Chapter summary:

This chapter has discussed the theoretical frameworks that will be used in this study regarding the influence of a university education on upward socioeconomic mobility. Perception, the human capital theory and socioeconomic mobility will be used as the theoretical lens through which this study will be articulated.
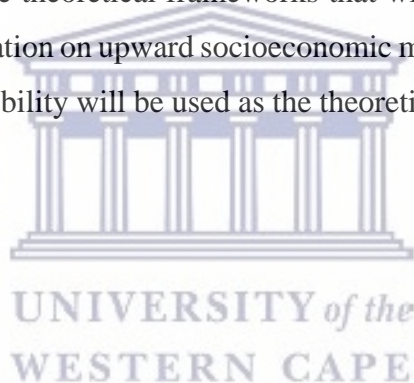
Chapter 3

Empirical Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on empirical research, regarding the influence of a university education on upward socioeconomic mobility. Through the literature discussed, the researcher aims to validate the importance of conducting this research. Additionally, different views of other researchers are highlighted, to provide insights in the world of research that could inform future research.

3.2. Impact of education on economic and social growth and development:

Governments across the world are constantly monitoring how their economy is growing and developing. There is an economic component of growth and development that is being observed and the social development and growth of the people who influence, affect, impact and are impacted by the economy also come under scrutiny. Education is a major influencer in both the economic and social growth and development of a society. Growth and development of both the economic and social aspects of society can be measured individually but because of the integrated nature of the two components (economic and social factors), the socioeconomic sphere has established itself as an integral part of the operation of societies' and countries' and therefore it has become an important part in education. According to Fritz (2010), socioecononic development refers to progress in terms of economic and social factors within a geographic unit. Economic development is described as the process of raising the level of prosperity through increase production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Fritz, 2004). On the other hand, social development is defined as the complexity of social dynamics (the interplay of social structures, processes and relationships) and focuses on (1) the social concerns of the people as objectives of development and (2) people-centred, participatory approaches to development. Social development is about inclusiveness, social justice and the common good (Fritz, 2004).

According to Restakis (2006), there has been an ongoing struggle to interpret and relate the practice of economics and the development of economic institutions to the question of social benefit. The fact that research with regard to finding information and understanding this concept, and the interaction of the social and economic components is still ongoing implies that a lot has yet to be discovered.

This section specifically focuses on the social and economic effects of education on the growth and development of countries and their economies.

Baum & Payea (2004) state that there is a financial investment return for society on higher education for individuals. This educational investment results in productivity increasing. The higher earnings of educated workers generate higher tax payments at local, provincial, and national levels, and consistent productive employment reduces dependence on public income- transfer programmes. Overall, this benefits the economy of a country as well as the society within that country. Hill, Hoffman, & Rex (2005) are in agreement and state that social benefits of a workforce with greater educational attainment and skills can be traced to the enhanced worker productivity associated with greater educational attainment. These productivity gains translate into higher output and incomes for the economy. In summary, the economic benefits according to the human capital theory, reveal that education increases the employment skills, productivity and earning power of individuals which contributes to economic growth (Mncube & Harber, 2011).

In society there are non-financial benefits that have an impact too. According to Baum & Payea (2004), higher levels of education are correlated with higher levels of civic participation, including volunteer work, voting, and blood donation. This leads to improvement in health and quality of life, a greater social and cultural participation and a better personal wellbeing which extends life expectancy. In addition, Mncube & Harber (2011) reveal that modernisation theory explains that education can be socially beneficial in the form of modern social attitudes toward things such as gender equality, science and the desire to achieve. Non-financial benefits are able to reach into political spheres by developing the behaviours and values required for suitable, sustainable and efficient political culture that will help improve and maintain democratic systems (Lynn & Harber, 2005).

These financial and non-financial benefits of education may create a perception that education and its contribution to growth and development may only be positive, yet Mncube & Harber (2011) discuss three discourses with regard to education and development. The primary or most dominant one being, education is a benefit to both society and individuals, which is clearly depicted above. On the contrary, education's second discourse could be that of reproduction or alternatively, the third discourse, making the lives of individuals worse and harming the wider society (Mncube & Harber, 2011).

It may be perceived that education seemingly being opened to all, creates a setting of endless possibility and opportunity, contributing to growth and development of a social and economic system

which has open competition, merit and achievement. The depiction may seem positive and bemeficial but the foundation resembles a sugar-coated Bantu education that was previously experienced in South Africa (McKeever, 2017).

Rather than the open competition, merit and achievement-based system assumed, the process serves to reproduce things as they are. Barnett & Coate (2005) explain this by stating that a hidden curriculum is an important aspect in the understanding of education as reproduction. It brings forth a suggestion that there is something going on behind the scenes that is beyond the learning situation and the textbooks in front of students (Barnett & Coate, 2005). It's not that some students are able to decipher the hidden curriculum process, which may result in achieving better outcomes but rather that the hidden curriculum acts as a safety net to advantage some students and disadvantage others (Higgs, 2016). From this observation, Higgs (2016) concluded that curricula serve to reproduce divisions in society, emphasising social reproduction in education.

In addition, a common trend is that children who come from poor backgrounds tend to go to poor schools and end up in low status jobs or even unemployment (Jacob & Holsinger, 2008). Mncube & Harber (2011, p. 234) "A small number of children from poor backgrounds succeed and this provides the appearance of a meritocratic system whereas in reality it merely serves to mask the role of education in perpetuating and reproducing inequality". This reaffirms the role of education as a tool for reproduction of socioeconomic inequality.

The third discourse of education will not be thoroughly discussed in this paper but (Mncube & Harber, 2011) share the idea that this discourse of education not only reproduces society fundamentally as it is but also actively makes the lives of individuals worse and harms the wider society because schools both reproduce and cause violence. Not only do they not necessarily protect learners from different forms of violence in the wider society but they actively perpetrate violence themselves.

3.3. The role of universities in social upliftment of societies

A university should be a place where values of good citizenship should be moulded and transmitted to students who are set to be graduated into society and their various professions. Benefits to society associated with a university include, but is not limited to citizenship, civic engagement, better health and lower crime. Citizenship looks at the attitude towards and

participation in voting of individuals (Brennan, Durazzi, & Séné, 2013). Generally, there is a higher correlation between individuals who have a tertiary education and voting than between those who

have a secondary education or less. Secondly, Calhoun (2006) and Borgonovi & Miyamoto (2010) both agree that a higher education qualification also results in greater civic engagement. Thirdly, literature highlights that education can help improve health behaviours and outcomes (Miyamoto & Chevalier, 2010). This can be done by raising emotional, social and cognitive skills which is an efficient way to improve the health of individuals. Finally, Vila (2000) states that there is a link between additional schooling and less violent behaviour. The basic idea for economists is that educated people have higher earnings and better labour market chances, reducing the likelihood of crime (Hill, Hoffman, & Rex, 2005; Lochner & Moretti, 2004). However, Groot & Maassen van den Brink (2004) report that with years of education the probability of committing crimes like vandalism, shoplifting, injury and assault may decrease but there is an increase in the probability of committing fraudulent crimes. These benefits refer to the improvements that graduates contribute to society as a result of their qualifications obtained from various higher education institutions, rather than the role of universities in society and the impact on society.

In order to understand the above-mentioned impacts and contribution to social upliftment, the roles of universities in society needs to be understood. Although the roles of universities in society may not seem directly related to the benefits that universities and the qualifications obtained by individuals in society, it is important to understand these roles of universities in society. Cloete & Maassen (2015) state that there are four key roles that university institutions play in society: values and social legitimation; the selection of the dominant elites; training of the labour force; and production of scientific knowledge.

Values and social legitimation through pre-established bodies such as church-based institutions were foundational in many traditional European educational institutions. In a non-religious institutional context, universities played a similar role in producing imposing values and beliefs that justified domination, western superiority and colonialisation (Cloete & Maassen, 2015). To this day, the development and breaking down of ideologies are still felt in a country like South Africa with tertiary institutions in South Africa still being identified by their founding principles of being historically white, historically black or historically disadvantaged (Wolpe, 1995; Langa, 2017; Keats, 2009). These titles associated with the burden of these founding principles and ideologies had to be shattered in order to restructure the tertiary education sphere to align with the transformation taking place in the South African society. The construction of these ideologies which were laws initially ratified by an apartheid government, needed to be broken down by pioneers of change in a South African tertiary institution context. One of the leading pioneers in the University of the Western Cape context was Jakes Gerwel, former vice- chancellor of the institution, who generated a new ideology to combat

that of the apartheid government but yet aligning itself with the revolution of time (Keats, 2009). These ideologies and values that overflowed into society are still being reconstructed with a prime example being the fight for decolonisation of tertiary institutions and the content of learning.

The second role of universities looks at the nature of how universities contribute to the selection of dominant elites in society. In Cloete & Maassen (2015) it is stated that the selection of the elites comes through an accompanied process of socialisation that is connected to social cohesion networks which distinguishes the dominant elite from the rest of society. Internationally, there are institutions that are identified as elite institutions that select elite members of society that exemplify a specific set of values connected to these elite institutions. In America, the Ivy League universities; In England, Cambridge and Oxford; In France, grandes ecoles and in a South African context, historically white universities filled this role with the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town specifically in the Western Cape.

But, as demand for access to higher education grew, universities differentiated. And while for some institutions elite selection and formation remained their primary role, large numbers of generalist universities emerged that increased higher education participation rates causing a massified system of education (Cloete & Maassen, 2015). These systems can be explained as follows: an elite system caters to a privileged or talented group; a mass system considers higher education as a right for those who are qualified; and a universal system that represents society's obligation to the population (Mohamedbhai, 2014).

This increased participation in higher education resulted in a massification of higher education. This massification did not only mean increased participation rates but it is also becoming an essential part in modernisation, with associated cultural, scientific, technological and socioeconomic changes (Scott, 1995). This resulted in the idea of an 'elite' changing from the selection of university students belonging to socioeconomic and/or political elite classes, to academic talent selection through set criteria.

Generally, in an African context, there are many challenges that are being brought about as a result of massification, with issues such as physical infrastructure, staffing, accreditation, graduate unemployment, private higher education and student mobility (Mohamedbhai, 2014). In a South African context, these same challenges are relevant in addition to the original political elite system still lingering over higher education (Jansen, 2004). Above all, it has provided many people in society the opportunity to be equipped with specialised skills, which brings us to our third role of universities.

The professional university, above all else had one primary role and that was the basic function of producing specialists in various trained areas. Boulton & Lucas (2011) state that universities play an important part in the process of producing a successful knowledge economy. One of the ways that it happens is through skilled labour, or alternatively, training of the labour force (Boulton & Lucas, 2011; Cloete & Maassen, 2015). In the contextualisation of higher education institutions in community engagement in a knowledge driven world, three key aspects are mentioned in Albertyn & Daniels (2009). These three aspects are the development of human resources; high-level skills training and production, acquisition and application of new knowledge. Similarly, in the South African White Paper on Science and Technology (1996), one of the five key objectives is the development of human resources (Maharajh, Motala, & Scerri, 2011). This generates the importance of higher education institutions in the development of individuals in communities in order to improve the knowledge economy of a country.

The fourth role of universities is the production of scientific knowledge. The production of scientific knowledge is in other words, the generation of new knowledge which is done at many institutions as part of their functions. Some universities are even called science universities or research-intensive universities that specialise in this production and generation of knowledge. These institutions are usually minority institutions in higher education systems and particularly in developing countries (Altbach, 2013). A specific focus on science and the application of it in society is essential. It provides support for various industries and assists in the development of specific industries at national, provincial and regional levels. The challenge for universities is that they cannot only specialise in one role or function as an institution but generally have to fulfil multiple or all four roles of a university at the same time (Cloete & Maassen, 2015). A critical component in the dynamics and structure of any university system is the combination of functions, even those that contradict each other in nature.

Higher education institutions have to simultaneously be connected to information economy changes as well as socio-cultural changes of society in order to be efficient and effective in their roles and/or functions (Kerr, 1991). The ability of universities to manage their functions and roles in generating knowledge and training labour forces in a development process context will assist in further aligning higher education institutions with capacitating societies at local, provincial, and national levels, culminating in a greater contribution in the world economy.

3.4. The role of universities in social upliftment of societies in South Africa

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, is aligned with many of the above-mentioned roles and functions which are used on a global scale. The South African NDP states that universities are key to developing a nation and that universities perform three main functions in society (National Planning Commission, 2011). Firstly, universities educate and train people with high-level skills to make provision for the employment needs of the private and public sectors. Secondly, universities are the dominant producers of new knowledge. This entails critiquing information and finding new local and global applications of existing information. As part of adding to the production of new knowledge, universities also set norms, standards, languages, ethics and philosophy, being the foundation of a nation's knowledge capital. With this being said, the visionaries of the South African NDP believe that South Africa needs knowledge that equips people for a society in constant social change. The third and final function of South Africa's universities, with due consideration of the country's apartheid history, is that the higher education sector provides opportunities for social mobility while simultaneously strengthening equity, social justice and its 25-year-old democracy.

Finally, Albertyn & Daniels (2009) refer to a key statement made by The Talloires Network (2005), which puts an emphasis on the need for higher education institutions to be committed to the strengthening of their social responsibilities and civic roles. The Talloires Network (2005) asserts that higher education must extend itself for the good of the society to embrace communities near and far. In doing so, we will promote our core missions of teaching, research and service. The university should use the processes of education and research to respond to, serve and strengthen its communities for local and global citizenship. In the South African context, policy documents have community engagement aspects embedded that creates the importance of community engagement and upliftment of universities in society. The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation (1996) and the White Paper on Higher Education Transformation (1997) emphasise certain goals which highlight the importance of community engagement in a South African higher education context (Reddy, 2004). The above mentioned documents highlight the need for students to be aware of social responsibility. Which accentuates the important role of universities in socio-economic development through community service programmes and producing skilled graduates who are competent in critical, analytical and communication skills to deal with change, diversity and tolerance to opposing views.

The role of South African tertiary institutions and more specifically universities have been aligned with the national objectives of the country and the overflow into society being a crucial part in the

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change for social upliftment and development in society. Taking into consideration South Africa's National Development Plan: Vision 2030, the visionaries driving the plan believe that higher education is a major driving force of the knowledge/information system, which firmly links it with economic growth and development in the country. However, it is stated that higher education is much more than a simple instrument that assists in economic growth and development but that education plays an important role for good citizenship as well as diversifying and enriching lives (National Planning Commission, 2011).

All of these fundamental elements engender the prominence of universities in the growth and development of citizens, societies and the economy at large, thereby revealing the important roles and functions of higher education institutions in the lives of individuals. This emphasises the ability and power that various higher education institutions have in uplifting, enriching and capacitating members of society in order to improve individual lives, but also that of local, provincial and national economies at large through education.

3.5. University experience of students with low socioeconomic status

In order to understand student experiences, we first have to bring an understanding to the concept of social economic status (SES) in this specific context. According to Okioga (2013), SES is the combined economic and sociological measure of an individual and their family's work experience, economic position and social position relative to others. Socioeconomic status can typically be divided into three categories: high economic status (HSES), middle economic status (MSES) or low socioeconomic status (LSES) in its simplest structure

(Mirowsky, 2017). These three categories will be foremost when identifying students and understanding their experiences at university institutions.

Research has indicated that the average earnings of a bachelor degree holder should be more than someone without one (Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016). However, there may be a difference depending on who is being asked. Does a medical or dental student with a large amount of student debt still see the real value of their education as it impacts their socioeconomic status? Does the role of national student loans have an impact? Or are there greater challenges beyond university fees and obtaining a higher education that stand as a barrier for students to progress in SES? One strategy to improve access to university education has been the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) that has been a major source of funding for students from low social economic status. The mission of NSFAS is "to transform NSFAS into an efficient and effective provider of financial aid to students from poor and working class families in a sustainable manner that promotes access to, and success

in, higher and further education and training, in pursuit of South Africa's national and human resource development goals." (NSFAS, 2021). With an mission that has a family with low socioeconomic status best interest at heart one would it could be assumed that NSFAS serves as a lifeline in the path of these families, but NSFAS is plagued with several issues. Many matriculants coming from LSES households in South Africa are informed about NSFAS as their first option for funding before seeking the assistance from other funding providers as an alternative.

According to Langa (2017), it seems that students at historically black universities are satisfied with NSFAS whilst students at historically white universities are of the opinion that NSFAS is insufficient in meeting their excessive fees. Fees at various tertiary institutions vary. With the variation in costs and coverage, unrest in South African tertiary institutions has been prominent, with NSFAS often being at the centre of these debates.

Thus several questions arise from this: Have institutions like NSFAS really contributed to enabling students from LSES to progress to a higher SES? Or has the issues of historical debt and exorbitant fees still crippled the ability of students to progress to higher SES after obtaining a bachelor's degree? And what other issues are preventing students from progressing from LSES to higher SES? Case, Marshall, Mckenna, & Mogashana (2018) capture the experiences of various young South Africans. The significance of higher education in the South African context has been questioned in a study that has 76 interviews with students who have come along six years since their first university registration. The complexities and difficulties of the legacy of apartheid and the creation of systematic educational inequality by political design are crucial but the lack of research in this area needs to be explored, especially with regard to LSES families and students. One needs to ask the question: Is education really promoting progress in communities and families from LSES?

Yet this is not only a South African higher education struggle since correlations between education and socioeconomic status have been examined globally. Baum & Payea (2004) and Ma, Pender, & Welch (2016), demonstrated fairly similar findings with regard to higher education enrolment, academic performance and graduate rates in an American context even though there's more than a decade gap between the two reports. Ma et al (2016) reveal that college enrolment rates are higher for those from HSES quintiles than those from MSES and LSES quartiles who had similar high school mathematics test scores. "In 2015, 82% of high school graduates from the highest income quintile (above $100,010) enrolled immediately in college, compared with 62% of those from the middle income quintile ($37,000 to $60,300) and 58% of those from the lowest income quintile (below $20,582) (Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016, p. 3)". This being the starting point of any higher education journey, entry into the higher education sphere is already a discouraging start for

individuals from LSES backgrounds. Baum & Payea (2004) show that enrolment rates of students to tertiary education improves as SES improves, approximately 20 years later (after 1992) Ma et al (2016) have proven this to still be the case.

Progressing to the end of goal of every student, graduation, Ma et al (2016) reveal students from LSES groups graduate at lower rates than those from MSES and HSES groups at every level of academic achievement (associate degrees, bachelor's degrees or higher). Meaning that during the process of being at university, certain circumstances, experiences or pressures resulted in more students from LSES group to drop out instead of completing their courses. So how has the gap been bridged in order to improve accessibility to higher education for students from LSES groups? In two words, financial aid. Dynarski & Scott-Clayton (2013) state that through increased financial support greater emphasis is placed on individuals from the LSES group to apply for tertiary education studies and having access to financial aid makes a big difference in student enrolment rates.

NSFAS assists in the accessbility problem but what about the graduate completion rate and the underlying issues associated with it? Ma et al (2016) proposes that in order to improve the completion rates of students, plenty of resources for both students and institutions will be required beyond the provision of fees. This requires a more focused role on personal guidance about study direction or, study location (institution), a structured path into university and from university transitioning into the work force. This needs to be foundationally backed with academic assistance to compensate for inadequate academic preparation to which students enter university. The Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society series has constantly established gaps across socioeconomic groups in many of their reports. Showing that there is a long way to go before equal opportunity for all can be fulfilled (Baum & Payea, 2004; Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016).

This brings us to the South African context. South African universities have open access to a diversified population of students, which resulted in an increased participation of first- generation, mature and low-income students. Simultaneously, the broadened access came with issues relating to retention and success (Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido, & Mkonto, 2017). Chetty & Pather (2015) further reinforces this by sharing that the increased number of people entering universities from poor, disadvantaged or LSES backgrounds at times do not have the cultural capital required for success. The reasons for the large dropout rate of these students range from poor programme choice, maladjustments, health, finances and social circumstances. McGhie (2012) identifies four challenges for learning at tertiary institutions. The setting of the research of McGhie (2012) is significant because it is the same as the researchers, the University of the Western Cape, with many students

from LSES household or backgrounds. This research will be discussing three of the four factors, namely: personal factors, academic factors and institutional factors.

Firstly, personal factors include accommodation, financial means and family support. Students in South Africa who come from LSES households mostly depend on the country's financial aid system run by NSFAS and in many accounted cases NSFAS has failed students. Reports of late payment resulting in students going hungry, no accommodation and late registration have disadvantaged many students over the years (eNCA, 2017; Dias, 2019; Dippenaar, 2017). Beyond these challenges, institutions just do not have the capacity to accommodate all students who need places to stay and issues of accommodation remain prominent (McGhie, 2012) but beyond this, many students also take public transportation in order to get to universities, which in South Africa is not reliable (Wentworth, 2017; Dano, 2016; Andersen, 2018). Accommodation struggles have resulted in students from provinces outside of the located institutions struggling to settle down thereby resulting negatively on their studies.

