

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



**FACTORS THAT COULD FACILITATE A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION
FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION: THE CASE OF
HIGH SCHOOL X IN PHILLIPI**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that **FACTORS THAT COULD FACILITATE A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION: THE CASE OF HIGH SCHOOL X IN PHILLIPI** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

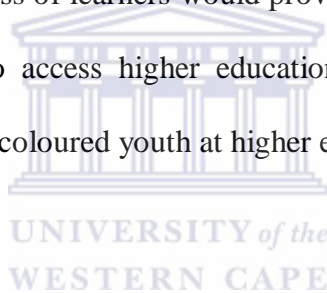
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ABSTRACT

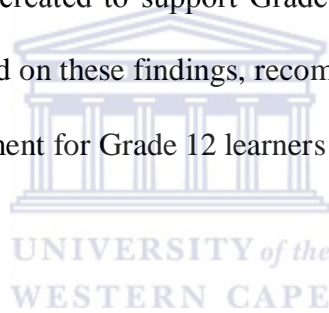
This study investigated the factors that could influence Grade 12 learners from low socio-economic backgrounds and their decision-making process with regard to accessing post-school education. The aims of the study were to establish the factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to university study, as well as identify the factors that potentially could inhibit the learners' transition. The objective of the study was to make recommendations, based on the findings of the research data, that could assist the different role players on how best to facilitate, guide and support high school learners' post-school educational choices. It was proposed that knowledge of the factors that could promote or inhibit the decision-making process of learners would provide valuable insights that could be used to enable more learners to access higher education and, in so doing, increase the participation rates of African and coloured youth at higher education institutions.



The student-focused Chapman college-choice model was used as the theoretical framework in order to gain insights into what the factors were that have a significant influence on the choice of learners to pursue studies beyond high school. The study was situated within an interpretative, qualitative research paradigm, using a case study design. The research site was a high school in Phillipi near Cape Town. The research participants consisted of twenty-eight Grade 12 learners who were selected by means of purposive sampling. Three Grade 12 educators also participated in the study. The research instruments included, for the learners, a demographic information sheet, a self-reflective questionnaire and three focus group interviews. Secondary data was included in the discussions. The educators had to complete a self-reflective questionnaire only. Content analysis, using a three-stage open coding process was used to analyse the qualitative data which were organised according to the study's three

sub-questions. The factors discussed in the theoretical framework were used as a guide to group the data into themes and sub-themes.

The findings of this study corresponded with the literature reviewed and the factors identified in the theoretical framework, but one finding contradicted the literature, while new factors emerged from the data collected. The findings revealed that there was a greater need of support required from the different role players - family, friends, the community, educators and the school; the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education; higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations; and companies and other institutions - to ensure that an enabling environment is created to support Grade 12 learners' transition from high school to university studies. Based on these findings, recommendations were made on how an enabling and supportive environment for Grade 12 learners could be strengthened.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHE: Council on Higher Education

CHET: Centre for Higher Education Transformation

DoE: Department of Education

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

HSRC: Human Sciences Research Council

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

NSFAS: National Student Financial Aid Scheme

SAIRR: South African Institute for Race Relations



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CHAPTER ONE

THESIS INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Post-school education is still a privilege for a minority of the South African youth (Centre on Higher Education, 2010; 2013; Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007). Identifying the factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school for the black South African youth is, therefore, a pressing priority. Research has identified at least two critical issues that point towards the need to encourage Grade 12 learners to further their education. Firstly, only 20% of Grade 12 learners progress immediately to post-school educational institutions (Sheppard, 2009), while approximately 600 000 secondary school learners, who have obtained Grade 12, form part of over 2.8 million youth between the ages of 18 – 24 years who are currently not in employment, nor enrolled in education or training (Cloete, 2012; DHET, 2012; Sheppard 2009). Secondly, the reported low participation and high dropout rates of black students (African and coloured) in higher education are of great concern for the government (Badat, 2010; CHE, 2013; Lolwana, 2009). Thus, the question one is compelled to ask is: *Why is the higher education sector experiencing low participation rates when there is a high number of eligible learners outside the system who could potentially enter university?*

A possible response to this question could be that many of the African and coloured youth experience challenges that prevent them from accessing higher education (Leseka & Maile, 2008). It is, thus, another reason why research in this area is needed. In addition, this need is urgently articulated in governmental documents concerning higher education, in that universities are tasked to produce graduates who could contribute to the growth of the economy and the

enhancement of social transformation - therefore, placing the higher education sector at the centre to the country's overall development (Department of Higher Education, 2012; National Development Plan, 2012; National Plan on Higher Education, 2001; Department of Education, 1997).

Prior to 1994, apartheid policy shaped the education and employment prospects of Africans and coloured people. Fiske and Ladd (2004:2) state: "Under apartheid, white people enjoyed good education, ready employment, and a sense of self control over their individual and collective identities while Blacks lived in an essentially totalitarian and dehumanising environment in which their every move was restricted, including education and vocational opportunities". Unfortunately, the impact of a racially based system of division along social and economic lines is still felt in South Africa today. Research conducted post 1994 shows that Africans, closely followed by coloured people, continue to constitute the poorest section in the country (Letseka, Breier & Visser, 2010). To turn the tide on poverty, education is key to accessing opportunities and increased livelihoods (Sheppard, 2009; World Bank, 2013). Sheppard (2009), among others, highlights the importance of education beyond secondary school because it is the vehicle through which the youth could access employment opportunities successfully. Furthermore, South Africa can be regarded as a youthful nation with more than half of the population (52%) estimated to be younger than 25 years of age (Cloete & Adam, 2012). Despite having over 2.8 million youth not in employment, nor enrolled in education and training, Mhlatsheni (2012) points out that the current youth cohort has the greatest opportunities in relation to past generations.

The fact that so many of the youth, who have completed Grade 12 successfully, are unemployed, together with the low participation rate in higher education, makes it pressing for more studies to be initiated that investigate and identify the factors that could shed more light on the enabling factors that would empower more learners to continue with higher education opportunities. It is for these reasons that this study aims to investigate and identify the factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education for learners who have completed Grade 12 successfully. Revealing such factors will enable schools and educators, higher education practitioners, government bodies, the Department of Education and non-government organisations to provide comprehensive support and guidance to learners, so that far more learners would be able to access and participate in higher education studies.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The literature reveals that it is mostly African and coloured youth who are not progressing to post-school education in South Africa. The research also highlights the fact that of the African and coloured youth who access higher education, 50% drop out before obtaining their qualifications (CHE 2010, 2013; Letseka, Breier & Visser, 2010). Such a high percentage of the youth not gaining education, training or skills, will result in a loss of talent, potential social unrest and a high societal burden (CHE, 2013; Cloete, 2012; DHET, 2012). Identifying the factors that impact on learner's choices beyond secondary school can provide insight into what influences learners to pursue post school education or not. Knowledge of such factors could successfully be used to assist and guide more learners to higher education institutions in South Africa, and in so doing, decrease the number among the youth who are not in employment, nor enrolled in education or training, as well as potentially reduce dropout rates. Thus, knowledge of

the factors that impact on learner choices would most likely enable learners to take advantage of further education possibilities.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Given the context discussed thus far, the aim of the study was to investigate and identify factors that could facilitate the successful transition of learners from high school to post-school education, in particular learners at High School X who have completed Grade 12 successfully. In addition, the study aimed to identify interventions that could address the challenges that obstruct the learners from accessing post-school education.

The objective of the study was to make recommendations based on the findings of the research data that could assist the different role players on how best to facilitate, guide and support high school learners' post-school education choices. It was hypothesised that knowledge of the factors that facilitate learners to embark on post-school education would enable more learners to access higher education and, in so doing, increase the participation rates of African and coloured youth at university.

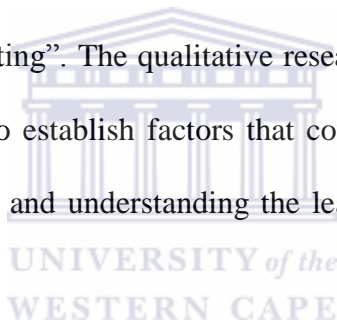
1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS

In order to realise the aims and objective of this study, the main research question was: What are the enabling factors that could successfully facilitate Grade 12 learners' transition to post-school education? The sub-questions were:

1. How do learners view post-school education and its role in realising their career aspirations?
2. What are the enabling or inhibiting factors that influence the decision-making process of high school learners in transitioning to post-school education?
3. How could the barriers that discourage learners from transitioning to post-school education be addressed and the enabling factors promoted?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is positioned within a qualitative, interpretive research paradigm. A key feature of qualitative research is the attempt to view the world through the eyes of the actors themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011:9) explain that “Qualitative research allows a researcher to examine, in detail, the experiences of people within their natural setting and to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the social, economic, cultural and physical context that they live in”. According to Babbie and Mouton (2007:270), “Qualitative research is appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting”. The qualitative research paradigm is well suited to this study as the researcher intended to establish factors that could enable transition and access to post-school education by studying and understanding the learners’ experiences in their natural settings.



Furthermore, a qualitative research paradigm involves the researcher as a key instrument, uses multiple data collection techniques, employs complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic, includes participants’ meanings and reflexivity, and gives an holistic description of the research process (Creswell, 2013; Hennink et al., 2011). Using the Chapman model that focuses on student characteristics and external influences as theoretical framework, this study elicited from the data the factors that facilitated and enabled learners to access higher education successfully, as well as the factors that hindered their progression. The qualitative research paradigm is further discussed in Section 3.4.