The financial component has surfaced once again which has been well researched in literature but issues of finances beyond the payment of academic courses, such as for food and accommodation are prominent with students from LSES households. If the financial support fails students or they are unable to obtain any, students end up without accommodation, food and books, which present unrealistic circumstances to achieve yet alone thrive (McGhie, 2012; eNCA, 2017).

The final component of this category is family support. Chetty & Pather (2015) highlight that pre-academic and non-academic factors are influential in assisting or hindering student experiences at university, especially pertaining to first-year students. Research done by Pather et al (2017) reveal that non-academic factors such as family support is crucial in every stage of a student's university journey, starting at pre-univerity, when applying. Data reveal that mothers motivate students to access university; they also provide motivation before tests are written; and encourage students to persist once they were admitted into university (Pather et al, 2017). Family assistance contributes positively to a student's progress but the lack thereof is detrimental and this gives opportunity for other role-players such as friends, tutors, mentors, lecturers, and psychologists to add value (McGhie, 2012; Case et al, 2018).

In the second category of academic factors in McGhie (2012), we find that there are more challenges in the academic category, being nine in total: attitude and personal orientation; transition; planning and time management; workload; learning styles; foundational knowledge; language; home environment and family crisis; studying and working simultaneously.

The first factor, attitude and personal orientation refers to student experience at a tertiary education institution and their reaction to that experience. McGhie (2012) found that students' will to learn were dependent on their interest in certain modules and their ability to succeed. Many students acknowledged that failure had a negative impact on their will to learn, resulting in them wanting to give up. In the face of adversity and challenges without support, many students have a decreased will to learn and few take challenges as a driving tool for success (Case et al, 2018). In addition, students' emotional experiences from LSES backgrounds, show a higher depression rate than that of students from HSES backgrounds since they find less opportunity to express negative emotions, thereby creating further negative attitude and personal orientations which negatively affect the university experience and academic performance (Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei & Darnon, 2017).

The second component refers to the transition of students from high school to university. Many students struggle with the social integration into the university space, resulting in an academic integration barrier (McGhie, 2012). The changed dynamic at university in terms of academic structure and a greater dependency on being more disciplined on their own, rather than a rigid schooling structure and system are difficult for students to adapt to (Case et al, 2018). With university transition comes a multicultural and multiracial experience of students. Students from black rural communities are not as adept to the multicultural and multiracial environments as, for example, their white counterparts who come from urban areas where it is more common, thus making assimilation difficult (Chetty & Pather, 2015). The university academic setup is a foreign encounter to students from LSES background, specifically those who come from rural areas, and often negative reactions result in a negative outcome of academic results. Although, this seems to be a personal challenge, the foundational root is in the academic challenge of transitioning but becomes a challenge for the institution as a resultant effect, thus crossing over into all three challenge categories for various reasons (McGhie, 2012).

The third factor is personal planning and time management of students. Khanam, Sahu, Rao, Kar, & Quazi (2017) define time management as a set of principles, practices, skills, tools and systems that work together to help you get more value out of your time with the aim of improving the quality of your life. At university, great importance is being placed on time management, but many students have low to moderate level of time management with very few having high levels of time management (Nasrullah & Khan, 2015). There is a very high correlation between time management and academic performance, yet many students lack the skill of effective time management (Khanam et al, 2017. Students from LSES backgrounds often lack the skill of time management and taking into consideration that the relationship between time management and academic performance is high,

the outcome would be low academic scores (Devlin & McKay, 2017). There is a linking challenge to time management and that is workload (factor four). It was found that students struggle to manage the workload at university, and two issues were identified. Firstly, the lack of time management previously discussed but also the quantity of work being allocated was found to be an issue with students (Pather et al, 2017; McGhie, 2012). The fifth factor relating to academic challenges, are learning styles. McGhie (2012) found that students who experience a challenge with time management and workload also struggled with learning styles, thereby demonstrating that an interlinking relationship exists among the three. In this case, learning styles refer to a student's social habits of learning.

The sixth component speaks to the foundational knowledge of students. Devlin & McKay (2017) determined that levels of preparedness of students from LSES background for university, on many spheres including their knowledge foundation, are below that of students with MSES and HSES backgrounds. Chetty & Pather (2015) agree, saying that numerous black students from LSES backgrounds do not have the financial backing and academic readiness to take up the tertiary education opportunity. In South Africa, many black and coloured students who come from LSES backgrounds and attend government schools which are under-resourced and have poor schooling systems are underprepared and disadvantaged when entering into university. (Chetty & Pather, 2015; McGhie, 2012; Pather et al, 2017).

In South Africa, there are 11 official languages but the primary language of teaching in all universities is English. The majority of students coming from poor or rural communities do not speak English as their home language and in this lies the seventh challenge, language. Many students in Case et al (2018) spoke about issues around language at university. Coming into contact with students from a diverse array of background with many different languages being spoken, initially made social engagements difficult (with peers, lecturers and tutors). This was in addition to the fact that many students came into an English dominated academic arena, where English was their second and even third language of communication (Chetty & Pather, 2015; McGhie, 2012; Case et al, 2018). This resulted in difficulty in understanding lecturers, writing of essays and even understanding of terminology in order to take tests (Chetty & Pather, 2015). This barrier ultimately becomes problematic in their academic journey and leads to disappointing results.

The final component that will be looked at in this category is studying and working simultaneously. Baert, Marx, Neyt, Van Belle, & Van Casteren (2018) postulate two views emanating from their study. Firstly, the policy view addresses the issue of students prioritising their student job over their studies; this negatively affects their studies and causes a reduction in grades. Similarly the academic

point of view reveals that there is a certain level of negative effects for some but a neutral effect on others. This is backed by Jewell's study on The Impact of Working While Studying on Educational and Labour Market Outcomes (2014), in which the author found that students worked more for financial than investment reasons. This had a negative effect on their studies because of the financial neccessity and high intesity as a result of it. There has been evidence that shows a link between financial pressure on students and the coexistence of employment during their period of studies (Metcalf, 2003). Students who find themselves in this position often prioritise work over studies and make their studies a component of their lives, rather than the central aspect of it (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). Moreau & Leathwood (2006) found that working students with their multiple commitments often had feelings of stress as a result of balancing work and studies, with limited time to study or to get involved in university life and its engagement opportunities.

Furthermore, Neyt et al (2019) reveal that student work has an adverse effect on educational engagement rather than educational performance, specifically when students are working during the academic year instead of vacation periods. This is supported by the findings of Rochford, Connolly, & Drennan (2009) that it's not working per se that has an adverse effect on student outcomes but rather the number of hours that students work while attending tertiary institutions. In addition, Neyt et al (2019) observes that students who work and study often are not be affected by a delay in graduation but there is an impact experienced in their academic performance outputs. In a traditional multivariate regression Triventi (2014) finds that an academic progression penalty is found in high-intensity student workers with low-intensity work experiences also having negative effects. In addition, Jewell (2014) found evidence that student workers reaped the benefits of their work-study student experience by receiving higher salaries when graduating.

Finally, there are institutional factors such as subject information and large classes that students from LSES household need to contend with (McGhie, 2012). Two types of factors strongly affect the academic performance of students, namely internal and external classroom factors. The internal classroom factors include class schedules, learning facilities, homework, class test results, complexity of course material, English textbooks, English competency, class environment, lecture roles, use of technology, examination systems and class size. Whereas the external factors is inclusive of extracurricular activities, family problems, social and other problems as well as work and financial factors (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). As mentioned above, the primary focus of institutional factors is subject information and large classes. In Fenollar, Roman, & Cuestas (2007) a raw correlation analysis was undertaken that reveals that class size is significantly and negatively correlated to work avoidance and performance-approach goals. In addition, class size affects the size of groups as well

as the number of groups, which affects learning experiences and social relationships in classes, which in turn, affects students academic achievements (Fenollar, Roman, & Cuestas, 2007). Owston & Lupshenyuk (2011) add that large classes result in little opportunity for interaction between students and lecturers, decreased notetaking and lower lecture attendance, all affecting academic performance.

Owston & Lupshenyuk (2011) share that limited opportunity for engagement in class resulted in a decrease of 82% in discussion participation and a decrease of 91% in questions asked.

In an article, Heinesen (2009) expresses and displays the interaction between class size with parental education, gender and academic ability. The findings reveal that boys benefit more from smaller classes than girls; students whose mothers do not have a higher education benefit more than students whose mothers who do have a higher education and the low-ability students benefit more from smaller classes than high-ability students. This being said, (Heinesen, 2009) also finds that reducing class size is able to promote intergenerational socioeconomic mobility and it is able to have a positive effect in the promotion of equality amongst students. Overall, there are a large number of effects that class size.

Providing students with access to information and advice, connection to university services, high quality courses and programmes, and quality instruction and guidance are all critical components of institutional factors that could improve student engagement. (Pather, Norodien- Fataar, Cupido, & Mkonto, 2017). McGhie (2012) states that moral and academic support and encouragement from lecturers, non-academic staff, tutors and mentors are important. It assists in providing students with an understanding of coursework content but also prior to module selection provides avenues of explanation of what various modules entail. Although universities often provide student services aid within their various areas, first-generation students are often unaware of where to go to receive such information and/or assistance (Spengen, 2013).

All the above-mentioned factors are important components that need to be taken into consideration in the low socioeconomic status student experience. The solutions and interventions for these factors are essential in the development of students in general but even more so for students from LSES backgrounds. These solutions and interventions are also important for sustainable development plans and goals in order take make a significant impact in tertiary institutions.

3.6. Summary of chapter

This chapter discussed the influence of university education on upward socioeconomic mobility by reviewing the empirical research around the impact of education on economic and social growth and

development, experiences of students with low-socioeconomic status at universities, the role of universities in social upliftment of societies globally, and the role of universities in social upliftment of societies in South Africa.

Chapter 4

Research design and methodology

4.1. Introduction
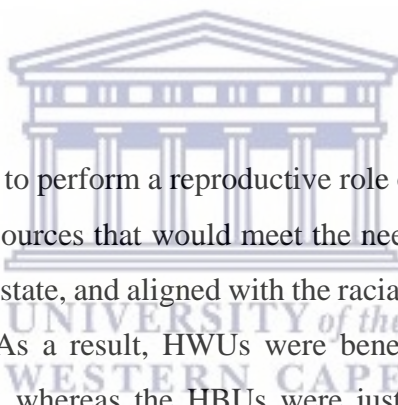
In this chapter, the researcher engages with the processes and measures employed in the study in to obtain the results. The researcher discusses the research design, methods and settings, in terms of the University of the Western Cape. The population, sample techniques and sample size are unpacked which is then followed by the analysis of the data collection. The chapter concludes with the relevant ethical considerations.

4.2. Research design

A mixed method approach is used for this study. According to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009), a mixed methods approach can be described as a type of research design in which quantitative and qualitative approaches are used for research methods, questions, analysis procedures, inferences, as well as data collection. The specific design is a sequential explanatory design. The sequential explanatory design collects quantitative and qualitative data in two phases. A quantitative online survey and face-to-face survey were used to collect demographic and socioeconomic data from students. This was followed by qualitative data collection which further explains and interprets the findings from the quantitative phase by means of unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. The two qualitative methods also provide a means for data triangulation.

4.3. Research setting

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) was established in 1959 as an institution for coloured people only. Initially, it was just an ethnic college but became a full university by 1973 (Keats, 2009). As a result, it was shaped to share the same features that were applicable to all other historically black universities (HBU) of the time. In the complexity of South African education history two distinct university types were formed, namely historically white universities (HWUs) which are described as the organic outgrowth of the undemocratic state of the time and the complete contrast, historically black universities (HBUs) (Wolpe, 1995). HBUs can be described as the artificial outgrowth of racially motivated planning. It was designed to provide education and training in restricted fields of study and relative to occupations, it was situated in the middle rather than upper levels of the stratification system, dictated by the apartheid system (as described in the problem statement section) (Wolpe, 1995).

Thus, its primary purpose was to perform a reproductive role of the apartheid system, specifically to make provision for human resources that would meet the needs of the coloured communities. This was designed by the apartheid state, and aligned with the racial stratification system of the prevailing social order (Wolpe, 1995). As a result, HWUs were beneficiaries of the social, economic and political demand of the time, whereas the HBUs were just a by- product of racially motivated planning.

By 1983, the institution gained its independence from the direct control from the political apartheid state, yet the institution under the leadership of Rector Jakes Gerwel took up a pivotal role in the struggle against the oppression and discrimination taking place at the time (Keats, 2009).

By 1998, the student populace at the UWC had transcended the initial coloured institution status and a reflection by (Dyers, 1999) shows that the home language of 63.9% of students was that of traditional black South African languages (Xhosa, South Soto, Zulu, Tswana, North Sotho, Tsonga, Venda, Swati and Ndebele) with 34.1% being the foundation of typical coloured household languages (English and Afrikaans), and the remaining 2% were other, which is indicative of the transition that the institution underwent as a result of the liberation of the university and the country at large. Although transition took place, one thing remained, the disadvantaged background of many of the students (Dyers, 1999).

The above provides a reflection of the current state of the institution's current race breakdown. The institution is more diversified but fundamentally, it is still primarily coloured and black in race resulting in large portions of the student population still being inherently from low middle socioeconomic status and a majority being first generation, and transitioning into second generation graduates in their families. As a result academic programmes at the university have been designed to meet the needs of society.

4.4. Research Methods

4.4.1. Quantitative methods

The study used a survey that was administered in two methods to collect demographic and socioeconomic data from students, an online questionnaire and interviewer-administered (face- to-face) questionnaires. According to Callegaro, Manfreda & Vehovar (2015), a survey relates to a method of systematic data collection, where people are asked questions through using standardised questionnaires for the purpose of analysing a targeted population. Traditional surveys are telephonic or face-to-face interviews administered by interviewers who record the respondents answers on paper (Callegaro, Manfreda, & Vehovar, 2015). In this case, face-to- face surveys were utilised as well as online surveys, better described as web surveys. The difference between the two is that, web surveys are self-administered by respondents (Callegaro, Manfreda, & Vehovar, 2015). With regard to this study, a standardised Google form was designed and sent out to final year students at UWC via the Registrar's office with a link attached to access the survey. The survey instrument is provided in the Appendix K.

4.4.2 Qualitative Methods

After initial analysis of the quantitative survey results, the qualitative data collection is used to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. The qualitative research was conducted through in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions. Kitzinger (1995) defines the focus group discussion as a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data. Focus groups share many common features with less structured interviews, but there are more to them than merely collecting similar data from many participants at once. A focus group is a group discussion on a particular topic organised for research purposes. This discussion is guided, monitored and recorded by a researcher (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Focus groups were used as a method in this study as the researcher felt that the nature of dicusussion will help elicit more information from a categeroy of respondents such as students.

The second qualitative component is the interviews. There are three fundamental types of research interviews: structured, semistructured and unstructured. Structured interviews are essentially, verbally administered questionnaires, in which a list of predetermined questions are asked, with little or no variation and with no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). In this study, semi-structured interviews were utilised which consist of several key questions that helped to define the areas to be explored, but also allowed the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Interview and focus group guides are provided in the Appendix L.

4.5. Population

The population for this study are final-year undergraduate students who are registered at the University of the Western Cape for the 2019 academic year.

Below is the table 1 that provides the breakdown of students per faculty at the University of the Western Cape for 2019 with the total amount of students being 4329.
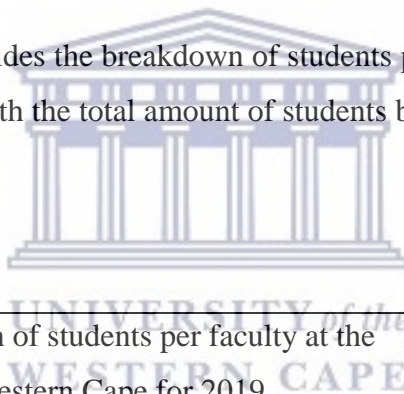
Table 1: Breakdown of students per faculty at the University of the Western Cape for 2019	
ARTS	1053
CHS	628
DEN	98
EMS	1181
EDU	462
LAW	329
NSCI	578
Total	4329

4.6. Sampling technique

The study initially proposed to use a non-random self-selected sampling technique through an online survey. This planned to enhance ease of access to a specific group which is final-year students. However, the sampling technique was changed when the survey was changed to a face-to-face survey.

In the face- to-face approach a random sampling technique was adopted. The researcher walked through the university and selected participants randomly after first asking them if they had participated in the online version or the survey and whether or not they were final-year students. Surveys were not administered to non-final year students or students who had already taken the online survey. This type of sampling is also known as chance sampling or probability sampling where each and every respondent in the population has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample and each one of the possible samples has the same probability of being selected (Kothari, 2004).

Another type of sampling is called deliberate sampling, it is also known as purposive or non-probability sampling. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe. When population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample based on the ease of access, it can be called convenience sampling (Kothari, 2004). Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative aspect of the study. According to Green & Thorogood (2004), the main reasons why participants are selected are because of the probability that useful data can be gathered from them.

4.7. Sample size

4.7.1. Quantitative sampling

From the 4329, only 300 students was needed to make the survey representative of the UWC final-year student population. Cochran's formula with an error of 5% assuming 75% of the student meet the requirement of being a full-time student. Calculation of the sample size resulted in a sample of 288 to be representative.

4.7.2. Qualitative sampling

The sample size for the interviews was nine and in the two focus groups that took place, there were 12 participants. The qualitative research sample size should be large enough to collect sufficient data to describe the phenomenon adequately, as well as address the research question (Creswell, 2009).

4.8. Data collection methods

4.8.1   Quantitative survey

The quantitative data were initially collected by means of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on theory and available literature on socioeconomic mobility. The survey determined the sociodemographic background of the students, information on funding of education and finally took demographic data from each student. The survey component was also used to recruit participants for the qualitative component of the study as students were able to respond at the end of the survey whether they wanted to participate in either focus groups, interviews or both.

4.8.2   Qualitative interviews

Interviews are similar to everyday conversations; however, they are focused on the researcher's needs for data, simultaneously (Thorogood & Green, 2004). The purpose of the interview method is to collect useful, in-depth information related to the research. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted. Qualitative data were collected by means of 9 semi-structured interviews and 2 focus group discussions.

4.8.3   Qualitative focus groups

Focus group discussions were beneficial to this current study, as they allowed the participants to engage with each other regarding their experiences with the phenomenon under discussion. Therefore, focus group discussions are useful in providing various perspectives on, or responses to, the phenomenon of the study. The researcher used a semi-structured approach, guided by the research question, in the focus group discussions. In this process, the researcher becomes more of a facilitator, or moderator, than an actual interviewer (Punch, 1998). Two focus group discussions were conducted comprising eight (8) and nine (9) participants, respectively.

4.9. Data collection procedure

4.9.1. Quantitative survey

A Google form was designed based on literature and was sent out as a link to all final year students once permission was obtained from the Registrar's office (Appendix C). The first email was sent on 7 May 2019 and repeated one more time on 21 May 2019. However, after two months of receiving a low response to the online version of the survey a decision was taken to change the approach to face-to-face administration.

4.9.2. Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions

After the researcher received permission from the University of the Western Cape (Appendix D) to conduct the study, and the quantitative online survey and face-to-face administration were done, respondents indicated in the survey whether or not they would want to further participate in the interview and/or focus group discussion.

The researcher explained the rationale of the study and their role as the research participants. The study was verbally explained to the potential participants; what is required of them, the advantages and disadvantages, the aim and the purpose of the study. Those that were willing to be involved were given information sheets (Appendix H and I) that explained further and a consent form (Appendix E and F) to complete. The participants were informed of their right to voluntarily participate and the right to discontinue at any point. The participants were informed about the use of audio-recordings which was stated on the consent form.

Students that participated in either interview or focus groups or both were selected from the survey phase based on their willingness to participate. The interviews and FGDs were then conducted on a day and at a time convenient for the students. Participants were provided with an information sheet prior to the interviews. Written consent was obtained at the time of the interview prior to any data collection. The qualitative interviews and focus groups gathered information on the perceived impact a tertiary education has on the socioeconomic mobility of students. The study used both focus groups and interviews for the purposes of triangulating the two data collection techniques. The in-depth interview was pilot tested on two (2) students to ensure that the questions asked would be understood by participants.

4.10. Data analysis

4.10.1. Quantitative Descriptive statistics

The data collected from the questionnaire are presented in terms of frequency and percentages to describe the population participating in the study using statistical software package (SPSS). The study also examined the associations between variables such as gender and SES, age and SES, and current employment and SES.

4.10.2. Qualitative

The qualitative data from both interviews and FGDs were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher then applied the steps of (Tesch, 1990) for qualitative data analyses which included:

- Reading through the transcripts in order to get a sense of the whole

- Selecting one interview at a time during the transcribing process to help the researcher to understand the meaning of the information in the interview

- Compiling a list of common themes and the common themes were then arranged into major topics using Atlas.ti.

- This was followed by the researcher abbreviating the topics as codes. With this list of codes, the researcher went back to the data and labelled the codes with appropriate segments of the text on Atlas.ti.

- The researcher then went through the list to combine topics that relate to each other on Atlas.ti.

- The reports for the codes and combined topics were created and assessed.

4.11. Trustworthiness

4.11.1. Reliability and validity:

The questionnaire was pilot tested on 15 students for content validity and face validity. Face validity aims to test at face value whether the questionnaire measures what it aims to measure and this was done by testing it on 15 students. No changes were needed to be done to the questionnaire. Content validity was done by sending the designed questionnaire to the supervisor to assess that the content is relevant to the objectives and will provide the information needed.

4.11.2. Trustworthiness:

Trustworthiness is defined as the believability of the researcher's findings, all that the researcher has done in planning, implementing and reporting the research to make the results credible (Polit & Beck, 2012). For this research study, credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability were used as trustworthiness criteria to ensure rigour of qualitative findings (Polit & Beck, 2012).

4.11.3. Credibility:

The researcher interacted and spent adequate time with the participants to allow for the collection of rich data, for the in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and for the development of a trusting relationship between researcher and participant.

4.11.4. Transferability:

Transferability is a type of validity that focuses on the applicability of the findings in one study for use in practice or further pursued research (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, &

Blackman, 2016). In this study, transferability is facilitated by the provision of a detailed description of the study, the collection of data and its analysis.

4.11.5. Confirmability:

Confirmability implies the degree to which the findings of a research study could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers and the collected data are a true reflection of the information provided by the research participants, and is not changed by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher kept detailed notes as to provide a clear audit trail of how themes and sub-themes were decided upon.

4.11.6. Dependability

Dependability includes the aspect of consistency, it refers to the stability of findings over time (Brink, Van der Walt, & Van Rensburg, 2012; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher promoted dependability through the use of the same interview guide with all the research participants. Participant characteristics are described. The researcher also made reflective notes of interviews and meetings with the participants.

4.12. Ethical consideration

The researcher submitted a request for ethics approval to the university's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC), outlining the study process. Approval was granted (Appendix D). In addition, the researcher requested, and received permission from the university (Appendices B, C & A) to conduct research among students.

Ethics considerations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were closely observed. For informed consent, the researcher undertook to inform the participants about the type of information sought from the participants, the reason/s for this information, how the participants were expected to participate in the study, as well as how their participation would affect the participant, directly or indirectly (Rossi et al., 2009; Kumar, 2014). The researcher assured participants that confidentiality would be maintained at all times; therefore, the participants were requested to sign confidentiality-binding forms for the focus group discussions, and consent forms for the individual interviews. The study participants are students, especially from

relative low socioeconomic background. Due to the vulnerability of the participants care and attention were taken throughout the entire research process to ensure no harm was done.

With the interviews, both anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, as the transcripts of interviews were anonymised and participants were known only to the researcher. Focus group discussions however, do not guarantee anonymity as participants are known to each other but confidentiality was maintained. During focus group discussions, participants signed a form stating that all information discussed in the group will be treated as confidential.

To further ensure confidentiality, hard copy datasheets were scanned and saved with all information collected electronically on a password-protected computer. Only the researcher had access to the information. No document or file was saved under the name of the participant. In the research report and all academic articles on this research project, the identity of the participants will be protected. After the regulated time of storage of 5 years, all datasheets will be shredded and recording will be deleted.

4.13. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, the researcher engages with the processes and measures employed in the study to obtain the results. The research design, methods and settings, in terms of the University of the Western Cape came under discussion. The population, sample techniques and sample size were also unpacked which was followed by the breakdown of the data collection methods and analysis. The chapter concluded with the ethical considerations for this study.

Chapter 5

Results – Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Introduction:

This chapter presents the analysis and a discussion of the findings. The chapter first unpacks the quantitative results obtained from the research and formulates the demographic characteristics of the study participants which leads into the socioeconomic background. The second part will analyse the qualitative results and discuss it. The first component that will be discussed is the views of students on the effects of university education completion on socioeconomic status. Looking at the programme of study, level of study and social capital acquired at university. The second component looks at socioeconomic status, breaking it down into economic impacts and social impacts. The third

component addresses students' expectations on how university education may enhance their socioeconomic mobility and that of their families. This gives the reader insight into types of movement with socioeconomic mobility and what influences socioeconomic mobility. The discussion then flow into the students perception of the role of the university in enhancing their socioeconomic mobility through direct and indirect impacts. The final component of the discussion and analysis looks at student experience and how it affects their socioeconomic mobility.

5.2. Quantitative data analysis and discussion:

5.2.1. Describing the socioeconomic background of students from the University of Western Cape:

5.2.1.1.   Demographic characteristics

Amongst the individuals who participated in this study (n=209), 66% were females (n=138) and 34% were males (n=71). The mean age for the participants is approximately 22.32 and the modal group is aged 22-25. 95.2% (n=199) of participants come from the lower tier age groups of 18-21 and 22-25. The racial breakdown of the participants were 61.7% (n=129) coloured and 32.1% (n=67) black which is 93.8% (n=196) of the participants. The demographic profile of the participants are presented in Table 2 below.
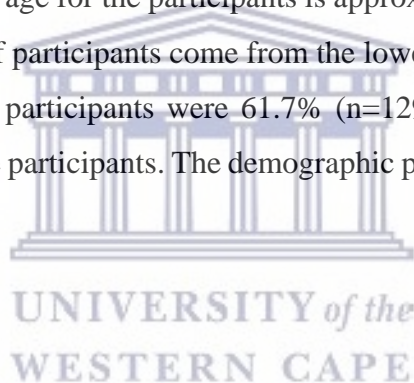
		Table 2: Demographic characteristics					
		Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Age	18-21	27	38.0	61	44.2	88	42.1
	22-25	40	56.3	71	51.4	111	53.1
	26-29	2	2.8	3	2.2	5	2.4
	30-33	1	1.4	3	2.2	4	1.9
	34-37	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	38+	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	0.5
	Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Race		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Total	71	100	138	100	209	100
Race	Black African	23	32.4	44	31.9	67	32.1
	Coloured	41	57.7	88	63.8	129	61.7
	Indian	4	5.6	3	2.2	7	3.3
	White	1	1.4	2	1.4	3	1.4
	Other	2	2.8	1	0.7	3	1.4
	Total	71	100	138	100	209	100

5.2.2. Socioeconomic background:

Additionally, it is found that 22.49% (n=94) of participants' parents are not working with 54.8% (n=228) working full time. Nearly double the number of mothers (n=60) in comparison to fathers (n=34) are unemployed but both parents who are working full time are equal to the same amount (n=114) for both. According to the levels of education of parents, 39.47% (n=165) of parents' highest level of education is a secondary education, 21.1% (n=84) of parents have a post-secondary education (excluding university) and 18.66% (n=78) of parents have a university level education.

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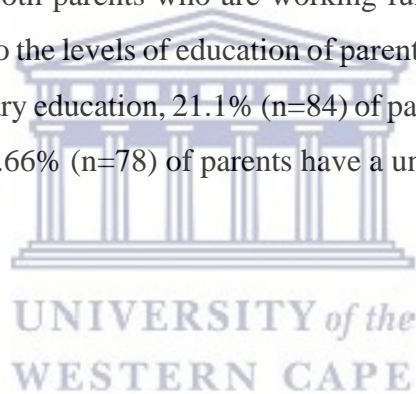
		Table 3: Educational background and working status of participants' parents					
		Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Father's Education Level	Unknown	12	16.9	24	17.5	36	17.3
	Primary school	7	9.9	10	7.3	17	8.2
	Secondary School	25	35.2	49	35.8	74	35.6

	Post-secondary school (not univer sity)	13	18.3	22	16.1	35	16.8
	University education	11	15.5	29	21.2	40	19.2
	None	2	2.8	2	1.5	4	1.9
	Other	1	1.4	1	0.7	2	1.0
	Total	71	100	137	100	208	100
Mother's Education Level	Unknown	3	4.2	9	6.6	12	5.8
	Primary school	6	8.5	5	3.6	11	5.3
	Secondary School	27	38.0	64	46.7	91	43.8
	Post- secondary school (not university)	16	22.5	33	24.1	49	23.6
	University education	14	19.7	24	17.5	38	18.3
	None	4	5.6	1	0.7	5	2.4
	Other	1	1.4	1	0.7	2	1.0
	Total	71	100	137	100	208	100
Father's Employment Status	Unknown	9	12.7	10	7.3	19	9.1
	Not working	11	15.5	23	16.8	34	16.3
	Part-time/contract work	5	7.0	10	7.3	15	7.2
	Full-time work	37	52.1	77	56.2	114	54.8
	Other	9	12.7	17	12.4	26	12.5
	Total	71	100	137	100	208	100
Mother's Employment Status	Unknown	3	4.2	3	2.2	6	2.9
	Not working	20	28.2	40	29.2	60	28.8
	Part-time/contract work	3	4.2	10	7.3	13	6.3
	Full-time work	42	59.2	72	52.6	114	54.8

Other	3	4.2	12	8.8	15	7.2
Total	71	100	137	100	208	100

Parents who have a university qualification have a majority in full time jobs at 79.5%. (62 parents out of 78) with the number of mothers and fathers with university qualification and full- time employed, both being 31. In comparison, the second largest education level with full-time employment is secondary education for fathers (59.5%) and post-secondary education (notuniversity) [57.1%] for mothers. In both the educational status and employment status of parents, participants show that their knowledge of their mothers' information is more easily accessible than that of their fathers.

Below is Figure 1 which is a representation of the household income breakdown of participants.
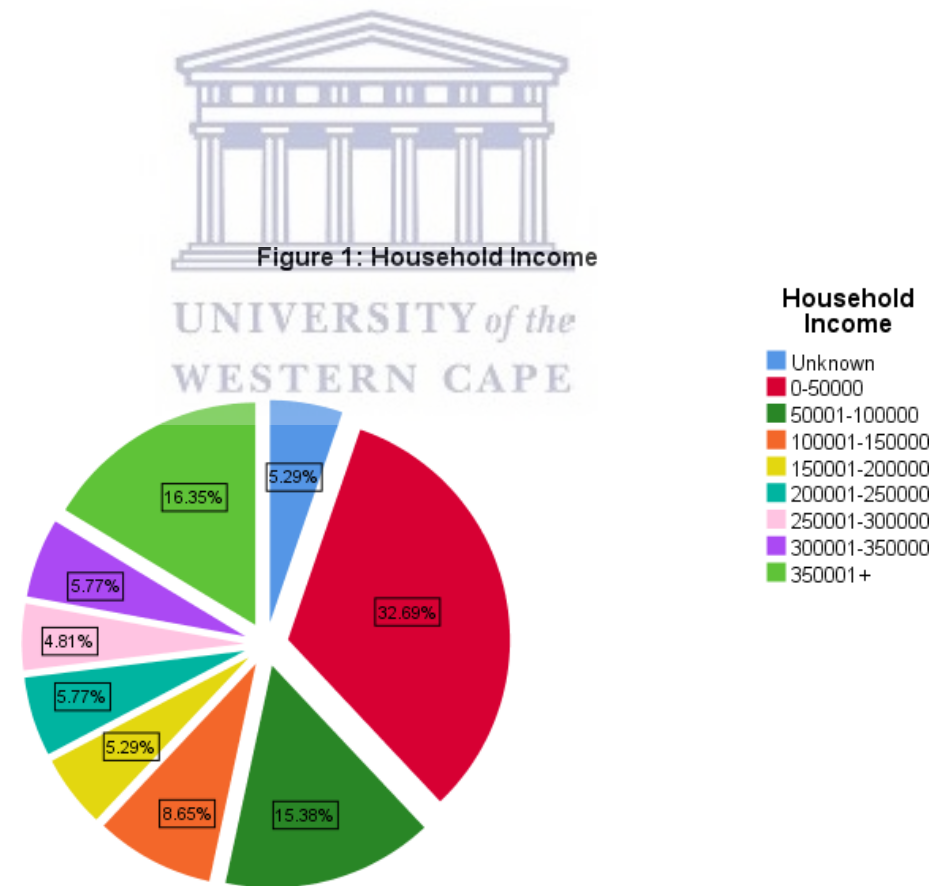

Figure 1: Household income breakdown of participants

The tiers with the highest number of participants of household income per annum are as follows, 32.7% (n=68) are from the lowest tier of 0-50000, 16.3% (n=34) are from the highest tier of 350001+ and 15.4% (n=32) are from the second lowest tier of 50001-100000.

Nearly 1 out of every 2 (48.1%, n=100) participants is able to apply for South Africa's National Student Financial Scheme (NSFAS) which before 2018 had a criterion of a household income below R122000 per annum. (NSFAS, Content/Bursary-scheme, 2020). The data show that only 38.4% (n=80) receive a combined primary and secondary income from scholarship

/bursary/financial aid, with 54.3% (n=113) being funded by their parents for primary and secondary income. 67.2% (n=45) of black participants fall into the criteria to qualify for NSFAS with only 39.9% (n=51) of coloured students qualifying. Although black participants' percentages are high, the large number of coloured participants dictate that there are also large numbers of coloured students who require financial assistance. At least 46.7% of male participants and 48.91% of female participants fall into the low socioeconomic status background with household incomes below R100 000 per annum.

Part of the R100 001-R150 000 per annum category also falls into the R122 000 cut-off to qualify for NSFAS, pushing both males and female over the 50% mark for low socioeconomic status backgrounds. 73.13% of black students and 49.22% of coloured students are below the R150 000 level, making the low socioeconomic background students primarily people of colour. The coloured student population percentage is lower than that of the black student percentage in terms of low socioeconomic background but the quantity of coloured is more than that of black students.

The data of parents' employment status and household income as well as the data of parents' education level and household income shows that the level of employment status has a greater impact on household income than that of educational level. The highest two tiers of household income (300001-350000 and 350001+) have an even spread among secondary, post-secondary and university education for parents but where employment status is concerned, full-time employment has the highest percentage in all tiers (from 0-50000 up until 350001+), and the highest count for the 350001+ tier is 54 (79.41% of the 350001+ tier). This information demonstrates that majority of parents' highest education level is secondary education (38.73%, n=165), with 32,69% of household income being in the lowest tier (0-50000) and 1 out of every two students (48.1%, n=100) is able to qualify for NSFAS. Resulting in at least 40%-50% of students falling into the low socioeconomic status group.

5.3. Qualitative data analysis and discussion:

In collecting qualitative data, in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with participants who opted in at the time of the survey. Of the 9 participants who were interviewed, four were male and five were female. Similarly, in the focus group discussion 10 participants were split equally; five were male and five were female.

In the sections that follow discussions on how participants feel a tertiary education will affect their socioeconomic status and mobility are presented, this is followed with outlining specific pathways through which this occurs.

5.3.1. The views of students on the effects of university education completion on socioeconomic status.

According to Okioga (2013), SES is the combined economic and sociological measure of an individual and their family's economic position, social position and work experience relative to others. Socioeconomic status can be divided into three categories, for example high, middleor low socioeconomic status. In this theme we have added economic position (occupation andfinances), social position (family and community perception) and work experience. Winkleby, Jatulis, Frank, & Fortmann (1992) acknowledge that SES is a complex phenomenon with many variables, but foundationally it is conceptualised as a combination of occupational, financial and educational influences. Combining these two definitions, we will look at the social, economic and educational positions of individuals.

When coming to university we find that students enter into the tertiary education sector for a variety of reasons but all these reasons are embedded in one primary goal, which is to attain auniversity degree. Additional reasons include knowledge acquisition, skills development, better employability and financial improvement, which may all lead to improvement in standard of living and socioeconomic status. In the paragraphs that follow the views of studentson how university education will affect their socioeconomic status is examined and presented.

5.3.1.1. Education

The outcome of the qualitative component of the study, (FGDs and interviews) suggested that participants perceived the act of getting an education in the university on its own as a means to achieve socioeconomic mobility as not sufficient. In understanding how participants perceived education as a means of attaining socioeconomic mobility, the following categories emerged: level

of study, type of study, soft skills or component of study and social capital acquired at an educational institution. In the paragraphs that follow each of these sub-themes will be discussed.

The experience of students gaining a tertiary qualification as a means to improve their socioeconomic status and move them to the next level is evident in the quotes. Some highlighted and emphasised that education was a goal to achieve and that obtaining formal tertiary education was a natural trajectory. In addition, participants acknowledged being first generation graduates and hence the importance of completing a tertiary education. Participants also highlighted that they realise that a matric certificate is not enough to advance in the work environment.

> "….university was always like a goal for me. Get my degree, get a job, like that was always instilled in me as a young child. Also, I've always been academic. I've always loved to learn. So coming here was also natural for me in that aspect, in that I wantedto learn, I wanted to gain more knowledge in the fields that I'm interested in." (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

> "Just to make something better of myself. Being the first, yeah, I think if I graduate then I will be the first graduate in my family from university." (Interview Participant 3,Female, Arts)

> "To further my knowledge and to increase my base of knowledge, you know, to attain a degree. Naturally, it comes along with being at university but moreover it's to give me for lack of a better phrase the leg up coming out of matric instead of going to a jobstraight away, just to have something behind myself to aid me in the work place. Because these days it's not, it's also who you know but they want to see what you knowas well And if you can contribute to the company bringing in knowledge, certain skillsand just furthering their enterprise as well. But fundamentally furthering yourself and that's what made me come to university." (Interview Participant 9, Male, Accounting)

The results from the interviews as the above quotes illustrate show that participants perceive an education as key in enhancing their socioeconomic status and ultimately achieving socioeconomic mobility. Baum & Payea (2004) state that there is a financial investment return for society on higher education for individuals. This educational investment results in increasing productivity. The higher earnings of educated workers as a result of being qualified generates higher tax payments at local, provincial, and national levels, and consistent productive employment reduces dependence on public income transfer programmes. Overall,

this benefits the economy of a country as well as the society within that country. Hill, Hoffman, & Rex (2005) support this by stating that social benefits of a workforce with greater educational attainment and skills can be traced to the enhanced worker productivity associated with greater educational attainment. These productivity gains translate into higher output and incomes for the economy. In summary, the economic benefits according to the human capital theory, reveal that education increases the employment skills, productivity and earning power of individuals which contribute to economic growth (Mncube & Harber, 2011).

The research data show that the initial expectations of students and research literature align but there is more than just the linear thought process of attaining a degree and experiencing improvement in socioeconomic circumstances. In the theme of education we find that the programme of study, level of study, component of study and social capital acquired at education institution all play a holistic role in the development of students and their ability to experience a shift in socioeconomic mobility.

5.3.1.2. Programme of study

There are seven different faculties and multiple areas of study at the University of the Western Cape. The interviews revealed that participants believe that different fields of study affect the decision making of students as a result of possible opportunities available in their various potential occupations and requirements to access these opportunities. According to Hill, Hoffman, & Rex (2005) what individuals earn has a strong relation to their educational attainment or level of study. Those who have completed high school would earn more than those who have not. Similarly, someone with a bachelor's degree will earn more than someone with a high school diploma or certificate and beyond that, someone with post-graduate education will earn more than someone with only a bachelor's degree.

We find that students from certain study fields believe that further studies beyond their undergraduate degree will be required in order to experience improved standards of living, socioeconomic status and socioeconomic mobility. This is due to the fact that their undergraduate degree is not sufficient to gain access to job opportunities that will allow them to reach the levels of socioeconomic status that they are striving for. In addition, in order to experience the expected socioeconomic mobility that an undergraduate degree was expected to bring according to literature, a postgraduate degree will be required.