1.5.1 Research design

A case study design was used in this study. A case study design forms part of qualitative research as it allows the researcher to conduct an extensive examination of a particular phenomenon (Schrank, 2009). According to Yin (2009: 18), “a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context”. Case studies, therefore, allow for considerable in-depth investigation into either a small number of cases or a single case (Gerring, 2007; Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004). Babbie (2001: 173) explains that the main purpose of a case study design is to “either provide descriptive and explanatory insight or provide idiographic understanding of a particular case under investigation”. Yin (2003) cited in Baxter and Jack (2008) points out that a case study design should be considered when a researcher seeks to answer the “how” and “why” questions and/or seeks to uncover contextual conditions, as they see it, that are relevant to the phenomenon under study. As the focus of this research was on the experience and perceptions of secondary school learners on further higher education choices, a case study design was deemed appropriate to elucidate what the factors were that could enable transition and which factors posed a hindrance to this progression. It was used, therefore, in a broader sense where the case included twenty-eight learners from the school identified, and the data collection instruments were administered to all twenty-eight learners in the case. The research design is discussed in detail in Section 3.5.

1.5.2 Research site and research participants

The research site for this study was High School X, situated in Philippi, a black township situated on the outskirts of Cape Town. Similar to many other townships in South Africa, Philippi has many social problems and a high unemployment rate, with only 32% of its population having completed secondary school and/or higher education qualifications (Census,

2011). As a result of the latter indicator, there was a lack of high status professions in Philippi who could act as role models and motivation for learners to seek a post- school education and delay the search for job opportunities after high school. The research site is further described in Section 3.6.1.

Twenty-eight Grade 12 learners and three educators from High School X were the research participants in this case study. Grade 12 learners were used as research participants because they are at a critical stage of their schooling career. It is at this point that learners have to make the choice to continue with higher education or not. The selection process was done through purposive sampling methods (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). The criteria for the selection of the research participants are explained in Section 3.6.2.

1.5.3 Data collection process

Qualitative research allows for the use of multiple data collection instruments, such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations, content analysis, visual methods and life histories (Hennink et al., 2011). The data collection methods used in this study included a biographical information sheet, a questionnaire, three focus group sessions, primary and secondary documents (the learners' progress results, schools statistics, and Census statistics that were deemed necessary). The data collection process is described in Section 3.6.3.

1.5.4 Data analysis

Content analysis, using a three-stage open coding process, was used to work through and sort the data in this study (Henning, 2004). The data were categorised under the three sub-questions, and the responses of the learners to the questions asked in the questionnaire and issues discussed in

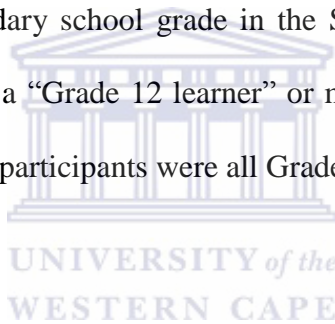
the focus group interviews were grouped under the themes and sub-themes as identified in the Chapman's model. The data analysis process was deductive, but other factors that were not listed in the model were also identified. A detailed description of the analysis process is provided in Section 3.6.4.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts and their definitions are used throughout the discussions in all the chapters:

1.6.1 Grade 12 learners

Grade 12 is the final basic secondary school grade in the South African schooling system. A learner in this grade is referred to as a "Grade 12 learner" or matric learner (Department of Basic Education, 2011). In this study, the participants were all Grade 12 learners.



1.6.2 Eligible learners

This term refers to learners who have achieved a bachelor pass/university endorsement that makes them eligible to apply for and access a university course. To be eligible for a bachelor pass, a learner must achieve 30% and more in the languages and 50% and more in at least four subjects/learning areas (Department of Education 2009, 2011; South African Institute for Race Relations, 2014).

1.6.3 Student

The term "student" refers to an individual who is registered at a higher education institution for a degree or diploma programme.

1.6.4 Post school education

The “post-school education sector” refers to public and private education and training institutions (recognised by the Department of Higher Education and Training) which fall outside the basic education schooling system. These institutions are Higher Education and Training Institutions (HEIs), Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges and Adult Education and Training (AET) Centres (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). In this study, “post-school education” refers specifically to higher education and training institutions only.

1.6.5 Higher education

“Higher education” refers to post-school institutions that consist of traditional universities and universities of technology (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

1.6.6 Participation rate

The term “participation rate” refers to the percentage of 20–24 year-olds of the general population that are enrolled in higher education (Centre for Higher Education, 2011).

1.6.7 Prospective students

The term “prospective students” refers to those individuals who are interested in entering university and participating in a university degree or diploma programme.

1.6.8 Transition

The term “transition” refers to the process of moving from one state to another, or an individual moving from one activity to another (Perry & Allard, 2003). In this study, transition specifically refers to the movement of eligible Grade 12 learners from secondary school to post-school education.