> *"I feel like a postgraduate degree definitely, depending on what degree it is,*
>
> *will playin your favour. Like I'm doing an Arts degree right now, so my goal is*
>
> *to do my Honours*

and my Masters because like I've been looking for jobs and things like that and you just get better jobs, more opportunities if I further my studies, if I do my Honours and do my Masters. Because obviously each to their own but for me making money plays a very big role. And the better your degree, like the status of that degree like Honours, Masters, the better income you'll get at the end of the day, but obviously with that goes the experience." (FGD 1 Participant 4, Female, Arts)

Another participant further supports this after being asked whether she thought her degree will enhance her chances of getting a job after graduation. She responded by saying:

"*After this graduation, I don't think so because of the subjects that I do. I just feel like if, like I want to go into psychology, but you need to have a…you need to have Honours. You need to do your Masters before you can actually work as a psychologist. So I think now I will have to study further.*" (Interview Participant 4, Female, Arts)

As discussed above, various degrees or fields of study have different requirements as revealed by the above quotes. Participants perceive that they will "*get better jobs*" and "*more opportunities*" if they further their studies. Participants specifically link this to postgraduate studies such as Honours and Master's degrees and this highlights or implies that accessibility to job opportunities may become easier when postgraduate qualifications are attained across the study fields imbedded in the BA degree. Interview Participant 4 reaffirms this when she says that, "*You need to do your Master's before you can actually work as a psychologist*" and highlights the fact that in order to be psychologist it is not sufficient to only have a BA degree with psychology as majors but specialisation through postgraduate studies will allow for this to take place.

However, in other fields of study students feel that an undergraduate degree is sufficient to exit the education system and start the journey of climbing the socioeconomic ladder. They perceive that it will provide them with access to job opportunities and it will meet the criteria required from places of employment. These are reflected in the following quotes:

"*In the beginning you need the experience more than what you need the postgraduate education. Because me with a Bachelor's degree and someone with a postgraduate degree we are going to go into the same entry level job.*" (FGD 1 Participant 1, Female, Science)

> "*Getting a postgrad degree or qualification might enlighten you on other opportunities. However, it doesn't guarantee you a better position in terms of employment because then you would still be having entry level experience and nowadays they don't even advertise entry level positions, especially in the social work profession. They would be asking you maybe five years of experience of which you would be spending maybe six or seven years at university pursuing a degree and a Master's*" (FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, Social Work)

In comparison to the students studying BA, these participants perceive that that their study fields have different requirements and so their decision making in their academic journey becomes different as a result of these requirements and the opportunities that come with them. Access to jobs initially is not dependent on whether you have an undergraduate or postgraduate degree,and does not necessarily imply a better salary or higher position. This brings to light that thereare different levels of study requirements depending on your field of study and the requirementsin various occupations in order to gain access to various opportunities. In areas like science wefind that undergraduate qualifications are sufficient to gain access to job opportunities and startnavigating the socioeconomic ladder but what about the fields of study where undergraduate studies are not sufficient? This leads to the importance of postgraduate studies in the lives of students. In part, the strong correlation between educational attainment and earnings is justifiedby (Hill, Hoffman, & Rex, 2005) but this is dependent on the field of study and the level of study in that specific field.

5.3.1.3. Level of study

Postgraduate studies, according to findings, have been able to play a variety of different roles in the progression of students through their academic journey and into their occupation. In theprevious category, the programme studied influenced the decision-making process of participants as to whether they continued studying or not. For students in the BA fields it is notonly a requirement but a necessity when moving out of the academic and into the work space if they want to fully operate in their occupation and gain access to better opportunities. Yet, there are various other ways that postgraduate studies can be utilised in the journey of studentsinto employees. One of the prominent reasons for doing postgraduate studies is that the initialneed to have a postgraduate qualification when entering into the work space in certain fields may not be there but as progress in their various fields take place it becomes a need.

"There may even come a time where I would have to further my studies to achieve a sort of, to work at a certain position or to achieve a certain level of success in the field, because some jobs are only offered to someone with a Master's or a PhD, you know. So not progressing my studies could start to hinder me if I decide to take the route of an employee in the science field." (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

"…it [postgraduate studies] *will serve you in the long run in terms of promotion, in terms of applying for other opportunities. But my perspective and understanding is that it all starts with the experience".* (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

Furthermore, additional reasons are revealed below. Some of the reasons include that an honours year equates to a year of work experience. The experience and postgraduate studies trade-off is important to note because it plays a role in students' decision making. Participants also highlighted that they perceive that a postgraduate degree opens up more opportunities and provides more career options. In addition, postgraduate studies were viewed as a lifeline in case they were unsuccessful in finding a job. Thus postgraduate studies can provide students with a good quality safety net if things do not go according to plan in the pursuit of a job.

"So for the accounting degree, when you go and apply for an accounting, I'm talking specifically an account degree, they don't look for B.Com Accounting, they look for B.Com Accounting Honours. So they expect you to have that, that extra year of Honours as a sacrifice for work experience. So say it's fine you don't have work experience you do your Honours we will give you the work experience after that." (FGD 1 Participant 5, Male, Accounting)

"Within the realm and the profession of social work, with a postgraduate degree, what it does is give you an opportunity to go into academia to go and lecture, you know, referring to the academic space. But in terms of the profession itself where it started, and what society's understanding of social work is a meaning of one on one, working and helping people solve their problems, is that we call it production social work, no." (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

"I think sub-consciously there's also that fear of me not having a job next year, you know. So I think my thinking now is like okay, I won't be studying, and I'll probably not have a job. I'll still be looking for a job, then what I'm doing, what am I going to be doing in the meantime, you know. So now, the mind says okay, continue studying, and

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then look for a job as well. If you find a job, it can be quickly changed to a part time rather than full time". (FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, Social Work).

Overall, the different levels of study provide students with many perceived benefits but decisions are made based on personal situations which relate to job requirements, their type of degree or field of study, the personal life positions in relation to themselves and family circumstances and finally the potential that the level of qualification holds in order to get them to where they want to be.

5.3.1.4. Component of study (soft and additional skills)

In addition to the skills developed as a result of knowledge obtained through the accredited education component of a university degree, some skills are developed at university or during the period of time that students attend university. These are essential in the holistic personal development of students as individuals and contribute to their end product as members of work environments and society. Schulz (2008) states that lecturers have a key role in developing the soft skills of students at university. These soft skills can be taught through courses which are able to effectively and efficiently enhance the soft skills of individuals. Theses soft skills are central to shaping personalities of individuals and equipping individuals for the work environment and life in general. There is great appreciation amongst employers for soft skills in driving the success of companies through activities where soft skills play an integral part but there is a dissatisfaction among university graduates in the nurturing of these soft skills at institutions (Gruzdev, Kuznetsova, Tarkhanova, & Kazakova, 2018).

"*A lot of university graduates would come out but they have no skills in inter-personal relationship you know skill set. Things like you know just basic stuff you know, just, just to create customer relationships or clientele relationships and so forth. So those are the things that are not taught in universities and schools per se.*" (Interview Participant 6, Male, Economics)

"*You meet someone on campus, have a conversation or you'll be part of a society that will give you like communication skills, that will give you management skills, that will give you organisational skills. So I think just the degree in itself, not just, what I learn in the lecture hall, the whole experience, the whole three, four years that you are here, you gain so much that makes you more employable, that makes you a better person in the greater society.*" She continues and says "*Growing up I wasn't really, I wasn't accustomed to getting like an allowance and whatever. And from my first year, I could*

tell that I had no experience working with money. I did not know how to budget, I did not know what to put where. So I think that, that, that knowledge of knowing how to, how to, how do you say… how to manage your money, how to distribute your funds will also have an impact on how you move or how fast you move. Because if I'm getting a salary every month and it's just leaving my bank account then you, you, theoretically then you would think that I would sit in the same place, you know." (FGD 1 Participant 1, Female, Science)

"*I work on campus. So I'm learning stuff that I can use for my…like for whatever job I have. Like I'm learning stuff now that I can use later in life. I was a PA facilitator last year. I like the skills that I learnt then I can use later in life.*" She continues and says, "*With regards to, like the skills that I learn, like I said, the, like I have to learn how to work with people. I have to learn office, the office dynamics -Like the, I don't know the roles that people play and my role and then, you know, so I feel like that will, it will definitely help me in the future. Like when I have a job then I can just refer back to okay, so this happened. I have to think about it like this.*" (Interview Participant 4)

"*You come from schools where you've never seen all things like this. You've never seen areas like this. You're never given this type of responsibility whereby the university gives you your money and tells you learn how to buy your own food. Learn how to manage a budget. Learn how to become, come on time. There's your lecturer, no one is telling you to come to univers-, no one tells you to be on time, you can come whenever you want. Those are indirect lessons we all get.*" (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

Participants thus believe that holistic growth goes beyond just what is taught in a lecture hall and the opportunities provided at university give students the opportunity to develop other skills. These additional skills are perceived to add to an individual's personal growth and through this, companies will experience the benefit of value added by individuals. Participants clearly identified skills, ranging from "inter-personal" skills, "communication skills" to "office dynamics" as well as "Management skills" and "Organisational skills" that they obtain at university and can be used to successfully navigate post-university life and experience the socioeconomic changes they desire. In addition to these skills, money management skills are perceived to be important, how to budget, which requires individuals to allocate funds to cover costs, how to save and invest. These money management skills are perceived to be essential in terms of the impact that is made on one's socioeconomic situation and how fast one progresses socioeconomically. If money comes in and

leave an individual's account, change will not come and stagnation will result rather than socioeconomic mobility.

5.3.1.5. Social capital acquired at university

Social capital refers to the relationship networks that come as a result of group membership and social position. Through social capital the opportunities for social and personal development of young people are affected and their expectations of moving forward in life is also formulated around various relationships of social capital that has been built up (Nunn, Johnson, Monro, Bickerstaffe, & Kelsey, 2007). As individuals progress on the academic ladder, and into the higher education sphere they gain direct access to active members of academic communities. Lecturers of students at university belong to external groups in their fields which allow students to gain access to this resource (Jones, 2013):

> "I've been giving QSC for, for four years now, four years. So all the people I've been giving to is only part-time people. So people in position of Old Mutual, Investec, Metropolitan. There are people who work in these companies you know. And I have a stock, like a lot of stock full of, it is employing these people that are working in HR. I'vegot a network. So for me just giving them a class every day and just speaking to them about their problems. Obviously, you know they're going to, people give you their problems, and you try to deal with them you know. So it became like a friendship thing.So like me now next year I'm going to work. These are people I send a message and saylike yoh, I'm looking for job next year. They are hands on. So they, hey Jerome, come this side we have a job here for you." (FGD 1 Participant 2, Male, Economics)

> "The lecturers in my faculty generally don't just lecture. So they, they have the connection to, to further your, I want to say job opportunities which there's a large partof them that have that, that connection you need or you want. So as in UWC, lecturers'perspective, yes, they do enhance your socioeconomic mobility assuming you make theright friends with the right lecturers. And likewise, if you don't make a good impressionit could also go the other way". (FGD 1 Participant 5, Male, Accounting)

" There's also a lot of students with lots of connections that I, when I initially came here I assumed your tutor, your mentors and your lecturers are the ones you need to look to because they are the ones that have all the cards, all the keys. They're the onesthat have the life experience. But the more you spend at university you don't actually know what the other students have experienced and how keys they also hold for you." He continues and says that "*the people around you are the people that are actually going to be the ones that you're looking at and that's looking at you when you need helpor when you need a job or when they need a job. Because you don't know what kind ofI guess, the word to use is karma that you are creating at the university*". (FGD 1 Participant 5, Male, Accounting)

At university, access to potential networks and external resources through these networks takes place at different levels and is able to reap personal benefits rather than just the upward (from lecturers to students) social capital that Jones (2013) discusses. Participants highlighted that being tutors broadened their networks and gave them access to active members of working communities, particularly in part-time studies. This would not have happened if they had merely just been a student studying at university, but through taking the opportunities presented at the institution to broaden their capacity they have gained access to further networks. This is reflective of downward social capital, from individuals as tutors, gaining access to their students. Another example of this is when lecturers tap into the networks of students. Others indicate and identify their lecturers as sources of building networks. Similar to that which has been mentioned by Jones (2013), university lecturers become networks of students and through these networks students are able to connect to opportunities at the institution but also external to the institution as a result of the connections that lecturers have obtained, switching the roles of opportunity and creating upward social capital for individuals. Furthermore, the opportunity for students to tap into fellow students' connections and networks are often not expected. Through the social capital of students' families and/or personal experience and networks built up, fellow students are walking opportunities that are able to be accessed. This type of network building is lateral social capital, student to student. Through these networks social capital is obtained and developed at universities for students. It is important to identify that upward, downward

and lateral social capital are all mutual because just as much as students can tap into the individuals that surround them, those individuals are able to tap into the connections and networks that the student has built up too.

5.3.2. Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Central to the study is the role of socioeconomic status in the lives of participants. Education has been identified as the catalyst to impacting socioeconomic status and the impact of that catalyst can be seen across two spectrums, economic and social. Under the theme of socioeconomic status we have economic impact and social impact as subthemes. Economic impact is broken down into occupation, finances, work experience and standard of living. The social impact component is broken down into family perception and community perception. The results show the multi-layered nature of socioeconomic status and the importance of education in each layer.

5.3.2.1. Economic Impact

a. Occupation

Intra-generational social mobility or occupational mobility, investigates individuals' employment history over their life course (Falcon & Joye, 2013). As a result an individual's occupation is important in socioeconomic status elevation. It provides individuals with the platform to improve in all other areas that pertain to socioeconomic status. Generally, the primary indicators in SES determination comes from educational and financial influences rather than occupational. Through education and finances the resource aspect of SES is represented but occupation and occupational prestige specifically, an explicit indicator of social status are revealed (Fujishiro, Xu, & Gong, 2010). As discussed above in the first theme, level of education is essential for students in different fields of study because it is ableto impact what job they are able to obtain and occupational prestige that they are able to establish.

> "I looked into it a little and I saw that like with my BA degree I can only do, like so much with it. I can only like maybe become a receptionist or something basic. So I feellike I have to go further if I want to get a better job. And then that in turn will make my status go up." (Interview Participant 4, Female, Arts)

> "*Like just an entry-level job I'd be earning close to what my mother is earning now. And from like the conversations that I've had with most of the people here at the careerday and like the science facul-, oh, science industry or where I'm trying to go into.*" (FGD 1 Participant 1, Female, Science)

> "*I think it will boost my confidence in a way because now I know I will be working and I will be independent. And people will no longer be looking down at me, especially family, or like the people surrounding the area where like I used to stay. So now, I know that I will be having some kind of dignity back home*". (FGD 2 Participant 2, Female, Social Work)

Based on the results, participants revealed that they perceive that level of study may affect occupation and prohibit them from attaining the desired occupation that they want. Others reported that they perceive that their degree would allow them to get a job that provided them with a socioeconomic platform that allows them to be able to reach the same income level as their parents. Some participants were of the perception that working would make them more "confident" and "independent". This was in addition to the fact that it also gave them their dignity back and this is highlighted with comments like "people will no longer be looking down at me". This makes known the different dimensions to the role of occupation in building and improving one's socioeconomic status. Occupation also flows into another key area in economic position, which is finances or income.

b. Finances

As mentioned previously, income plays a crucial role in improving an individual's socioeconomic status (Fujishiro, Xu, & Gong, 2010; Okioga, 2013). Participants clearly indicate that the steps in moving from a degree to the impact on socioeconomic status, requiresa good job or occupation which results in better pay (income). It highlights the importance of the role of occupation and shows the interconnectedness between occupation and finances in order to experience a better socioeconomic status. (Winkleby, Jatulis, Frank, & Fortmann, 1992).

> "*You need to get your postgrad Honours, Master's. Get a job so that you can earn money to, to get a higher status. So I feel like it will help. It will definitely boost it so that, like I can earn more money than I am now so*

that I can move into a better place or get a higher job". (Interview Participant 4, Female, Arts)

"*Initially there's no change because the pay is pathetic in the beginning ... But once you make it through all the sifting so to say then the pay is* (good), *and then my socioeconomic status will rise*". (FGD 1 Participant 5, Male, Accounting)

"*So that's how I believe that my socioeconomic status would definitely change becausethere would be that shift from being someone that I was once a student depending on someone else to now being someone that's working and making my own money. Hence,I could also maybe get a car, whatever, buy groceries, and help my mom whatever. Sothat's how I feel like it would have a shift on my status.*" (FGD 2 Participant 4, Male, Nursing)

The perceptions of participants are portrayed as both positive (that the education will "*boost*" them into a better place or job and that will improve the amount of money they can earn) and negative (entry level pay is "*pathetic*" which will result in no change to their socioeconomic status). This is dependent on many factors; the type of job, occupational position and family socioeconomic status which is all subjective to individuals. However, it was evident that manyparticipants perceived that the transition from a student to an employee as positive in its contribution to shifting their socioeconomic status as they would be earning their own money. The majorityheld this perception because many of them come from LSES households and the ability to earn their own money is crucial to them. What is prominent in many of the participants is that money earned is important, whether it be that the initial "*boost*" which makes an impact or that with time, "*sifting*" and progression, a desired level of income that matches aspirations is reached in order to fulfil socioeconomic expectations.

c. Work Experience

The concept of work experience has been mentioned many times in the education theme, withindividuals experiencing a trade-off between whether to continue studying or go out and gain work experience. Fundamental to socioeconomic status, work experience provides occupational stature which allows for potentially better jobs and/or higher paying salaries. Okioga (2013) reveals that work experience is one of the key

components in meauring the socioeconomic status of an individual and their family. Under occupation there is a deeper concept of occupational prestige which was eluded to in the occupation section of socioeconomic status. Occupational prestige encompasses income and educational attainmentwhich an individual is able to obtain better jobs, explore and obtain positions, which contributesto improvement of SES (Saifi & Mehmood, 2012). Occupational prestige directly measures thesocial standing of the job and job holder (Fujishiro, Xu, & Gong, 2010). This occupational prestige comes as a result of work experience which comes through educational attainment andresults in better income.

"*So one would ask that why would they pay me because I have Master's in law and don't have that particular experience in that field, so I feel like it depends. You must investigate what kind of degree you have because if you've got, yeah, you don't have the experience, you still need to go do articles which means that you need to go learn first before you can start any job*". (FGD 1 Participant 3, Male, Law)

"*Your salary, first of all, in your employment is based on your years of experience. Andso it's either then you have a postgraduate degree and you're over qualified, so peopledon't employ you. Or you have the degree but you don't have the experience*". He continues and says that *"so that's why apart from the socioeconomic circumstances mydecision has been, and it, I stick to that decision. My commitment to that decision is toexit the system, higher education, go work, gain the necessary experience whilepursuing postgraduate studies part time.*" (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

"*Although you get your degree over time and you have the necessary knowledge for your degree, work experience plays too big of a role these days as in you needed to have started working from the second year into, to prepare yourself because you don'tknow what kind of competition you're going to go up against. Yes, it gets you through that initial, when they say you meet the requirements you meet the paper but you don'tmeet their, if they, they have their own person requirements they put down and as opposed to someone that's been working to someone that just came out*

fresh, they don'twant to start over. They're looking at someone that knows, that can say listen, this person knows". He continues and says that "*an overall perspective I would think that work experience eventually trumps the postgrad in the sense of you can always go backto get your postgrad but you can never get back that time you needed to get those few years work experience just to make yourself a bit more desirable.*" (FGD 1 Participant5, Male, Accounting)

Students are confronted with the reality of potentially being overqualified or being qualified beyond the level that they will be remunerated or even being highly qualified but still lacking the experience, and therefore not being employed because of not meeting the job criteria. Companies are looking for value for money when paying a potential employee and in certain fields' postgraduate studies is less beneficial than work experience. All of this is field dependent and it reveals that each individual needs to make a decision based on their own set of circumstances and job requirements which level of study is best suited to them. The salary of certain occupations is determined by years of experience and affects financial gain and potential opportunity. As a result students need to decide what is more important and that trade- off between postgraduate studies and going to attain work experience comes into effect. Therefore, students at an early stage need to plan the course of their careers, whether to study further, work and study part-time, or work and then come back to study.

The reality is that the entry level requirements goes up to a certain point in terms of qualification but eventually what differentiates individuals from others, is work experience. Students concur that the option of doing postgraduate studies will always be available, whether it be part-time or going back to study but the potential time and opportunityto accumulate work experience you can never get back in certain fields in order to obtain occupational prestige which is important in contributing to socioeconomic status.

d. Standard of living

According to Halam, Dywili, & Nwokolo (2017), there are two ways to define standard of living. Firstly, it can be described as the access to services, ownership of goods and quality ofresidence, through this the economic development of a country can be monitored as cited in the South African Audience Research Foundation (2021) and

secondly, standard of living pertains to the material circumstances in which people live, consume good and services, and the ability to access economic resources as cited in The Social Report (2016).

> "*So if you come to an organisation with experience and higher qualifications it does open more doors to you. So it will kind of result in better living circumstances for me.*" (Interview Participant 5, Female, Arts)

> "*We started renovating our house, like two years ago, and we didn't finish because youknow, the money ran out or whatever. And I would like to finish that for them. I wouldlike for them to see their vision. Because they had like such a beautiful plan for the house and the way it turned out, like what's been done, it's gorgeous, it's amazing. ButI want them to see their vision come to life.*" (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

> "*So that means renovating, having a bigger house, extending the house. Making sure you buy a car for your grandmother, having someone to drive your grandmother backand forth, maybe an uncle. My uncle can keep this car so that when my grandmother needs to be taken to hospital she can have someone to do that because I'm not going tobe staying there, I'm going to be staying maybe here or maybe in Joburg. So I won't beat home but actually, I'm going to be making change at home.*" (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

> "*Economically speaking, I can earn more which leads to the increase or the levelling up so to say of my standard of living. I come from like a middle class, to be more specific, lowerish middle class to middle class and having a degree might get me that boost to go from middle to upper. I mean getting a well-paid job based on my degree itwould give me the funding and let's say the tools to increase my life. Live a better life, finance things to you know just in case my well-being and my standard of living as a whole.*" (Interview Participant 9, Male, Accounting)

Participants highlighted the breakdown of how the progression of higher education eventually affects standard of living. They emphasise the move from qualification, experience, occupationor opportunities which provides an income and leads to better living circumstances. Participants also provide examples of a better standard of living.

Improvement in standard of living does not mean that a shift in socioeconomic status takes place, but a shift in socioeconomic status does not take place without standard of living improving. As Halam, Dywili, & Nwokolo (2017) shares, an improvement in standard of living is essential to the growth of inviduals as well as an indicator to economic development of nations.

5.3.2.2. Social Impact

e. Family perception

The family's perception of success for individuals starts at the point of graduation. Tensions emerge between being genuinely excited for the graduation and the expectation of now supporting the family. This brings to light that individual's family's perspective change because they see the graduate as providing in the household but also because they change the reputation of the family amongst the community.

> "*You know, for black parents if you are home, the black community, even the, I think, have you seen grans here on campus? Have you seen our mothers how excited they are-?*
>
> " She continues and says, "*the whole point of them being excited is that you are goingto work in your house in order for people to see that there's actually somebody working.*"(Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

> "*So it's always a personal choice as to whether or not that will elevate you amongst your family members or it doesn't. It really just depends on a personal level for a humanbeing. But I think in my regard I will gain the respect but it's not so say that I don't valueit*" He continues and says, "*If you're coming in with a new M4 series car. Oh, best believe the family is going to go nuts because I mean how are you able to do it? You know, you've got money, you've got this, and you've got that. Now, you've elevated thefamily rather than just yourself. So we, we always have to keep in mind that the things that we do and achieve and whatever we go out and however way we represent them always falls back on them as well.*" (Interview Participant 6, Male, Economics)

> "*So my uncle is the one that's working at home. The only one that's working at home. So this other day, me, and my cousin, I was sent to buy bread and*

meat. And then as we go out so my uncle says take this way, not the other one. And we don't ask. We just take that way. So when we come back I asked my cousin but why are we walking this way. It is filthy, there's dodgy people here and whatever and whatever. And then he says because the breadwinner said so. That's why you're taking this way, you know. So that on its own, and it, it wasn't, it was a joke, but we didn't question him. Why must we now take this way, you know. So because there's that perspective of him. He knows what's right. He's got finances together, you know, so it must be right that we take this way. So if you take, what, what we take away from that is he makes the decisions basically, you know. So as I'm saying if, if, I'll be, I'll be the first one to graduate and technically the first one to, to have a salary is the, you know, a stable salary. So let's say there's, you know, there's a traditional something that's going to happen at home. Who's going to decide that we are going to slaughter a cow or a sheep if they don't have money to buy that, you know? So I have to be there to be involved in that decision of who, what is going to be slaughtered here because I know that I'm going to be contributing the most. You know, what I mean. So in that, in that, in that perspective literally though there will be no meeting. My uncle, we will wait for him. If he's not available, we postpone. What about decisions are we going to make if we don't have finances, you know. So it's, that's where I was coming from when I said that." (FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, Social Work)

Participants emphasise that family decision making is influenced by their ability to earn and through this authority is given to them in their family. Through the financial ability of individuals respect is gained from the family because of what they now able to do and the impact they are able to make. This respect is not without responsibility because in many black families, respect comes with an obligation to do, serve and provide in order to uphold that respect amongst loved ones. This family perception and admiration accompanied by expectation and requirements are more a matter of delegation from elders in the family, ratherthan an option given to many individuals of colour.

f. Community Perception

A family's socioeconomic status is based on family income, parental education level, parentaloccupation, and, important to this section of community perception, social status in the community (Saifi & Mehmood, 2012). In addition, Okioga (2013) mentions of the importanceof social position in socioeconomic status. Saifi & Mehmood (2012) describe social status in the community as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family or individual.

> "*You know, for black parents if you are home, the black community, even the, I think, have you seen grans. Here on campus. Have you seen our mothers how excited they are? That excitement actually goes back home. They take it back home with them. You are… now talked about. The community knows that you have achieved this and that".* She continues and says, *"The graduate is, even in our communities, the graduate is perceived as this person who is an intellect, who doesn't do just about anything. I hopeyou would go to our churches and see this. Where I'm seated is different from where a graduate is seated. I tell you if you arrive by car, my God, the ushers are already looking. They're seating you in front. Even if the whole row is empty but I'm going to beushered into the third row because I'm me. I've seen a policewoman who was walking in church she was ushered in because she is that person in the community.*"
> (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

> "*But now my grandmother has this thing now that she's been doing. Like when I went home last year I've noticed that she has been telling people to come at home with their issues because she's now got a social worker to work out the issues for them, you know.You know, you know. So in that sense I think I'm becoming an important person in termsof the community, which I was not even aware of.*" (FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, SocialWork)

> "*So medically spoken it will change a lot in my community. First of all, I have a lot of friends and family in my community. They would put, even now on social media they will seek like medical advice from me like I've received this medication, why this. I havethis pain where does it come from. Why, why, where, how*". (FGD 2 Participant 4, Male, Nursing)

When students re-enter their communities once they have finished their degree or simply commute to university on a daily basis the community in which they reside creates a certain perception of individuals. Participants highlight how their success and the success of their family is celebrated by the community but it is all as a result of one individual, the graduate. Often many people invest into one person's success that goes beyond family and extended family but into fellow community members. So a graduate might belong to one familybut they are a member of the whole community. Participants emphasise that the community perception as a result of what you've achieved gives you social status and that your material gain further heightens that social status. None of this would be possible without obtaining a degree, getting a good job, improving you and your family's standard of living, furthering yourself and obtaining occupational prestige through work experience and altering the perceptions of family, which culminates in a change of community perception and social status.

According to participants a resultant effect of improving their social status is that the family and the community begin to revere you, you are treated highly in the community and people start enquiring by you as a result of your qualification. Whether it medical advice, advice around social issues or life guidance, a graduate's social status results in responsibility, expectations and privileges. In different spheres of the community, including religious spheres, people who are highlyesteemed are treated accordingly. Family perception and community perception enhance the social status of individuals which adds to the economic component and results in holistic socioeconomic changes for individuals.

5.3.3. Students' expectations on how university education may enhance their socioeconomic mobility and that of their families.

Figure 2: Socioeconomic Mobility
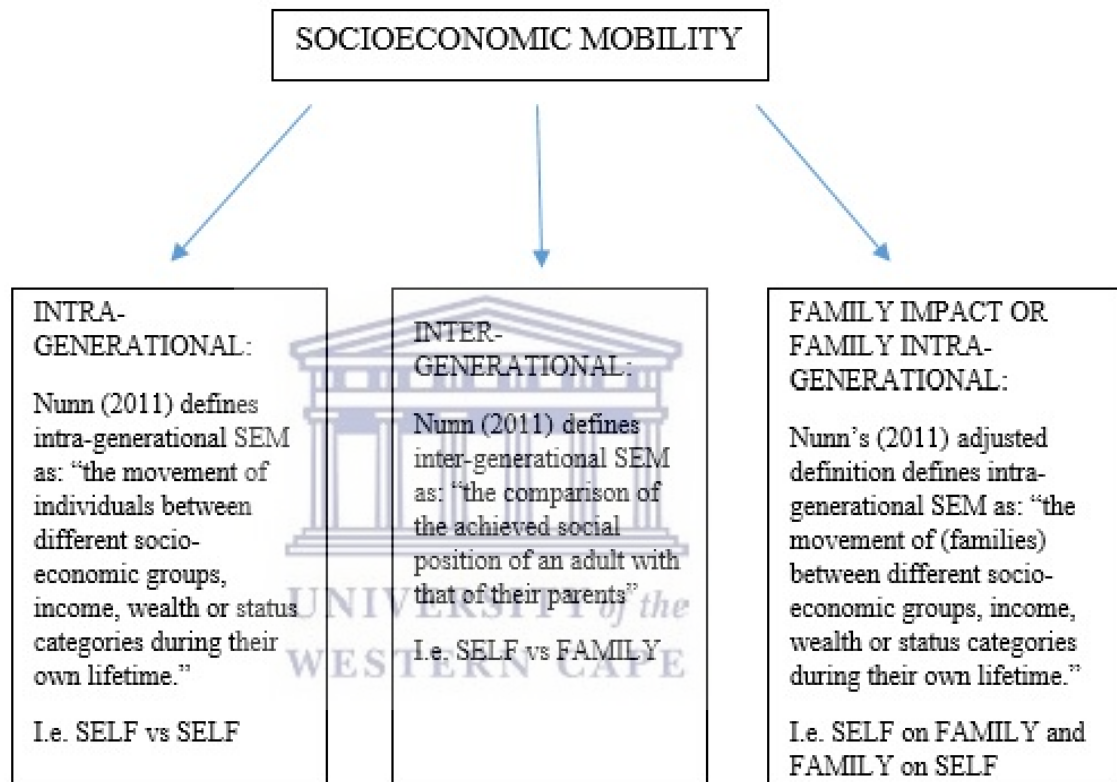
Aldridge (2001) looks at a multifaceted approach that takes into consideration income, security of employment and opportunities for advancement. In addition, the OECD revealed that social mobility is multifaceted and should take into consideration earnings/income, educational attainment, health and occupation (OECD, 2018). Education included in the OECD view of social mobility is not common as other definitions of social mobility do not include an education dimension. However, despite the perspective by which one views socioeconomic mobility it is clear that education plays a critical role in impacting many determinants of social mobility.

In summary, the concept of social mobility simply refers to the phenomenon of shifting from one social position to another, either in comparison with family background or

with previous employment. The former case (family background), called intergenerational social mobility, studies the transmission of social status from parents to children (life chance, social justice, social inequalities), whereas the latter case (previous employment), often named intra- generational social mobility or occupational mobility, investigates individuals' employment history over their life course (Falcon & Joye, 2013). Nunn's (2011, p. 13) definition for intra- generational mobility is as follows, "the movement of individuals between different socioeconomic groups, income, wealth or status categories during their own lifetime."

Similarly, the OECD (2018) defines intra-generational as, "the extent to which people's socialor economic situation's changes over their life course". Nunn (2011, p.13) also gives a definition of inter-generational mobility as, the comparison of "the achieved social position ofan adult with that of their parents", in comparison to the OECD (2018, p. 1) which defines inter-generational mobility as, "Gains or losses in economic or social status between parents and their children". The theme of socioeconomic mobility will look at the types of movementsthat are able to be made in socioeconomic mobility, the fact that shifting can take place progressively, the impact that university education has on LSES students shifting, as well as the impact of entrepreneurship on an individual's ability to shift. In addition to this, the researcher looked at how an individual is able to impact the socioeconomic mobility of his/herfamily, how giving back affects families and communities as well as the burden of black tax on individuals.

5.3.3.1. Types of movement

In simplicity, when socioeconomic mobility takes places it can only move upward, downwardor remain lateral.

> "*The reality is my family, no one has a qualification. The biggest job is becoming a police officer. You know, so coming from a household whereby someone has a qualification, working in the, or there are people that are working in offices but they're getting that jump and getting that type of money, you know, because undergrad will giveme that platform to do that; to jump from low class to middle class.*" (Interview Participant 1, Male, Economics)

> "*Like just an entry-level job I'd be earning close to what my mother is earning now. Andfrom like the conversations that I've had with most of*

the people here at the career day and like the science facul-, oh, science industry or where I'm trying to go into." She continues by saying, "*So in my first year obviously like I said a bit stagnant but immediately once I have that training, once I have the tools that I need to, to be desirable to all these companies, then I feel like I would move way, way past where I, I would be just from having my degree. I would now have my degree, I would now have my experience, you know and everything else that I would've learnt along the way. But I do feel with the experience, with the degree, also comes, if we're talking in terms of economic mobility*". (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

"*I would believe it would get worse initially.*" (Interview Participant 8, Male, Accounting)

As stated above, there are three different types of movements that individuals are able to experience once they leave university and become employed. Different individuals have different backgrounds and are therefore affected differently. Some individuals experience a significant upward shift as a result of their new occupation and the increase in income that comes with it. Their backgrounds are generally from LSES homes and their family householdincomes are extremely low. An undergraduate degree allows these students to have a platform to shift from low class to middle class with the condition that they do find employment. There are also individuals who experience stagnation, their shift into the workplace will match the level of living that they have experienced before being qualified and if they primarily focus on themselves and move out, they'll be able to maintain their current socioeconomic class and standard of living. These individuals usually come from of MSES households, rather than LSES households.

Finally, there are individuals who experience a potential drop in class if they have to move out immediately after qualifying and being employed because entry level jobs in their field will not allow them to maintain what they currently have in their parents' homes. These are MSES households with parents earning significantly over the 350000+ household income. These individuals come from very stable and secure backgrounds and will require a significant income to be able to match or better their socioeconomic class, the result of this isthat a downward shift in the socioeconomic

ladder can take place. Although for both the stagnant individuals as well as those who experience downward movements, over time they are able to gain work experience, additional skills and an increase in income to the point where an upward shift will be able to take place in their socioeconomic mobility, we'll call this the progressive shift. Initially, coming out of university, students' socioeconomic level iscompared to that of their parents because they have often not established a socioeconomic background of their own. These initial movements are inter-generational.

5.3.3.2. Components that influence movement

a. Progressive Shift

Often the initial socioeconomic impact is not substantial enough for change to take place. Aqualification itself and entry level job cannot accomplish the expectations of graduates and their families. So graduates need more time to establish themselves and experience a progressive shift, which affects the intra-generational socioeconomic mobility of the individual which also results in inter-generational socioeconomic mobility taking place.

> "*That initial burst will not actually but over time, it should.*" He continues and says "*through progressive means I would have ensured, and I believe above, my parents because you can't just leave the university and expect to be competing with people that have been working for 40, 50 years. Everything takes time and through time, you develop.And as you develop then you are more desirable and you would earn more.*" (Interview Participant 8, Male, Accounting)

> "*I'm going to take, talk on a personal point of view, you know. So for the first two or threeyears it cannot shift my whole family. It won't, it will only shift me because I'm still developing in a field where I am going to go in. But due to experience and exposure and maybe a better income, it will lead my family, or progress my family to become into the middle class.*" (Interview Participant 1, Male, Economics)

> "*From my perspective, you can't get out of university and jump into a new socioeconomic status unless you are coming from a very well standard, social fam-, economic family so to speak like family that is well off. But for your own sake or for my own sake I would rather want*

to like you said take it progressively. Climb the rankings slowly. Familiarise myself with the current standing and then see if I can increase, see if there's opportunity to increase. And once I do lay that foundation where I have achieved this level and I do not want to go down from there. Yes, anything happens, you can lose everything in a split second but like rather just put your foot in every time here and then slowly climb the ladder to a point where you're like okay, this is comfortable and then see if there's opportunities there and you take it progressively from there as well." (Interview Participant 9, Male, Accounting)

At times the initial impact is perceived to not be great enough to make a significant change in individuals' situations. The situation and circumstances are so severe that things first need to be set in order before any sort of growth can take place. On the other hand, students from affluent families who already have a middle-class or higher socioeconomic status perceive that they may struggle to maintain the lifestyle given to them by their parents with an entry level job. Which may reduce their standard of living or possibly only maintain it. For students who have the above mentioned experiences, they will graduate and because of the high standard of living they were provided by their parents, they will not be able to experience immediate upward socioeconomic mobility, although through years of growth and development that comes through upskilling, experience, position shifting and income raises, the possibility of reaching their previous socioeconomic level and even surpassing it becomes possible through a progressive shift. Progressive shifting allows individuals to grow in status as they grow in stature. For some students they would be able to experience immediate shifts, had they not been burdened with responsibility of looking after and providing for their family as well. This leads to no shift at all initially but, once again, through upskilling, experience, position shifting and income raises, the socioeconomic mobility upward shift becomes possible. This brings into light intra-generational socioeconomic mobility, shifting up in skills, experience, work position and income, often known as occupational mobility. That progressively shifts their level from their initial starting point. With this intra-generational shift, there can still be a comparison to that of their parents, highlighting that both intergenerational and intra-generational socioeconomic mobility can take place simultaneously.

b. University Shift

The impact of a simple shift from a LSES home to university is understated. The conditionsand circumstances of some LSES households are so severe that coming to an institution allows for greater provision to be made for individuals.

> "*It (university) will move me from low to middle and whether I get a job that will move me from middle to high. Because when you look at what I can afford now* (at university incomparison to home)*, if I work I'm going to be able to afford more*". (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

> "*And then after that and then I got a scholarship after that. But then also it was not a matter of getting monthly allowances then, it was just a matter of getting an allowance here and there. And then work-study came and it was a breakthrough because I could even start saving for myself and I could also start saying when my little sister needs something oh, okay, at least I can do this. And for my personal needs as well, having to do my hair, I didn't have to ask anyone. Having to get myself toiletries while I'm still waiting for the bursary to come through. I still had to, like I was able to do it, even whenit comes to me having to dress myself I was able to. So as participant number 1 was saying, the work-study came and at least we started flourishing.*" (FGD 2 Participant 5, Female, Social Work)

> "*My class is very different from my families at the moment, but when I go home, I go back into that class unless I don't have a job, unless I get a job*". He continues and says, *"there's a difference between if you have a scholarship and whether you are in other financial aid schemes, like NASFAS and stuff. There's a completely difference between the two because we're not necessarily faced with food and security that those that don't have scholarships are normally faced with. So the scholarship*

indeed has, you know, changed my class a lot. And through the scholarship as participant one has said, I was able to not only sustain myself, but sustain the family over these four years. So when I do get my foodallowance, so I do get whatever allowance, it's not just for me. I have to plan and budget that for the whole family. It goes into the kitty and from there we all make any decisions and we all pull from there to whatever needs to be done." (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

When students from LSES backgrounds come to university there is potential to experience socioeconomic upward shift. This is as a result of living on residence and having their own bed and room. This happens because student either receive bursaries/scholarships or financial aid such as NSFAS. These sources of funding provide students with things they've never experienced before. Accommodation, travelling allowances, book allowances and food allowances. All of this is either paid for in cash or in vouchers given to students. This funding gives students access to quantities of funds that they've never experienced before which allows them to shift socioeconomic classes. This means that their class is completely different from that of their families back home. The standard of living is completely different because they are able to provide for themselves and cover their needs as well as their wants. In addition to funding, students are able to work in the university's work-study programme which provides them with additional income that can be used as they please because often their fees are already covered through funding sources. This move from their families to university results in the university socioeconomic class shift taking place which pertains to aninter-generational shift between themselves and their families.

c. Entrepreneurship impact

Entrepreneurship has become important in modern society and through tertiary education students are able to gain knowledge for entrepreneurship. Through entrepreneurship individuals are able to make an impact on their lives, their families' lives and the lives of their community. Research has shown that entrepreneurship is a good tool to assist upward mobility however, the magnitude of increase in entrepreneurs' social mobility varies with their individual characteristics and family background. Results suggest that, although entrepreneurs with lower-income parents experience upward mobility, they have more difficulty reaching the top end of the

socioeconomic distribution than those with parents in the middle- or high-income part of the socioeconomic distribution (Vélez-Grajales & Vélez-Grajales, 2014).