1.6.9 Successful transition

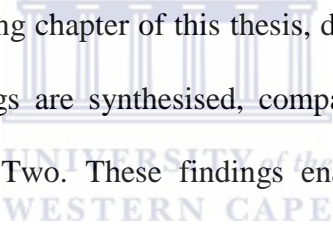
In this study the term “successful transition” refers to learners who have passed Grade 12 with a bachelor pass/university endorsement and met the requirements for a university course, and have registered for a degree or diploma programme (Department of Education 2009, 2011).

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

This chapter provided an outline of the study that is comprehensively described in the four chapters that follow. Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant literature on the South African education and training landscape, the post-school education sector and the theoretical framework used for the study. The theoretical framework was derived from the student choice model of Chapman (1981). It was argued that Chapman provides a holistic model that considers the interaction between the learners’ characteristics and institutional characteristics, as contributing factors that influence potential learner decisions about selecting an institution and pursuing further studies.

Chapter Three is the research methodology chapter which describes the qualitative research approach, the research design, the research site and participants, the data-gathering instruments and the analytical process followed. In each instance, the different decisions for actions taken are explained and justified on the basis of the existing body of knowledge in the field of qualitative research.

Chapter Four is the analytical chapter in which the data is analysed and discussed. The chapter is divided into three sections according to the sub-questions: Section One reports on the learners' perceptions of post-school education and the ability of learners to realise their career aspirations. Section Two identifies and discusses the factors that influence the learners' decision-making processes, the impact of the factors on the learners' future education development in terms of enabling factors, and factors (barriers) that could prevent the learners from accessing post-school education. Lastly, Section Three deliberates ways and suggestions on how the barriers could be overcome and the enabling factors be strengthened in order to direct and guide the learners to adopt the enabling factors.



Finally, Chapter Five, the concluding chapter of this thesis, draws together all the discussions of the previous chapters. The findings are synthesised, compared and related to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two. These findings enabled recommendations that were formulated for families and the community, the school and educators, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, higher education institutions and non-profit organisations, and other companies. I conclude the thesis with the noting of the limitations of the study, comments on opportunities for future research and a final reflection on my experience as a student researcher.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in Section 1.3, this study seeks to investigate and identify factors that could facilitate the successful transition from high school to post-school education for learners who complete Grade 12 successfully. The study resorts within an educational discourse that encompasses secondary and post-school education. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the South African education and training landscape prior and post-1994, the post-school education sector and the theoretical framework used for the study.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE PRIOR TO 1994

Since its formal inception, education has been used as a socio-political tool to create and maintain power and privilege for whites, and an inferior education for disenfranchised black South African (Msila, 2007). Schooling was first managed by missionaries shortly after the arrival of the Dutch at the Cape in the 17th century, but a formal education system was only established under British rule during the 19th century (Simbo, 2012). Education, by its nature, during these periods was divisive, with the transference of Western culture and language being the core of the curriculum. Lewis and Steyn (2003) explain that the British provided funding to mission schools to transfer Western values, culture and language, in order to create Africans who were alienated from their cultures and communities.

It was, however, only when the National Party (NP) was elected into government in 1948 that an institutionalised system of segregated, unequal and oppressive education was set in motion. Influenced by their Afrikaner philosophy of Christian National Education (CNE), the NP stood for segregating whites and blacks, without equality for the “native”. The NP initiated discussions regarding black education which later led to the establishment of the Eiselen Commission that was tasked to investigate the state of black education and provide recommendations on a suitable education directed at the native’s development that reflected the separate development ideology of the new government (Kallaway, 2002). The Eiselen Commission found that the education of a black child prepared them for the labour market of the European society and not for the service of their own community. According to the report, “education must not be divorced from the overall economic and social needs of the community; real development, and real education must engage with the life of the community culturally, socially and economically” (Kallaway, 1998:30). The recommendation, therefore, offered by the Eiselen Commission was the need to provide an education for blacks that prepared them for the development of their communities and did not encourage aspiration to participate in European societies (Kallaway, 1998). Based on the recommendations of the Eiselen report and, to a large extent, the Afrikaner CNE philosophy, the Bantu Education Act was created and passed in 1953, bringing about structural changes that entrenched a segregated education system which was divided in quality and resources along racial, ethnic and geographical lines (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The Bantu Education Act effected widespread changes to the education landscape. Firstly, the Act pressured missionaries to hand over their administration of black secondary schools to the state (Hartshorne, 1992; Kallaway, 2002). Secondly, with the passing of the Bantu Self

Governing Act of 1959, black education was further segregated, as it was turned over to different self-governing homelands in geographically fragmented areas, while remaining under control and administration of the Department of Native Affairs (Ndlovu, 2002). In addition, the state expanded provision of basic education via a “platoon system” by increasing learner numbers in the lower standards (now referred to as grades), which meant double schooling sessions in a day (Christie & Collins, 1988). The result was that for lower standards, the school day was shorter, there was heavy strain on facilities and teachers, and quality was compromised (Christie & Collins, 1988).

For secondary schools, the Rand-for-Rand system of funding was introduced, placing the expense of building schools on the communities with the state only compensating 50% of the cost, if funds were available (Hartshorne, 1998). Furthermore, parents had to pay tuition fees for their children each quarter, as well as contributing towards the cost of educational services. There was a call for a curriculum that suited the context of the black child (Christie & Collins, 1989; Kallaway, 2002; Ndlovu, 2002). This, however, did not materialise and black learners were exposed to a similar curriculum to that of their white counterparts. The only difference was that black learners were being taught under constraints, such as inadequate facilities, lack of resources, unqualified teacher and being taught in a medium that was not their mother tongue (Christie & Collins, 1989). Despite these challenges, learner numbers at secondary schools increased from 20 000 in 1949 to 43 496 in 1959, exceeding the Eiselen Report target of doubling school enrolment by 1959 (Hartshorne, 1998). Learners who accessed secondary school had the option of exiting Standard 8 with a Junior Certificate (JC), qualifying them to enter teaching or nursing. In 1955, for example, 6803 learners wrote the JC examinations and 3524 passed. By

1966, 9917 learners passed (Hartshorne, 1998). Learners could also complete their secondary schooling and write the secondary exit examinations to receive a Senior Certificate (SC) or University Matriculation pass (Hartshorne, 1998).

Universities also were not spared the apartheid state's intervention to support its vision of separate development. In 1960, through the 1959 Extension of University Education Act, the vision for higher education was outlined by the apartheid state (Reddy, 2004). This Act had made provision for a number of tribal colleges for black students to be created which restricted black students from gaining access to and enrolling at white institutions. Reddy (2004:13) points out that in October 1959 the Government Gazette stated that, as from 1960, no "non-white person" would be permitted to attend any university without the permission of the Minister of Education and Culture, and that black admission would only be permitted under special circumstances. With the racial differentiation of universities, the state intended to maintain the racial organisation of society: "society had to constitute an inflexible hierarchical structure with the minority classified as white on the top and Africans at the bottom", and universities contributed towards this purpose (Reddy, 2004:11). Higher education under apartheid, thus, was highly fragmented and skewed along racial and geographical lines. Also, funding to these institutions had been highly stratified and unequal, mirroring apartheid divisions (OECD, 2008). Different government funding frameworks existed for black and white universities. White higher education institutions received considerable funding from government and they also had the flexibility on how funds were managed and spent (Bunting, 2002). Black institutions, on the other hand, did not have this flexibility, and many had to rely on tuition fees of students as revenue (Bunting, 2002).

The era of apartheid ingrained racial inequality and socio-economic marginalisation within South African society. The institutionalised, race-based system was dedicated to securing social, economic and political privileges to a white minority at the expense of black, coloured and Indian South Africans (Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 27). As a result, a society was created where the marginalised were predominantly black, followed closely by coloureds and Indians.

2.3 POST-APARTHEID BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR

When the newly elected democratic government, the African National Congress (ANC), took office in 1994, they inherited a deeply segregated and fragmented education system. Apartheid education had left a vast number of black South Africans functionally illiterate and disenfranchised (DoE, 1995). The restructuring and transformation of this segregated education system became one of the major objectives of the democratic government (Meerkotter, 1998). Education, once again, took on its role as a socio-economic and political tool to bring about equity, equality, opportunity and social justice. To address the education needs of its citizens and to set the country on a development path required strategic intervention. Many of the policy documents circulated for debate borrowed heavily from the experience of other countries, particularly Australia, the United States, England, and New Zealand (Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 62).

Similar to the National Party government of 1948, the new government relied on commissions and civil society to give direction and inform policy and legislation to drive the restructuring of the education system. One such commission was the National Education Co-ordinating Committee that set up the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) which considered

policy options (Lomofsky, Thomson, Gouws & Engelbrecht, 1998). The NEPI was guided by principles that, significantly, could inform basic human rights in education, that is, a unitary system, non-racism, non-sexism, redress and democracy (Lomofsky et al., 1998:149). Parts of the NEPI guiding principles were later identified as essential to drive national policy for the reconstruction and development of education and training in the Department of Education's White Paper (Lomofsky et al., 1998). The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) was regarded as a visionary document, as it stipulated the vision and objective of the post-1994 education system, as well as governing principles and various development initiatives (Christie, 2008). Kruss (1998:96) states that the White Paper aimed to address the demand for equity by promoting access for all to quality education, and to meet the country's human resource development needs by promoting a new form of high quality education and training. This strategic education document articulated the need for an integrated education system, and a framework that integrated and encouraged lifelong learning (NQF) and a restructured curriculum (DoE, 1995 & Kruss, 1998).