> "*I think I did mention earlier that I want to get my yoga teaching qualification and the plan with that is to open up a yoga studio back home.*" She continues and says "*The hopeis that it will take you out of whatever situation you are in and make it better. And the hope for me is definitely that it will succeed. The yoga studio will succeed and not only just to feed my want or my need to jump social classes, but also just to, like I said, to, to give the kids back home something to do*" and finally she says, "*So yes, the entrepreneurship will, I, hope will not only give me the ability to jump social classes but also to give back.*" (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

> "*I do perceive myself moving into the higher class considering all the goals that I have and all the dreams that I have based on wanting to start my own business. So even thoughI've got to be working, I'm not going to quit working, I'm going to work. And I'm going to have my own business*". (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

> "*I have a lot of friends and a lot of you know family members who have studied degrees but now they're doing something completely opposite of what they, what they intended todo in the first place. You know, you find people now they're running their own businesseswhere as they studied finance and they should be at accountancy firms and so on and so forth.*" (Interview Participant 6, Male, Economics)

Individuals have identified that being employees is not the only option to success but the opportunity to become employers also holds significant potential in the journey to upward socioeconomic mobility. With a degree, individuals can work their 9-5 and start a company on the side. The knowledge and insight that comes through tertiary education but also the internet, give individuals access to endless possibilities. Through the starting and running of their own businesses they perceive that a socioeconomic shift is able to take place. This going hand in hand with working or potentially transitioning into something where they will not need to work. Many individuals leave university and do not pursue what they've studied, work in different fields or start their

own companies in their field or in another field. Potential accompanied by entrepreneurship is endless. Entrepreneurship also goes beyond financial impact and personal impact but into communities. Entrepreneurship can be used as a platform to create opportunity, instil skills and be a catalyst for hope. As a result of socioeconomic mobility taking place in individuals by means of an increase in finances, their reach and impact can be expanded and people around them will benefit from their overflow.

d. Family

For many individuals from LSES households, central to their reasoning for coming to university is to assist their families and not only themselves in moving to a better livelihood. Which means the socioeconomic mobility shift of families are important. This brings forth the concept of intra-generational family socioeconomic mobility.

> "*I'm going to take, talk on a personal point of view, you know. So for the first two or three years it cannot shift my whole family. It won't, it will only shift me because I'm still developing in a field where I am going to go in. But due to experience and exposure and maybe a better income, it will lead my family, or progress my family to become into the middle class.*" (Interview Participant 1, Male, Economics)

> "*If I stay in the house when I get my Masters' like I feel like it will, gradually I will be able to, like move the whole family up* (to a higher class). *It will take time but I think I can just with my income including, like adding to theirs. I think it will move the whole family's status up.*" (Interview Participant 4, Female, Arts)

> "*Ideally, it's supposed to move them up, but if we were being realistic now with the expected salaries in our field it would make a big difference, yes. But considering the fact that I have, I've told you, like in my family I'm the first-born. There are others that come after me. My mom is not working. The situation is not entirely great. So it will make a difference, but it's still going to be a struggle with me working alone, you know. Financially, me working will make a difference, but it's not a solution to our finances really.*" She continues and says, "*If we speak realistically and we look at the social circumstances, it has been the fact that I'm employed will make a difference. But in terms of class, I don't think it's*

going to, with the salary I'm going to be getting and all my personal responsibilities as well. And there'sno, there's no mobility there. Things are going to get better because they're going to, foodinsecurities, they will no longer be there, but I don't know, I can't be educating my siblings and building my home, and buying my mom a car and you know, yeah, so really, it's not going to happen." (FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, Social Work)

"*I think a lot of factors, you know, come into play. Like how big your family is, do they work themselves. You know, even though it's not millions, you know, or hundred thousand rand at the end of the day so that you just (indistinct) category. I think those are factors that all comes into play and whether your family will be able to move. So (indistinct) muchmore in the family. We are a small family. You know, one thing that they can do they knowhow to work with their finances and all those kinds of stuff. So I think mine is just going toadd a little bit more to that to make, to get some mobility. There's mobility. Yes, as, I've seen it happen, you know, as I've said I've been employed and have had all of those nice stuff and now that I will be getting some, or just a little bit more as a social worker. And I did see the movement. I do understand what participant 1 is saying and I, and I agree to some extent that you know it needs the whole family to win. That's why I say, like all of those other factors, how big is your family, do they work. How do they spend their finances,you know, all those kinds of stuff. I think that does it because I've seen it happen, you knowfor me that I'm just there basically to you know support, bring the necessary support in order to get mobility.*" (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

"*They're like really depending on you to get this degree and stuff. So I think it, it kind of impacts them in a positive way because it takes them out of circumstances that they find themselves in and that. Like say for example, my mom can't find a job now that's like bringing in enough money for her to get through the month and to carry us financially. So now the best, the next best plan is to, for me to graduate and to postgraduate to be earningto provide for them. So it would shift and*

cause them to shift also because they're not looking at it as I'm doing this for me. Like I said, it's for them actually." (Interview Participant 5, Female, Arts)

"*I would say everyone is, is well off. They're fine. Like even my little brother now he, he wants to play soccer. You know, he's the last of my mom, my mom's kids. He wants to play soccer and he's actually making money-playing soccer now already. So I feel like I, I'm not going to change much in my household and I'm not going to change much for my family because everyone has sort of sorted themselves out, so to speak.*" (FGD 1 Participant 1, Male, Economics)

FGD 1 Participant 5 (Male, Accounting) when asked about what impact does it (his undergraduate degree) now have on your household? His response was, "*None. None.*"

For individuals to cause socioeconomic mobility in their families, there are many factors that come into play. The size of the family, whether there are other contributors in the household, the previous socioeconomic condition of the family, the size of individuals incomes and how families are able to manage their finances. For most students coming out of university with a degree and finding employment would allow them to experience upward socioeconomic mobility but as spoken about before, their responsibilities are too significant and burdensome for that to take place and their families are central to this. The initial impact for some is that they perceive that they would be able to immediately shift themselves and their family into a better socioeconomic position. For majority of individuals, there is not much of a perceived socioeconomic mobility shift but rather, improved standard of living. Over time as they grow in their fields and their salary increases, a family shift is perceived to be able to take place. Then there are individuals who, more often than not, come from MSES backgrounds who will have none to very little impact on socioeconomic mobility shifts in their families as result of the already well-established socioeconomic situation in their households. The variety in perceived impact reveals the importance of the different components that play a role in socioeconomic mobility.

An undergraduate degree may result in socioeconomic status changes for individuals before the external responsibility of family but the resultant effect of the external factors

is that upwardsocioeconomic mobility may not take place. This can come down to the fact that an undergraduate degree is not sufficient. There aren't adequate job opportunities. There is a lackof development of certain auxiliary skills in order to be successful. Job requirements are not being met because of level of qualification or work experience. On the other hand, individual'spersonal responsibilities at home to give back or cultural constructs such as black tax play a decisive role.

Different dynamics may contribute to a perceived socioeconomic status change in terms of social position (family and community perception) and economic position (a new job and higher income) but the above mentioned external factors and responsibilities are perceived to be hindrances in socioeconomic mobility taking place. This has no prejudice on whether it is male or female. The role of tertiary education on socioeconomic mobility of different individuals from different initial economic backgrounds may impact their ability to shift themselves or their families but there is no visible gender variation in all economic levels – middle income - low income – ability to financially contribute or support household.

e. Giving back

e.1. Family

As individuals start earning they tend to give back to their families, at times out of necessity, other times out of their own free will and even at times because of cultural obligation.

> "*My mom always tells me, like once you get a job, like please don't feel any obligationto give me money or to come home and do whatever. But I mean, that woman has givenup a lot for me, you know, and I feel like yes, I'm not obligated to understand, I'm not obligated to you. but I want to give back, I want to because we, we started renovating our house, like two years ago, and we didn't finish because you know, the money ran out or whatever. And I would like to finish that for them. I would like for them to see their vision.*" (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

> "*There is some sort of giving back. But again, that's all on a personal level to the individual and it attains to a degree as well. I know personally I always give back andI'll end up even setting up a trust fund for them*".
> (Interview Participant 6, Male, Economics)

"I need to consider the cost of living, having to pay rent, having to buy food for myself, and also having to send money home. And also having to go to Eastern Cape is also another thing because then you need to make sure that you're not far from home, so that at least you can be able to maintain the living of not only yourself, but for the familyas well, so that you are able to cover whatever is expected from you. And at the same time still be able to survive." (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

"I also send some of the money to my family, not every month though. When there's a need then they ask me for money or do you have money, we need this and that. And thenI assist where I can with the work-study programme money." (FGD 2 Participant 2, Female, Social Work)

There are positives for when students give back to their families, more so when it is not a necessity but to be able to honour families for all they have done. At times, students are assuredby families that giving back is not necessary but as a way to show appreciation individuals giveback through helping or completing home projects that could not be completed as a result of alack of finances. In other instances, individuals set up a trust funds for their family members that mature over time so that they can reap the benefit of it at a later stage. Although often in aSouth African context, situations are different, and individuals are forced to consider their family, rather than given an option. Their decision making is not only for themselves but centered on the family. Through their earnings they need to maintain themselves and their family because there is an expectation to cover a certain part or even all of the household expenditure. This shows that they are obligated to give back and consider family. If individuals

are not living at home, they need to send money home in order to support and maintain their family. Students often feel the weight of their obligation at university already where they needto support their families from scholarship, bursary, NSFAS or work-study money. Individuals more often than not tend to want to give back but the socioeconomic circumstances of LSES background students experience "giving back" as more than an obligation rather than a courtesy that MSES background students' experience.

e.2. Community

Beyond their families, individuals when going back to their communities at times are expectedto give back but they often have a desire to plough back into the community that they grow up.

> "*Now I realise that there's more important things that you need to achieve when you get to university. You need to make sure that you, your personal and community affairs,and you also achieve a degree is sorted. So my intentions have changed quite a bit.*" (FGD 1 Participant 3, Male, Law)

> "*The yoga studio will succeed and not only just to feed my want or my need to jump social classes, but also just to, like I said, to, to give the kids back home something to do. To give them, to instil the knowledge that I have and impart it to them and just makesure that they have a chance. You know, because kids from back home, it's very commonfor you to just sit at home after high school. Like for me to be here is a miracle and I, I'm very (indistinct). It's something big for someone coming from Kimberley, you know.So yes, the entrepreneurship will, I, I, I hope will not only give me the ability to jump social classes but also to give back.*" (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

For individuals there are different levels of responsibility that can be identified. It starts from what they need to do for themselves, what they need to do for their families and it filters into what they need to do for their community. This comes through their ability to share their skills in the community, whether it be medical advice, social work processes or legal counsel. All of it is able to touch lives and assist communities in some way, shape or form. This allows them to become important figures in their communities and their status to grow. Beyond the academic accolades and field skills, individuals are also able to make an impact in the community through entrepreneurship, whether it be creating employment or platforms for youth to express themselves and through this develop and growth. The communities that majority of students at UWC come from have some need that is related and connected to poverty and this creates an opportunity for graduates to give back and make an impact.

f. Black tax

Continuing with the trend of giving back, a concept called "black tax" arises which further exposes the giving back was an obligation in families. Black tax is defined as the process through which a black individual (usually an employed recent graduate) uses a significant portion of their income and savings to support their immediate and extended family or the obligation of employed black South Africans to provide for their extended family (Magubane, 2016; Matlala & Shambare, 2017).

f.1. Definition

Individuals have their own understanding and concept of black tax. Many researchers share that the concept is not scientifically defined in literature yet but students live the experience of black tax and define black tax through their experience.

> "*Black tax is the responsibilities that one has that are actually beyond your personal responsibilities. That is outside of your own personal responsibilities. You know, what I mean. Like I know that I have to have a roof on my head, I know that I have to have toiletries, transport monies and all of that. But beyond that, there are other family members that don't have means that I have to help, you know. And for instance, I'm at university at the moment and there are siblings that are coming after me that are not there yet, and I have to take care of that business. I have to make sure that they are at school and they are fed. And beyond my immediate family I have cousins, you know, I have my grandparents that, who participant 5 has mentioned a thing about expectations, you know. They are obviously, they've contributed in my life you know. So not that I feel I would, I feel indebted to them, but somehow I'd have to help where I can with whatever financial issues that they have. That is if I can, you know. So I think black, that's where the black tax situation comes in, yeah*" (FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, Social Work)*

> "*The distinguishing part, you know, to really make it make sense is that it is people of colour. I know that you have said that it transcends, you know, the racial categories and I assume that you meant, you know, people of colour because those are the ones that you know are s-, I don't want say stuck because that is negative, but that is your responsibility as*

a person of colour. B-, it's like you have the responsibility to undo the structural inequalities and limitations that have been put on your family, you know, when they go back. Because that is the way it all started, those limitations that were put in place, those structural inequalities. And now you as a person because you're in a new dawn of South Africa and you have much more possibilities. It's like you now have to go and you have to undo those things that was done because your family and your grandparents weren't allowed to school, or they weren't given a proper school, or there was no NASFAS at the time, because you had NASFAS and you had some scholarship now, you have to make surethat they eat." (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

"*I think this term, the black tax, refers to a situation where one after they graduate and theyneed to plough back, not only in their family but in, in what brought them actually to the university in the first place and what made them who they are. So we need to be able to look at the circumstances where you come from and be able to change those circumstances.Not only or on a personal basis that you have to now, support the family. Obviously, a largepart of black tax refers to you being able to provide in the house. You being able to bring in clothes for those small ones that you left back and then be able to get them the same education as you have. So I think in a nutshell it refers to those particular circumstances where one needs to alleviate the circumstances they left home in terms of finances*". (FGD1 Participant 3, Male, Law)

Black tax is described as the responsibilities that one has that are actually beyond your personalresponsibilities. Graduates need to plough back into their families but also into what and who made it possible for them to come to university in the first place and made them who they are.Through this they are expected to look at the circumstances of the communities they come fromand try and bring some sort of change. Individuals are expected to bring back home a financialcontribution that is able to alleviate the struggles and difficulties they grew up in. This is donethrough their obligation to give back to their family, extended family and community. The responsibilities that come with black tax transcends the common courtesy of just assisting andhelping out where one can. A key distinction with black tax is that it pertains to people of colour. The responsibility

that comes with black tax is significant but also burdensome. Individuals are required to help family members who do not have, put those who are followingthem through school, make sure that everyone is fed, assist with financial issues, support the family, provide in the house and make sure everyone is clothed. That only covers the financial side, but the pressure on graduates to undo the structural inequalities and limitations that havebeen put on your families weigh heavy on them. What wasn't given to previous generations, graduates now have access to and through that access it must open doors for others who followwhile also providing for those who have laid a foundation for you. Through these things blacktax is implemented in order for families to experience better living standards when graduates return home, it is a cultural construct that has been imbedded into many LSES background people of colour.

f.2. Black Tax Experience

Besides being perceived by many as a culturally and socially responsible way to give back to the family, more young professionals, as well as the media, have described black tax as the exploitation of young black professionals that leaves them in a vicious cycle of poverty and financial need (Fongwa, 2019). The effects of black tax are now so severe that it not only shapes, but dictates the lives of young South Africans (Matlala & Shambare, 2017).

> "*In two days' time I'm going to be buying a plot for my mother. So all I can say is to builda house is not cheap. To build a house is not cheap. And the reality is next year I got a guaranteed job, but the reality is to build that house. I want to have a (indistinct) job but Iwill not live the status of the job due to my responsibilities because I need to build that house. So I believe it does bring me down because you are given a platform or socio- mobility to move up but due to your responsibilities, you have to come down. Because I cannot live that type of standard of life. I can't live the life where I drive the doctor's car. Ihave to take a taxi. I have to take a taxi to work, you know. I have to. I have to do the basicthings. I can't stay in Century City. I can't, I have to, you know, I have to level down. I haveto live in a house where I pay a 1000 or share a room with someone. So I would say yeah,this really brings you backwards because you don't go forward because you do your*

responsibilities or you want to capture or finish off what you started. So due to that I don'tthink you would go forward." (FGD 1 Participant 2, Male, Economics)

"*Your responsibility can keep you back because say you didn't have responsibility, black tax and whatever, and you could just take your degree and your job or whatever add that money for yourself, and you could just build without that responsibility, you would move so much faster and get to your goal so much quicker. But now you have a responsibility. Like example me, I'm going to work next year and that's just going to be to now cover everything that needs to be sorted out at home. And once that is done then I can grow andbuild for me. Had I not had that responsibility I could've just started immediately with myself and reached that growth. So and you, that responsibility definitely does keep you back and slows the process.*" (FGD 1 Participant 4, Female, Arts)

"*So black tax is very complex for lots of families. So for my mom, so okay, I'm going to talk about it. So with my mom she is a teacher, and when she goes home everyone is expect-with our, we're excluding my grandmother now; everyone is expecting her to contribute towards the traditions that are going to be taking place, whether an uncle is sending his son to circumcision school it's going to be, she's going to be consulted first because she has the money. So it's a whole big family of relatives and before relatives make that decision they call her, can we do this. Yeah, you can, but only and on that month. Then sheis the one that says okay, I've got to have money on that date and then I will be able to assist. Assisting doesn't mean assisting, it actually means it's the whole, you take care of the whole ceremony. So with that it's relatives, it's people that is inside actually. Internal family they also want something. My uncle, my mother's brother, he gets an allowance frommy mother, I (indistinct), but he does, and he stays at the backyard of my grandmother's house. So black tax is everywhere, I mean they expect a lot.*" She continues and shares, "*Sothe one child that she has is kind of my responsibility. So you are taught to teach the others.What means is*

she sends me money every month. She doesn't miss it. So she's basically expecting the same from me even if she won't say it. But should the time come for her son to go to school I have a responsibility already. He is my son practically because everythingthat he is going to be needing is going to be coming from me. And same for him. It carrieson. It never stops. Because if the mother, God forbid, if my aunt would die and everyone in the family knows that I am the beneficiary, I'm everything for the son now, I'm going to inherit her problems. They become mine. But as time goes by and I have my own children,he has to take care of my children. So it's an ongoing thing. It never stops. So it's just trusting your whatever with whomever." (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

"*For me, it actually works in reverse surprisingly. So besides my personal, I don't want tosay liabilities, but I already have my own family. So if we take, let's imagine that I didn't atthis point. The way my family would work was my parent's family gave up their educationfor my parents to get their education. So they pushed my parents the platform and so my house has always been the prosperous house. But my house has also been the one that haspaid for everyone's education in the, our extended family. In everyone's family, provide clothes, food, whatever they need. So the way my parents brought up me and my brother, or let's not talk about him, me specifically, is that in the beginning you need to find your feet. But once you have found your feet and you are stable you would, must not only look to support yourself. You have to carry the family that put you there also. Because without my family my parents would not be where they were. If my parents were not where they were, I would not be where I am. So once my, say my struggle with my minimum pay is gone in the beginning and I am now set in my job, I have to look back at my cousins and my, my cousin's cousins. And my girlfriend's family is the same. I have to also look at theirfamily also. My, because we already planned, because our families are very connected.*"
(FGD 1 Participant 5, Male, Accounting)

Students experience with black tax has significant impact on their lives and the trajectory of their socioeconomic status and more so their socioeconomic mobility.

Whether it be building a house for their families or providing for the needs of their families, extended families and communities, black tax comes and comes at a cost. The result of this cost is that individuals will be earning high salaries but not be able live up to that standard of living. They won't be able to drive the fancy car or live in a fancy area. The reality is that they will have to take a taxiand rent in a low cost area. All of this is the result of the negative impact of black tax which holds individuals back instead allowing them to move forward because of their responsibilities.Although the platform for upward socioeconomic mobility is created through education, the extent of home circumstances and responsibilities cripple students and prevent them from experiencing upward socioeconomic mobility.

5.3.4. Students' perception of the role of the university in enhancing their socioeconomic mobility

Universities have an important role to play in the lives of individuals. The South African NDP states that universities are key to developing a nation and that three main functions are playedin society by South African universities (National Planning Commission, 2011). Firstly, universities educate and train people with high-level skills to make provision for the employment needs of the private and public sectors. Secondly, universities are the dominant producers of new knowledge. This entails critiquing information and finding new local and global applications of existing information. As part of adding to the production of new knowledge, universities also set norms, standards, languages, ethics and philosophy, being the foundation of a nation's knowledge capital. With this being said, the visionaries of the South African NDP believe South Africa needs knowledge that equips people for a society in constantsocial change. The third and final function of South Africa's universities, with the consideration of the country's apartheid history, the higher education sector provides opportunities for socialmobility and simultaneously strengthening equity, social justice and the 25-year old democracy(National Planning Commission, 2011). The South African NDP assists in skills development and seeks to promote socioeconomic mobility. Through this students are able to provide their perceptions on the direct and indirect roles of university institutions on their socioeconomic mobility.