In addition, the South African Constitution of 1996 has been instrumental in steering and guiding transformation in education. The Constitution requires that education be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism, and guarantees the right to basic education for all, including adult basic education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008: 20). According to Christie (2008), in terms of the Constitution, the National Department of Education has the responsibility for developing norms and standards, frameworks and national policies for the system as a whole. Furthermore, the constitution gave guidance - which was

outlined in the National Education Policy Act of 1996 - to the relationship and responsibility that exists between national government and the provinces. According to the National Education Policy Act (1996), the Minister of Education sets the political agenda and determines the national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation, while the nine provincial Departments of Education have the responsibility of implementing education policy and programmes that are aligned to national goals (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008).

Departing from the White Paper on Education (1995) and the Constitution (1996), various acts and policies were enacted to set in motion the restructuring and transformation of the education landscape. These include as outlined by Christie (2008:132) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008:39):

- **The National Education Policy Act of 1996:** This Act sets out national and provincial powers in education, and the structures for decision making within the system. According to this Act, the national government is responsible for establishing broad policies and the necessary monitoring systems. Provincial governments and, more specifically, provincial departments of education, are responsible for establishing and funding schools in line with provincial needs.
- **The South Africa Schools Act (SASA) of 1996:** This Act sets out frameworks, norms and standards for the governance of schools. It stipulates that all schools should have democratically elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs) on which parents would be the majority. SGBs were given powers to determine admissions policy, language policy and school fees. They also had powers to administer properties and make recommendations to provinces on hiring teachers. Section 20 gave basic management powers to all schools, and schools that had the capacity to manage their own budgets were given additional Section 21 powers.
- **The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA):** Established in 1996, this Act sets out the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) on which all qualifications could be registered and articulated with each other. According to the White Paper on Education and Training (1995), the NQF encourages creative work on the design of curricula and the recognition of learning attainments where education and training are offered. It will

open doors of opportunity for people whose academic or career paths have been needlessly blocked because their prior knowledge (acquired informally or by work experience) has not been assessed and certified, or because their qualifications have not been recognised for admission to further learning, or employment purposes.

- **The 1998 National Norms and Standards for School Funding (amended in 2005):** This Act sets out the framework for funding provinces and schools. It included a pro-poor funding formula for part of the education budget, whereby more funds would be given to poorer provinces and schools. Schools are identified from “*Poorest*” to “*least poor*”, in terms of the income, unemployment rate and literacy rate of the school’s geographical catchment area. Schools are divided into one of five socio-economic quintiles, depending on the degree of poverty existing in the community, where quintile 1 represents the poorest of the five quintiles.

With the introduction of these policies and the restructuring of the system, a significant turnaround in education has been achieved. Key highlights for the democratic government has been the creation of a single National Department of Education out of 19 racially, ethnically and geographically divided education systems. The functions of the National Education Department were handed over to the nine provinces (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 5). In addition, universal access to equal and quality education, which was not determined by race or culture from grade R to grade 12, had been achieved and the National Qualification Framework (NQF) was introduced. The NQF aligned the restructured education system along three bands, namely: A General Education and Training (GET) band that covers Grades R to 9, the Further Education and Training (FET) band that covers Grades 10 to 12, and the Higher Education (HE) sector (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008; Sheppard, 2009).

In 2009, the schooling system comprised 24 699 public ordinary schools, 418 public special schools and 1207 independent schools (DoE, 2011). The 24 699 public ordinary schools accounted for 96% of learners in the system, or approximately 11,8 million learners (DoE, 2011). Since 2006, the poorest three quintiles of schools have been classified as “no-fee schools”, as

they do not charge learners school fees, but receive a weighted share of non-personnel funding to compensate for this loss of income (Taylor, 2008:9).

Table 2.1: DoE (2009): Trends in Education, Macro Indicators Report

| Year | Total candidates | Total pass | University endorsement |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1991 | 409 076 | 216 147 | 70 318 |
| 1992 | 447 904 | 243 611 | 73 328 |
| 1993 | 470 948 | 239 556 | 67 915 |
| 1994 | 495 408 | 287 343 | 88 497 |
| 1995 | 531 453 | 283 742 | 78 821 |
| 1996 | 518 032 | 278 958 | 79 768 |
| 1997 | 555 267 | 261 399 | 69 007 |
| 1998 | 553 151 | 279 986 | 71 808 |
| 1999 | 511 159 | 249 831 | 63 725 |
| 2000 | 489 941 | 283 294 | 68 626 |
| 2001 | 449 371 | 277 206 | 67 707 |
| 2002 | 443 821 | 305 774 | 75 048 |
| 2003 | 440 267 | 322 492 | 82 010 |
| 2004 | 467 985 | 330 717 | 85 117 |
| 2005 | 508 363 | 347 184 | 86 531 |
| 2006 | 528 525 | 351 503 | 85 830 |
| 2007 | 564 775 | 368 217 | 85 454 |