5.3.4.1. Direct

a. Funding

Funding at tertiary institutions for undergraduate studies primarily come through two avenues, scholarships/bursaries and NSFAS. The aim of NSFAS is "to transform NSFAS into an efficient and effective provider of financial aid to students from poor and working-class families in a sustainable manner that promotes access to, and success in, higher and further education and training, in pursuit of South Africa's national and human resource developmentgoals" (NSFAS, 2021, p. 1). The financial component has been well researched in literature but issues of finances beyond the payment of academic courses, such as for food andaccommodation are prominent with students from LSES households. If the financial support fails students or they are unable to obtain any, students end up without accommodation, food and books, which are unrealistic circumstances to achieve yet alone thrive (McGhie, 2012; eNCA, 2017). These two avenues of funding have a great impact on students but also has a ripple effect on their families as a result of the financial support which lifts the burden off students and their families.

> "*There is some direct influence from these institutions particularly the university, and it starts with the university accepting you into its program. That is where the movement starts. Because if the university doesn't accept you there's not going to be any mobility.*" He continues and says, "*Being accepted, that one, and then the other thing is getting the scholarship. Because again without the scholarship none of us would have moved into a different class. Again, there wouldn't have been any mobility. The scholarship made sure that there is now no food insecurity. That you do get to meet the most basic things such as do you (indistinct), all of those kinds of stuff. And even the ability to send money home.*" (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

> "*Obviously even now that I'm on a scholarship and I work on campus, that has enhanced every aspect of my life because I'm not asking for any kind of maintenance from home and literally my mom does not know how I survive in Cape Town, you know.*"(FGD 2 Participant 1, Female, Social Work)

> *"We like to call NSFAS father. And even when we have conversations with my, betweenmy friends and I we always say, (speaks Xhosa), meaning her father has provided this money. So, and has a fixed date, For that money. So you know that okay, maybe I was sent 500 from home and then now it's the 15th. So this 500 is going to keep me up untilthe 25th because on the 25th you get money from NSFAS And that lowers the burdens.So I think it has played a great role. Now, you know you you're at varsity and oh yes, of course, you're going to struggle. You're not going to do everything that everybody does but actually, you're going to get through the day because there's some sort of helpthat you're going to be receiving."* (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

The foundation of university impact, starts at the point of entry or inability to gain entry, whichsets the course of an individual. The next part, which is often worrying for students from low socioeconomic status background is funding, one of the students shares that "*without the scholarship none of us would have moved into a different class*" and beyond that, there is the possibility students would not be able to progress beyond being accepted. The funding then provides for and assists with socioeconomic issues that are associated with a LSES background,namely "*food insecurity*", basic needs to survive and "*the ability to send money home*". The fact that these issues are resolved, through funding and working on campus, has enhanced everyaspect of students' lives because their dependency is not on those who are at home but this hasremoved the burden from their families at home and has the potential now for them to assist the family through sending money home. In addition to scholarship funding, there is also funding that comes from NSFAS, which participants share "*lowers the burden*" because it covers students fees, books, transport and food throughout their undergraduate journey, provided that they complete in the stipulated time.

b. Work-study

Neyt et al (2019) reveal that student work has an adverse effect on educational engagement rather than educational performance, specifically when students are working during theacademic year instead of vacation periods. This is supported by the findings of Rochford, Connolly, & Drennan (2009) that it's not working per se that has the adverse effect on studentoutcomes but rather the number of hours that students work

while attending tertiary institutions. In addition Neyt et al (2019) observe that students working affects graduation often without delay but performance outcomes are impacted. Triventi (2014) finds that an academic progression penalty is found in high-intensity student workers with low-intensity work experiences also having negative effects. In addition, Jewell (2014) found evidence that student workers reaped the benefits of their work-study student experience by receiving higher salaries when graduating. The University of the Western Cape has created a work-study programme that enables students to earn income while studying. This is intended to help students pay off their fees and provide for themselves. The institution limits undergraduate students to a maximum of 40 working hours per month in order to keep academics at the centre of their focus.

"Work-study was like, often it was like a window of opportunity and it opened an opportunity for a financial break, breakthrough, yeah. Because it has taught me to function independently because I know, I was with my parents, my grandparents, so I didn't want to depend on them knowing that they earn a SASSA grant. So with that money I actually saved some of that money up until now for graduation. So it will benefit, it did benefit me a lot in, benefited me now." (FGD 2 Participant 4, Male, Nursing)

"Like we started with R600 and like that money I, I spent it on transport and then fortunately the rate went up. It was like one point two and then that was the end. It was like, yes, this is the real deal. So it really helped me a lot in terms of my needs, like basic needs. The things that I need to buy for myself. When I need money to go to the doctor, I can, I use that money. And also for the toiletries, I use that money and all my other needs. And I also send some of the money to my mommy, not every month though. When there's a need then they ask me for money or do you have money, we need this and that. And then I assist where I can with the work-study program money." (FGD 2 Participant 2, Female, Social Work)

"Financially, I mean it's not much. It's not much. But with regards to, like the skills that I learn, like I said, the, like I have to learn how to work with people. I have to learn office, the office dynamics Like the, I don't

know the roles that people play and my role and then, you know, so I feel like that will, it will definitely help me in the future. Like when I have a job then I can just refer back to okay, so this happened. I have to think about it like this." (Interview Participant 4, Female, Arts)

"*I can do this, it can go on my CV because I've always been very concerned about the fact that I've worked and so now I come to university so there's going to be this huge gap in my CV. So how am I going to fill that gap up and so the work was to fill the gap up.*" (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

The work-study programme has been used in various ways for student's personal gain. For some students it is a "*breakthrough*" which allows them to start saving. So the financial benefits are there and the impact that it has on individuals families is significant. There are costs and expenses that can now be catered for that was not an option before such as paying for "*transport*", "*basic needs*", "*the doctor*" and "*toiletries*". Whereas for others the financial benefits weren't significant but the work environment, skills gained and lessons learnt were beneficial which will be useful in future work experiences. Another non-financial benefit of work-study is the ability to fill the gap and add to the CVs of students. These additional soft skills and opportunities are beneficial for individuals when moving into the work space because it provides them with a competitive edge over their colleagues or fellow interviewees in interviews, aligning with sentiments of (Jewell, 2014) .

c. Work opportunity

At the institution the work opportunities extend beyond the jobs created by the institution for the students. The relationships, networks and connections form a platform for students to gain opportunities through the structures embedded in the university.

> "*So I spoke to this other attorney, the… in clinic. So I've been going with him into court, and so I've been observing and then he's been making me sign contracts and do all those things. So it's giving me a positive start. So whenever I, I'm to apply for a job let's say next year I'm looking for articles. At least that's an elevation in terms of socioeconomic mobility*

and in terms of putting me in the right place for job. So it's a positive thing, it's a good thing." (FGD 1 Participant 3, Male, Law)

"*The lecturers in my faculty generally don't just lecture. So they, they have the connection to, to further your, I want to say job opportunities which there's a large part of them that have that, that connection you need or you want. So as in UWC, lecturers' perspective, yes, they do enhance your socioeconomic mobility assuming you make the right friends with the right lecturers. And likewise, if you don't make a good impression it could also go the other way.*" (FGD 1 Participant 5, Male, Accounting)

"*I have a friend who was on the SRC and she has, she was offered a job in Parliament because she was on the SRC. So like you said it's a gym, it's a tool and it just depends on how you use your tools. So the university definitely does enhance our opportunities and our future.*" (Interview Participant 4, Female, Arts)

Students' engagement with individuals in their faculties have opened up doors and provides them with opportunities to gain invaluable experience in their field which is rarely afforded to students who have not qualified yet. This puts them in a better position when applying for jobs or further studies. The connections made with tutors, mentors and lecturers can help students gain work opportunities or lose opportunities based on relationships formed and of impressions made. Interview Participant 4 shares a story of a friend, "*I have a friend who was on the SRC and she has, she was offered a job in Parliament because she was on the SRC*". Another avenue to gain work opportunities at the university is through structures in place at the university which is intended for their holistic development of students, such as the SRC (Student Representative Council). The university created an enabling environment for student growth and development but it requires students to utilise these structures that are in place and build networks because work opportunities can come through any avenue at an institution. All these factors contribute to improving the socioeconomic status of individuals and their socioeconomic mobility.

5.3.4.2. Indirect

d. Class Teaching

The foundation of university development for students is embedded in the content that is taughtby their various lecturers, in their various fields. It is the primary reason for students coming to university. The importance of class teaching provides students with the platform to attain their degrees. Universities like the University of the Western Cape has lecturing or class teaching as a primary function, unlike distant learning institution. The expectation of studentsplaced on lecturers is therefore to support them through their academic journey in order to complete their degrees. According to McGhie (2012), there is a desire amongst students for more learning and academic support which will be beneficial to them. Academic support provision is considered important by all researchers involved in successful student learning andhigher education (Leibowitz, 2009).

"*Somehow, they are helping us out in terms of that because obviously we need their support in order to finish our degrees, you know. So without them there won't be a degree. Without the degree, there won't be the elevation, you know.*" (FGD 2 Participant1, Female, Social Work)

"*They can only come and give you content which basically means they are just a (indistinct) and they're giving you what you need, whereby they will have no influencein your life. The only thing they're doing is that they're doing their job. (Indistinct) if you take yourself, you take that content and use it to benefit yourself, or they can be there to really involve themselves to a point whereby they enhance you. Because they are teachers who really want you to know the topic and understand it to use it in your own life. But there's only people that come and just give you the book. They just give you the book and say do your own thing*". (FGD 1 Participant 2, Male, Economics)

"*Definitely it did, it, firstly they are doing their job where they equip you with the skillsyou need to, firstly attain a degree, to prepare for the work place and to equip you withthe knowledge and the know-how of your field. But like along the line they don't just teach you curriculum based things. They teach you some life skills. They would say, they will just teach you how to go through life not just as a student but as an economic participant as well. They would prepare you for, like in my field now,*

financial accounting, it's not just the books. It's not just the numbers. They tell you about work what's it's like, what life will be like. And with the current lecturers, the mentors, the mentors especially, they do a lot more than just teach you one plus one. They will teachyou how to cope with life. They teach you more interesting skills than just your one plus one, your debits, and your credits. It's more how to go about interacting as a human and not just as a graduate or a calculator so to speak. So the role they play in preparingyou for your socioeconomic mobility, its, it's very, I would say it's actually very big." (Interview Participant 9, Male, Accounting)

Lecturers are able to decide the extent of their support, guidance and assistance. Lecturers tendto have different approaches, some "*come and just give you the book*" with no influence in students personal lives and just "*do their job*", while others get involved and enhance students' lives holistically so that the information is implementable in students' lives and careers. This type of teaching does not only provide the knowledge from the book but additional workplace insight and knowledge which is perceived to further equip students to be better employees and members of society.Through this sharing of knowledge and insight, students are taught how to go through life notjust as a student but as an economic participant, how to cope with life and how to interact with other and through this lecturers are perceived to be able to play a in preparing students for socioeconomicmobility. If we are to take all of this into consideration, information is shared through class teaching that provides insight for students to develop. This transfer of information can be at a very basic level where just book knowledge is shared or a true impact can be made by educators, lecturers, mentors and tutors to provide students with insight to set them on course for upward socioeconomic mobility.

e. Extra-mural activity

At university, holistic growth and development is essential for students to thrive and become better socioeconomic participants when exiting the doors of an institution. One of the active pillars at many institutions in holistic growth for students, is extra-mural activities. This enablesstudents to gain access to additional teaching, knowledge and skills in order to be better equipped. According to McGhie (2012), through recreational

activities students start getting involved in good quality extra-mural activities whereby different life, social and soft skills can be learnt and development can take place. Although, Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido, & Mkonto (2017) acknowledge that it is challenging for students as a result of their backgrounds to get involved in extra-mural activities and additional social support service when they come to university, because their academic involvement is prioritised thereby highlighting potential gains and losses in getting involved in extra-mural activities.

"*Then we have the Gender Equity Unit, right. They have the food program. They have tutoring, lots of activities where you can help the community. And in my field I'm going to need that because when I do my Honours and they, and I want to maybe do my Master's they look at what community activities have you been doing, how have you been giving back. Hence I joined the equity unit to do that so I'm making up my hours, I'm gaining the experience and I'm also just learning and getting to help people.*" She adds that, "*So our university provides so many extra opportunities and I'm going to touch on a few like for example the rugby. The cheerleaders even, they get to travel, they get to see places that being in that specific activity allows them to do, and from like play your cards right and get a connection, get a job, whatever, in that field. Get a bursary even.*" (FGD 1 Participant 4, Female, Arts)

"*I have been a part of the UWC rowing club since 2017. And I come from a very small town so I couldn't, like just even coming here and just hearing about the rowing club my mind couldn't wrap myself around that fact because I, I didn't know these things were going on. And you go, when you go to events you go to, you know you get to like meet with other rowers. You see that these people are going to Tokyo, they're going to Japan, they're going to America, and they're going to there just because of this sport.*" She continues and says, "*it's a very elite sport so like the people sort of, how do I say... if you know the right people man, they'll get you into the right places. You get me. And if you, if they see like you're a rower or whatever they're like oh, my person you know, like my, like one of my tribe*". (FGD 1 Participant 1, Female, Science)

"*I think that the organisations, well, they have greater impact because they add value to everything that we learn. We have skills, curriculum skills of everything that we've been taught but being in a (indistinct) and being involved in organisations add value, for example the ELP. It entails* (equipping) *upcoming leaders with the needed skills and also giving them a background of what it is and what it means to becoming a leader and being a leader. So that for me personally is one step I had to, one step closer into being, becoming what I want to become considering entrepreneurship. That's applicable there.*" (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

The data shows that there are various components to extra-mural activities. There are units at the university that have provided students with opportunity for growth. For example, through the Gender Equity Unit students have been able to be involved in various programmes such as the feeding scheme, tutoring and community engagement. Through these opportunities' students are able to gain experiences that assists in meeting the requirements of some postgraduate courses. It also adds to their resume, making them desirable for companies. Through sport, students are able to travel the country and the world, and meet new people in the process. Through these extra activities new doors and opportunities can open for students to propel themselves forward, through people connecting them with scholarships/bursaries and even jobs. There are also programmes such as ELP (Emerging Leaders Programme), that provide students with the knowledge around leadership and equips them with the needed skills to become leaders. Through programmes like these it creates belief in students to dream big and achieve their goals but also set them up with the skills needed for success. These extra- mural activities have many avenues for opportunity and provide students with platforms to be exposed to things that go beyond their usual day-to-day life in order to gain extra skills to be successful and promote the perceived potential for socioeconomic mobility.

f. Mentorship

The additional guidance obtained by students from educators who go the extra mile transitions into the concept of mentorship. Mentoring is multifaceted and serves numerous purposes in order to achieve set objectives, this is done through various

methods (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Lev, Kolassa, & Bakken (2010) define mentoring as follows, when a senior person or mentor provides advice, information and emotional support to a junior person or student over a period of time. Mentors have the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in students' lives at a critical learning moment that can change their futures for the better. Effective mentoring occurs as mentors recognise their contribution to long-term student success and the impact of mentoring, understand their role as mentors, and have the benefit of an organised mentoring programme designed to assist them in their mentoring (Andersen & West, 2020).

> "*I feel like if every university had that type of mind-set, that view that they have to mentor you to become or move up out of poverty, especially the kid, people like us, or people like me who come from poverty, you know, where you get here and then they mentor your mind-set to change it so that you can believe the impossible. Because some of us come here with the mind-set because we're still struggling, with academics, you are content to what you are and you don't want to go beyond. And if the university has that type of idea or logic or method they use to mentor you beyond this, it will create, and it will basically change society because the key people in society are you*" .He continues and says, "*due to me having great mentors, you understand, which the university can maybe explore or get into what you just said now, having that holistic idea of saying that let's teach a child not to think poor or have a poor mind-set. But to teach them to believe that you know what anything is possible because you are here at university whereby all the information is here.*" (Interview Participant 1, Male, Economics)

> "*I definitely have seen like a lot of things on campus. Like I know last week there was like a, how to compile your CV sort of thing, you know, and there has been, there's a lot of things in place to help us. There's mentors, peer facilitators for the first years and whatever. I do think however, that the university does not do a good enough job of letting people know that these things are available. Because some of these things I only found out about, like through here, oh, word of mouth or by chance. Like it's not, they don't, it's not, and I feel like something that*

should be like in your face, like they shouldannoy you with it all the time. Because then it would be on me whether I decide to attend, whether I decide to put my name on for something, you know. So there is a lot that, that I found out that's actually happening here, but they don't do enough to let thestudents know that hey, we have this for you, hey, this is how we can help you, this is how we support students." (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

"*The biggest one for me also was my practical coordinator was also someone I'm working now. She, from her I think I've learnt how to be a black woman occupying anyspace especially a space like if you, if you're talking about science. It is a space that ispreviously dominated by white men, old white men. So I think that, all of that together with my degree sets me up to so, broader paths. Because I can walk into the world with confidence. I can walk into the world knowing that you, I, I, I've got this. I know how todo this. I, I believe that I can, you know, because I've seen it being done. And yeah, nowI just need to pave the way forward for myself.*" (FGD 1 Participant 1, Female, Science)

Students coming into university are often under-prepared. Students coming from a LSES backgrounds often have a poor mind-set and struggle to believe that they can achieve. As a result, students have acknowledged that mentorship programmes focusing on equipping and empowering students to transform and become better are important as a means to assist peers who struggle. Students struggle with a mind-set that has been groomed for 18 years by negativethought processes and often tend to struggle with the new dynamic shift in academics. A needfor academic support and guidance is perceived to be essential for future success of students. In addition, often the structures are in place at universities for students to grow and be mentored but students reveal an issue in communication from the institutions side. Many have shared that there is a gap between havingthe structures and programmes in place and the students receiving the necessary information for opportunities.

When mentorship is adequately provided we find experiences where students are able to be equipped to claim their space even when they are in the minority. Through these experiences and guidance students become more "*confident*", are able to "*believe*", and

learn to "*claim herspace*" all because of mentors who have been through the journey and can advise, groom and guide individuals towards success.

5.3.5. The student experience and how it affects their potential socioeconomic mobility

5.3.5.1. First Generation Graduate

In many communities of colour families are experiencing first-generation graduates. These students have an extra burden placed on them to succeed, not only for financial reasons but tomake an impact on their communities by bringing hope. There are many people keeping their eyes on these individuals from their communities. There are various challenges that first- generation graduates face coming to university because of the unfamiliar territory they walk into and trying to navigate this territory. A large portion of this is down to the fact that parentswant students to succeed (Olson, 2014) but do not have the knowledge, experience or capacityto adequately assist them (Miller, 2008). For many first-generation graduates their success is a point of pride and accomplishment for themselves and their families but come with internal and external pressures and expectations for further success (Olson, 2014).

> "*If I'm going to do I have to do it to a point whereby to show that this thing does reallywork. Because the belief, we've been living like this for a very long time. And I grew upwith seeing this. Because at the point whereby evens me I was believing it that you knowgetting a job at Spar or something will be the greatest job. But for that, I believe you know it's very important because it creates a process of belief within your own family.*"He continues by saying, *"If you can do it you know, it's nice to come out of a house youknow that oh, this guy did it. He came from the same parent, the same roof. We eat thesame food. So obviously, he's going to believe you. You know, it's basically belief. So Ibelieve you know as a student or as an academic, I would love my family to have it. Soit's very important, like she said, very important to ensure that I get my degree, get thehighest qualification I can evens if I don't want it, meaning postgrad. Just to set that pace to say hey guys I didn't say let's end my degree. Let's try to get the biggest one orthe highest one evens if I don't want it.*" (FGD 2 Participant 2, Female, Social Work)

"*So not only in terms of just getting a job and a work, there's also, the pressure with I have a younger brother who I have to set the example to so there is no room for failure. There is no room for making mistakes and that is because I'm a first-generation graduate. So I just feel like a lot of pressure.*" (FGD 1 Participant 4, Female, Arts)

"*First of, all it's not to mess up while you're at university. Not to mess up, that's the first thing.*" He continues and says, "*I didn't fail, let me just put that, I didn't fail but the money just didn't come. And so I had to go back home, you know, and it was bad. You know, people had a lot of things to say. They had a lot of assumptions. There were a lot of things. But eventually you know, I think now, go, if I graduate now and I go back home it's not going to be not that big of a deal because a lot of students have now started to go to university.*" (FGD 2 Participant 3, Male, Social Work)

One of the main things mentioned by students is the fact that there is significant pressure placed on them - pressure not to mess up, pressure to succeed and pressure to provide. The first-generation graduate is perceived to set the example for those who follow and the impact that this has on so many others in their home communities is evident. Their success brings hope and belief into others because the youth at home is able to role model someone who came from the same community and the same circumstances who has been successful. Although it is important to highlight that there is a change taking place in communities, more and more individuals are entering tertiary education institutions and graduating.