In terms of performance and meeting its objective of universal access, the education system has made tremendous strides. According to Sheppard (2009) and the DoE (2011), the participation at the primary school level is at 98%, with the primary school completion rate increasing from 88% in 1995 to 93% in 2007. Grade 9 level pass has also been improving from 80% in 2003 to 88% in 2010 (DoE, 2011). The number of learners completing Grade 12 has also steadily increased. According to the DoE (2009, 2011), the Grade 12 pass rate has increased from 52.8 in 1991, 57.8

in 2000, to 65.2 % in 2007. After Angie Motshekga took over the reins of Basic Education in 2009, the Grade 12 pass rate increased exponentially from 67.8 % in 2010 to 70.2% in 2011, 73.9% in 2012, and to 78% in 2013 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). Table 2.1 demonstrates the gradual increase in learners (all races) sitting for the Grade 12 examination, as well as passing and achieving a university endorsement pass for the years 1991 to 2007.

The table also reflects how post-1994 Grade 12 and university endorsement pass rates have steadily increased. Historically, the National Senior Certificate has been the single mechanism for assessing the quality of the education system (DoE, 2009; Sheppard, 2009; Spaul, 2011). The year-end Grade 12 pass, therefore, is considered an indicator to evaluate whether schools, specifically, and the education sector, more broadly, are performing and contributing to the country's human resource development and the number of learners eligible to proceed to higher education and training opportunities (DoE, 2009, 2011). In addition, when considering the societal transformation and redress agenda of the education sector, Table 2.2 below reflects the increase that has been achieved in the number of black students sitting for Grade 12 examinations and achieving a university endorsement pass.

Table 2.2: Black learners: Grade 12 pass for the years 1991 and 2007

| Year | Total Candidates | Total Pass | University endorsement pass |
|------|------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| 1991 | 304 315 | 150 611 | 30 431 |
| 2007 | 458 836 | 277 941 | 49 950 |

Data drawn from South African Institute for Race Relations (2013)

Despite the significant progress and achievements of the education sector, the quality of education is questioned. In measuring the performance of the sector, there are various national

and international assessments that schools participate in at different grade levels to assess how the education system is faring. According to the DoE (2009), South Africa has participated in numerous national and international learner assessment studies since 1995. One such test in recent years has been the Annual National Assessment (ANA) which tests grade-specific primary level schooling performance in language and mathematics for Grade 1 to 6 and Grade 9 (DoE, 2011; Spaul, 2011). Since its introduction in 2011, this test has revealed that learners are performing below the required level for the respective grades (Spaul, 2011; Taylor, 2013). At Grade 6 level, the ANA test showed that only 29% for literacy and 30% for numeracy was achieved by learners in this grade (Education Handbook, 2012). International tests, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), have allowed for the performance of South African learners to be monitored over time relative to earlier cohorts, and relative to learners from other countries (Spaul, 2011). Both TIMSS (1995) and PIRLS (2006, 2011) have shown, in the respective years in which they were conducted that South African learners are performing poorly in Grades 4, 5, 8 and 9 in literacy and numeracy in comparison to learners participating in the same test from other African and international countries (DoE, 2009, 2011; Education Handbook, 2012). The results of the ANA, TIMSS and PIRLS assessments show an education system that is not only underperforming, but, even more concerning, it is a system that is producing learners who lack the foundational literacy and numeracy skills required to progress through the school system and access post-school education or employment opportunities (Modisaotsile, 2012).

The outcomes of low levels of literacy and numeracy attainment in the lower grades are reflected in the senior phase of schooling. This is most notably seen in the Grade 12 pass rate in

Mathematics and Science (South African Institute for Race Relations, 2013, 2014; Spaull, 2011). According to the South African Institute for Race Relations (2013), the number of learners taking Mathematics and sciences has fallen by around 20% in the last six years, while only one in five National Senior Certificate learners taking Mathematics and science managed to achieve a 50% and above pass. The concern with the ratio given by the South African Institute for Race Relations relates to the fact that Mathematics, specifically, is a university entry requirement for qualifications in the sciences, engineering and commerce fields. This implies that fewer and fewer learners will have access to these degree programmes at universities and universities of technologies.