5.3.5.2. Mentality

The mind-set of individuals is important for growth and development in order to achieve success but students don't necessarily come into university with the right mind-set. This is why mentorship was identified to be important, in order to groom and nurture the mentality of students. The higher education sphere is a culturally diverse environment for LSES students. A significant portion of this is down to the fact that there is a system at institutions that is developed around that operates according to certain unwritten codes, rules and cultural norms associated with HSES and MSES individuals (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubia, 2012). When LSES

students enter these environments with these unwritten rules and codes there are often psychological barriers that arise, pertaining to emotional experiences(emotional distress and well-being), identity management (sense of belonging), self-perception (self-efficacy and perceived threat) and motivation (achievement goals and fear of failure) (Jury, et al., 2017).

> "*I feel like if every university had that type of mind-set, that view that they have to mentor you to become or move up out of poverty especially the kid, people like us, or people like me who come from poverty, you know, where you get here and then they mentor your mind-set to change it so that you can believe the impossible.*" (Interview Participant 1, Male, Economics)

> "*And of course I know, I know the people back home, I'm not sure if it's because it's such a small town or because they don't really, they're not exposed too much. They, they, they, they're very small minded.*" (Interview Participant 2, Female, Science)

> "*I will find a job but I think university being in the space of a university has actually taught me a lot. And also attending seminars as well. So I think I am in, I have that capability because of being in this space of opening actually my own business and actually being something of myself. It doesn't I don't have to be employed in order for me to try.*" (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

Students who come from a LSES backgrounds tend to have a poor mentality. As a result of their circumstances, their mind-set is cultivated through this and often creates obstacles for success. Through mentorship students are equipped with the skills to achieve but they are also provided with examples of success and start opening up to go beyond the box that their circumstances has created and restricted them to. A shift in mentality is important for students to be successful at university but also in the workplace. A degree might provide the knowledge but the deeper know-how to be successful can be taught to individuals. UWC has set in place programmes and seminars in order to assist students in this mind-set shift and assist them with the tools, skills and environments to go beyond their boundaries and comfort zones.

5.3.5.3. Roles and perceptions of family

The role and perception of parents in the lives of students are crucial in shaping them as individuals. Often student decision making is as a result of what parents have imparted to them through value and belief systems. At times, these belief systems are cultivated through circumstances. Research done by Pather, Norodien-Fataar, Cupido, & Mkonto (2017) reveal that non-academic factors such as family support is crucial in every stage of a student's university journey, starting at pre-university when applying. Data revealed that mothers motivate students to enter university; they also provide motivation before tests were written; and encouraged students to persist once they were admitted into university (Pather, Norodien- Fataar, Cupido, & Mkonto, 2017). Ogunshola & Adewale (2012) report that the SES of parents as a whole has no significant impact on the academic performance of students. Although research has found that the educational qualification of parents and health status of students specifically were significant factors that affected students' academic performance (Ogunshola & Adewale, 2012). Contrary to the above, Walpole (2003) has found that students from low SES backgrounds who attend colleges and universities work more, study less, are less involved, and report lower GPAs than their high SES peers.

> "*So my whole focus of why I come to university was to sort of get out of this crappy life of poverty opposed to assisting my family to get out of it. Because my father already created this picture for me saying that you know if you go to university blah, blah, blah, you will have it. You'll make money. You will sit in an office. You know, you're going to make it in life*". (Interview Participant 1, Male, Economics)

> "*I've never felt that responsibility or I've never felt like I was obligated to be successful and come back and make money. Like my mom has always just wanted me to be successful and to see me there, whatever, you know. And I, I do understand that I might be speaking from a place of privilege*". (FGD 1 Participant 1, Female, Science)

> "*The first thing that made me come to university, we had this conversation with my grandmother. She was sitting, I was sitting, and she was actually giving me lots of lessons before coming here telling me who I am, don't forget this, don't forget that. And I was like oh okay, but*

she told me one thing that I will never forget. She said you could actually go to school I made sure of that. And it was so that you can live for the both of us. It's like my grandmother is living through me." She continues and says, *"Whatever I do, it's because of her, and then I come second to anything that I do. So I can't be selfish about that"*. (Interview Participant 3, Female, Arts)

The data revealed that student's with different socioeconomic backgrounds have different reasons for coming to university. Students from LSES backgrounds tend to come to university in order to get out of their situation which is linked to poverty and negative circumstances. As a result, parents advise their children to go the route of tertiary education because this is the source they believe will shift them, as students, as well as the family in the right direction. Education becomes the route to a high ranking job, finances and eventually making it in life. The lack of opportunity for parents and grandparents fuels the desire for them to get their children to university, so that they are able to come back home and change the circumstances for the family at home. Whereas in MSES background families, the mind-set is different, it's not about going out there and being successful for the family but rather students are urged to go and be successful for themselves. The pressure of black tax and giving back is not placed on these individuals, so the input of parents shape students' mind-sets differently and as a result of this type of nurturing, students' goals and purpose for being at university is different. There are different belief systems and values that are passed down which tend to groom individuals differently. There is a greater focus on support and ensuring that MSES students succeed whereas LSES have the burden to succeed, often without the ability of parents to sufficiently support them.

5.3.5.4. Student university responsibility

At university systems and structures are put in place in order to ensure that students have the best opportunity to succeed. These systems and structures guide and support students along the way in order to lead to students to the ultimate outcome, graduation. Yet, the reality is that even with all this support, students can still go astray. It is important to bring to light the responsibility that students have at university to succeed. Success is not given to any student on a silver platter, it takes hard work and perseverance to attain their goals.

"*At the end of the day, it's up to the student. I feel like it doesn't matter how much someone teaches you. It's up to you as the person how you're going to grasp this and apply it. And sometimes you can have a really, really good, a, or a really bad teacher,right, that you've or a lecturer that you feel like you're not learning from so it's up to you yourself to put in the effort to educate yourself, to go the extra mile*" (Interview Participant 7, Female, Arts)

"*It's through them that the learning is taking place that progresses you to your graduation and postgrad studies. So it's mainly, the impact actually does come from them - Because it's what they put in, what they're willing to give. And although I thinklearning is mostly a, like a responsibility that you have to take on yourself - But it doescome from them as well. Because if they're not willing to go the extra mile or assist youin any way or be understanding of situations - Then it's a little bit more difficult to getto your degree*" (Interview Participant 5, Female, Arts)

"*University is like a gym, it's just a tool. If you want to use it, if you don't want to use it, it's your own fault. People come here for three years, they're done, get out, they havelearnt nothing, you know.*" he continues and says "*I believe the university is a tool. Solike a gym. You can go to the gym. You can just sit there and just watch the people gym.That's (indistinct). You just sit there, watch the people gym, and then go out. And then anyone can say I have a certificate, I went to the gym. Do you understand? But if you go to the gym and you gym actually so much, like taking the weights, you know, like gyming you know. You will come out knowing like I built a muscle, built a chest, built whatever you're building. So I believe the university is the same thing. ...So I believe that coming to university and clearly using it as a tool as I said. You go to the gym andyou're gyming and you come out and you use it, definitely, it enhances you. Especiallywith me, I feel like it enhanced me because it didn't just give me a degree, it gave me . Because I actually went to the gym and really gymed.*" (FGD 1 Participant 2, Female, Science)

Students perceive that what an individual gets out of the university experience is "*up to the student*", putting the university success responsibility on the individual, although there is a general consensus that lecturers do have an important role to play. Students are able to have a good or bad experience as a result of lecturers. As previously mentioned in class teaching under the indirect impact of universities, lecturers can either just give the book or actually make an impact through being involved with the holistic process for students but at the end of the day whether the experience be good or bad, students still need to navigate through the process and go the extra mile in order to ensure their success. An example is made which portrays a university to be like a gym, the point behind it is that everything is available in a gym to develop your body holistically, it all depends on whether you utilise what is available to you. Similarly, with university, the institution provides the tools and support for success but there is a responsibility on students to utilise them for their own growth and gain.

5.3.6. Summary of Chapter

This chapter has captured the quantitative and qualitative research. Through the quantitative component, the demographic characteristics of students were noted. The majority of the students surveyed 66% were female, most students were in the age group 22-25 and 93.8% were students of colour. Additionally, 54.8% of parents were working full time with the largest group of parents being qualified only up to a secondary education level (39.47%). Parents who have a university qualification have a majority in full-time jobs (79.5%). The largest group of household income comes from the lowest tier 32.7% (n=68) and if the second lowest tier of 50001-100000 is added, 15.4% (n=32), the two lowest tiers comprise of 48.1%. Overall, 67.2% (n=45) of black participants fall into the criteria to qualify for NSFAS with only 39.9% (n=51) of coloured students qualifying. At least 46.7% of male participants and 48.91% of female participants fall into the low socioeconomic status background with household incomes below R100 000 per annum. Part of the R100 001-R150 000 per annum category also falls into the R122 000 cut-off to qualify for NSFAS, pushing both male and female over the 50% mark for low socioeconomic status backgrounds.

Whereas the qualitative component indicated that though students believe that a university education would influence their socioeconomic mobility, it was dependent on specific components such as type of programme, level of study, component of study

(soft andadditional skills) and social capital acquired at education institution (upward, lateral and downward). These components affected the economic status of individuals through determining occupation which led to an impact on finances, work experience and standard ofliving. The social status was then affected by family perception and community perception as a result of the economic impact and the educational components. The impact of the economicand social changes result in socioeconomic mobility, which lead to different types of socioeconomic movements. These movements can be immediate or progressive and can be positively affected by a move to university and entrepreneurship which can cause an upward shift. These shifts also have an impact on family socioeconomic mobility and is critical in changing the lives of individuals' loved ones. As a result, some students have the choice or desire to give back to their families and communities but a more burdensome situation calledblack tax features prominently. In addition, the university has an ability to impact student's socioeconomic mobility directly through funding, work study and work opportunities and indirectly through class teaching, extra-mural activity and mentorship. Finally, student experience is critical in understanding the impact that is made on socioeconomic mobility. This comes from being a first-generation graduate, the mentality imparted through their homecircumstances, the roles and perceptions of their parents and the responsibility placed on thembeing at university.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will summarise the research study, present the conclusions drawn from the study,by revealing the limitations within the study and making recommendations for

future research.This current study explored student perceptions on the influence of a university education on up-ward socioeconomic mobility: A case study of students at the University of the Western Cape. The human capital theory and socioeconomic mobility were used as a theoretic base. Amixed method approach was used for this study, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the specific design was a sequential explanatory design.

The first objective was to describe the socioeconomic background of students from the University of Western Cape using a quantitative survey as a basis for understanding their perception on the effect of university education on their socioeconomic mobility. The second objective of the study used qualitative methods to determine the views of students at tertiary education institutions on the influence of university qualifications on socioeconomic status. Further to this, another objective looked at perceptions of students at a tertiary education institution on how tertiary education may impact their individual socioeconomic mobility andthe socioeconomic mobility of their families. The fourth objective examined the views of students relating to the roles tertiary institutions and the faculty are expected to play in enhancing their socioeconomic mobility. The final objective looked understanding the student experience and how it affects their potential socioeconomic mobility.

6.2. Conclusions

The University of the Western Cape has a final-year student population made up of 1:2 ratio (Male: Female) with the majority of students in the 22-25 age group. The student population ismade up of majority students of colour (black or coloured) with a very small minority from other racial groups. Approximately half of the student population was able to qualify for SouthAfrica's National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which has a criterion of a householdincome below R122000 per annum before 2018, meaning that approximately half of the studentpopulation falls in the low socioeconomic status (LSES) background. The highest education level attained by majority of parents was post-secondary education (not university level) and below, meaning that a large portion of students are first generation graduates. The findings highlight that education is a critical component in contributing towards socioeconomic status. Yet there is a great complexity in terms of how it truly makes an impact.In terms of a higher education, the role of individual's programme of study, level of study, component of study (soft skills

and additional skills) and social capital all contribute to the impact of education on socioeconomic status. It is important to note that the holistic development of students is key to contributing to the end product of graduates and the contribution they will make to society and the world of work. It is clearly revealed that the steps in moving from a degree to the impact on socioeconomic status, requires a good job or occupation which results in better pay (income or finances). It was evident that many participants viewed the transition from a student to an employee as positive in its contribution to shifting their socioeconomic status as they would be earning their own money. Many students viewed money earned as an important factor. For some it assisted in giving them a necessary initial boost which makes an impact. For others as they grow in their various fields a desired level of income that matches their aspirations is reached in order to fulfil their socioeconomic expectations.

Socioeconomic status changes transition into socioeconomic mobility for individuals, although not everyone is affected in the same way. This addresses objective three. The study highlighted three different types of movement that individuals are able to experience once they leave university and become employed. Some individuals experience a significant upward shift as a result of their new occupation and the increase in income that comes with it. There are also individuals who experience stagnation, their shift into the workplace will match the level of living that they have experienced before being qualified and if they primarily focus on themselves and moving out, they'll be able to maintain their current socioeconomic class and standard of living. Finally, there are individuals who experience a potential drop in class if they have to move out immediately after qualifying and being employed because entry level jobs in their field will not allow them to maintain what they currently have in their parents' homes. Although for both, the stagnant individuals as well as those who experience downward movements, over time they are able to gain work experience, additional skills and an increase in income to the point where an upward shift will be able to place in their socioeconomic mobility, which is known as the progressive shift. Overall, everyone is able to experience a progressive shift, or intra-generational socioeconomic mobility.

For many individuals from LSES households, central to their reasoning for coming to university is to assist their families and not only themselves in moving to a better livelihood. This means that the socioeconomic mobility shift of families are important. This brings forth the concept of intra-generational family socioeconomic mobility. For

individuals to cause socioeconomic mobility in their families, there are many factors that come into play, namely the size of the family, whether there are other contributors in the household, the previous socioeconomic condition of the family, the size of individual incomes and how families are able to manage their finances. For most students coming out of university with a degree and finding employment would allow them to experience upward socioeconomic mobility but as mentioned before, their responsibilities are too significant and burdensome for that to take place and their families are central to this. The initial impact for some is that they would immediately be able to shift themselves and their family into a better socioeconomic position. Though for majority of individuals, there is a limited socioeconomic mobility shift but rather,improved standard of living. Over time as they grow in their fields and their salary increases,a family shift is able to take place. Then there are individuals who, more often than not, comefrom MSES backgrounds who will have none to very little impact on socioeconomic mobility shifts in their families as a result of the already well-established socioeconomic situation in their households. The variety in impact reveals the impact of the different components that playa role in socioeconomic mobility.

An undergraduate degree may result in socioeconomic statuschanges for individuals before the external responsibility of family but the resultant effect of the external factors is that upward socioeconomic mobility may not take place immediately. When graduating, students either choose to give back or have an obligation to give back. Individuals have different levels of responsibility that can be identified. It starts from what theyneed to do for themselves, what they need to do for their families and it filters into what they need to do for their community. A large portion of this forms part of the concept labelled 'blacktax'. Individuals are expected to bring back home a financial contribution that is able to alleviate the struggles and difficulties they grew up in. This is done through their obligation togive back to their family, extended family and community. A key distinction with black tax isthat it only applicable to people of colour. The responsibility that comes with black tax is significant but also often burdensome. Individuals are required to help family members who do not have, put those who are following them through school, make sure that everyone is fed,assist with financial issues, support the family, provide in the house and make sure everyone's needs are met. This brings to light the challenges experienced by individuals in their pursuit ofsocioeconomic mobility.

The contribution of universities in an individual's life is crucial. When students from LSES backgrounds come to university there is potential to experience socioeconomic upward shift directly. University systems and structures are put in place in order to ensure that students havethe best opportunity to succeed. These systems and structures guide and support students alongthe way in order to lead to students to the ultimate outcome, graduation. Yet, the reality is thateven with all this support, students can still go astray. It is important to bring to light the responsibility that students have at university to succeed. Success is not given to any student on a silver platter, it takes hard work and perseverance to attain their goals.

Finally, the student experience is important for the process of socioeconomic mobility. For many, being first generation graduates come with a wide array of pressures that they place on themselves, that come from their families and even from their communities. Thus, the new shift into university highlights the importance of the roles and perceptions that parents and family members play in students desire to come to university and the impact they have on student experience.

Students who come from a LSES backgrounds tend to have a poor mentality as a result of their circumstances. Their mind-set is cultivated through this and often creates obstacles for success. Through mentorship, class teaching and extra-mural activites students are equipped with the skills to achieve but they are also provided with examples of success and start opening up to go beyond the box that their circumstances has created and restricted them to. A shift in mentality is important for students to be successful at university but also in the workplace.

Furthermore, the impact of universities and lecturers on students can either just give them the book or actually make an impact on their lives and future socioeconomic mobility through being involved with the holistic process for students, but at the end of the day whether the experience be good or bad, students still need to navigate through the process and go the extra mile in order to ensure their success.

6.3. Contribution to knowledge

This research contributes to empirical knowledge regarding the impact of a higher education undergraduate degree on socioeconomic mobility of individuals. It highlights the importance of higher education in socioeconomic mobility but also reveals that a higher education degreeis not the only factor contributing to socioeconomic mobility but

it is a starting point that assists individuals to commence the process of upward socioeconomic mobility. It also contributes insights to academic programme evaluations, which are essential for the development of programmes that are relevant, and meet the practical needs of individuals in order to experience socioeconomic mobility and contribute to economic growth and development in the country, according to human capital theory.

Also, the mixed methods approach was used for this study combining quantitative and qualitative methods and triangulated two qualitative data collection methods. The study's qualitative component combined the use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, allowing for data triangulation. Given that students are a vulnerable group, it was anticipated that in-depth interviews would allow them to be confident and comfortable enough to open up during discussions. However, the nature of the topic pointed to the possibility that the high level of engagement and interactivity of focus group discussions means this method can be successfully applied. The study used both methods. The results indicated that the data from these two qualitative methods corroborated each other.

6.4. Recommendations

A critical issue that emerged from the study is the need for universities to pass onto students a set of skill that prepares them comprehensively for their off campus future. Two groups of such skills for which the need was clear are soft skills which include; interpersonal skills, communication skills, office dynamics, management skills and organisational skills; and financial management skills. Emphasis needs to be placed on soft skills by universities. The additional emphasis on soft skills, whether it be as part of the degree course or as co-curricular courses provided at the institution, are critical in the development of a holistic graduate. This holistic cultivation of graduates will make them more valuable and give them a competitive edge in potential work environments. A combination of good financial management skills will be able to equip graduates with the necessary skills to navigate up the socioeconomic mobility ladder while dealing with external pressures of work, family and community. By adding financial management skills as part of the degree course or as co-curricular courses, individuals will be provided with the necessary skills to further assist them in their pursuit of socioeconomic mobility.

A critical factor in the lives of many individuals and specifically individuals from LSES backgrounds is the need for proper organised mentorship. Through mentorship, some of the key skill sets mentioned above can be shared and cultivated. The University of the Western Cape has many co-curricular courses and programmes but students experience a lack of communication from the university in terms of making these opportunities known to them. Students who participated in the study indicated that they were not aware of co-curricular courses. This means that the institution is not efficient in relaying the information to students. If the communication strategy to inform students about the opportunities available at the institution improves the potential to rectify the need for additional skills by students can be resolved and the link between students and good mentorship can be bridged.

6.5. Suggestions for future research

This study's findings point to the view that more research is needed on this theme, especially related to other factors that contribute to an individual's socioeconomic mobility. One of the key issues that emerged from this study that merits further research is the impact of financial responsibility and financial management skills on socioeconomic mobility. A key theme that came out of the study was the financial responsibility many students are expected to bear, namely "black tax". Initial views from this study show that students perceive this to influence their socioeconomic mobility. However, more research is needed on the actual impact of black tax on students. An additional aspect that needs further examination based on this study's outcomes is the expectation of workplaces in terms of graduate skills for successful integration.

6.6. Limitations

The findings from this study are critical for policy makers on the issue of transforming tertiary institutions. However, the case study design adopted means that this study cannot be generalised to a broader population but is specific to this cohort of people, especially as participants were mainly from LSES backgrounds and were only from a limited amount of fields of study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance

Appendix B: Letter of request for permission from department

Appendix C: Letter of request for permission from university

Appendix D: Letter of Approval

Appendix E: Consent Form Interview

Appendix F: Consent Form FGD

Appendix G: Consent Form Questionnaire

Appendix H: Information Sheet Interview

Appendix I: Information Sheet FGD

Appendix J: Information Sheet Questionnaire

Appendix K: Questionnaire

Appendix L: Interview and FGD guide

Appendix M: Certificate of Editing