2.4 POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION LANDSCAPE 1994 AND BEYOND

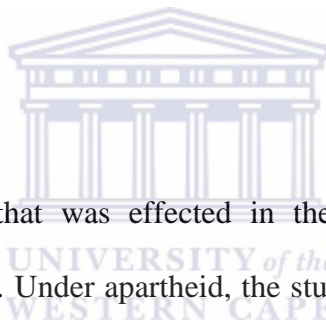
Similar to the basic education sector, the higher education sector (post-school education) had undergone considerable changes since 1994. Prior to 1994, the higher education and training landscape was highly fragmented, restricted and determined by race. In anticipation of coming to power, the new ANC government envisioned a higher education sector that was less differentiated and fragmented, and one that could play an important role in the social transformation agenda of the state by generating new knowledge for social and economic benefit, and developing a skilled labour force and critical citizenship (CHET, 2009; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

According to Dison, Walker and Mclean (2008), higher education as a sector plays both a reproductive and transformative role in society. Under apartheid, higher education played a reproductive role by preserving white power and privilege, while at the same time, limiting and restricting black education and vocational ambition (Dison et al., 2008; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Reddy 2004). There were enormous differences between what is known as historically white universities (HWU) and historically black universities (HBU). According to Dison et al.

(2008:8), white institutions were well funded with qualified faculty staff and students, and had adequate facilities. HBUs, on the other hand, were systematically underfunded, had limited curricular offerings, weak administrative and faculty ranks, and were located in remote areas and isolated from mainstream academics (Dison et al., 2008:8). The sector, therefore, by design, was purposed to reproduce social standing along racial lines and provide blacks with inferior education which limited their societal progress and participation as professionals within the reserved white society (Badat, 2004; CHET, 2009).

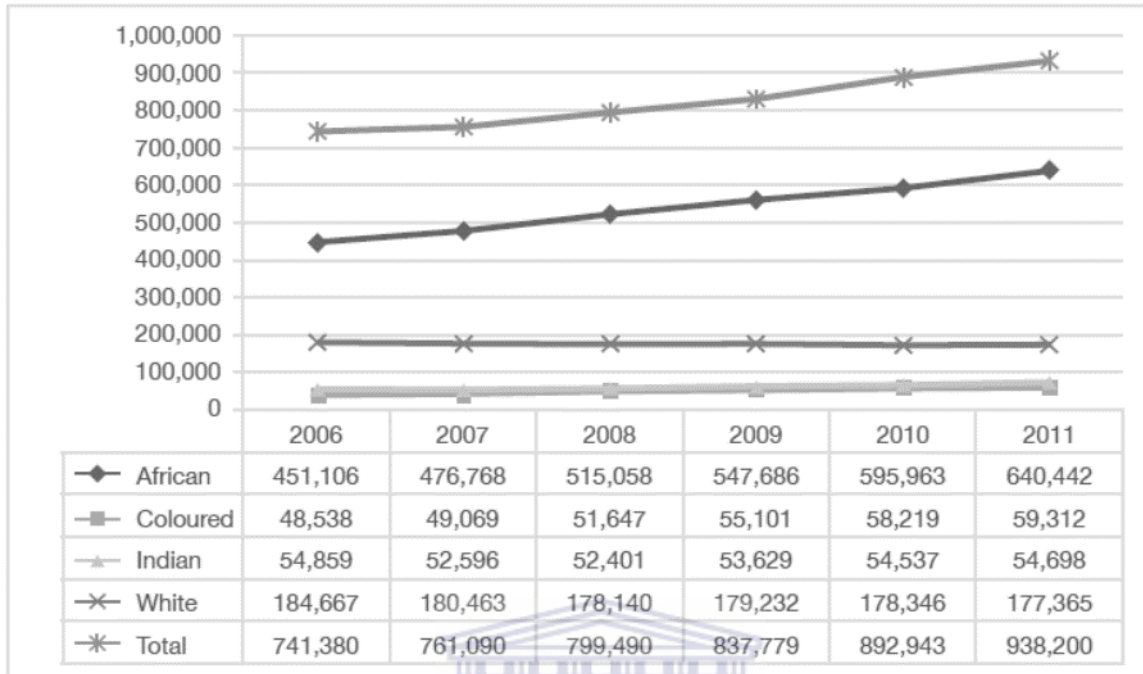
Post-1994, the higher education sector had to be restructured to meet the country's new development agenda, that is, it had to play a transformative role in society. In the early 1990s, a number of initiatives took place to design post-apartheid higher education policies (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008). According to Cloete and Bunting (1999:1), after the 1994 elections, the new Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, requested President Nelson Mandela to appoint a National Commission on Higher Education (NHCE) to give direction to the transformation and reconstruction of the higher education sector. Through consultation and consensus-building, the commission was able to create a space for policy debate. In 1996, the NHCE published a report, entitled *A framework for transformation*, which was regarded as a model tertiary education document (Education Handbook, 2009:142). Following this report in December 1996, a Green Paper on Education was released which endorsed the recommendations of the NCHE and proposed that a single statutory body be formed, named the Council on Higher Education, to advise the Minister of Education on all policy matters and for quality assurance (Reddy,2004:37). The following year, building on the Green Paper, the White Paper 3 on Education (DoE, 1997), entitled *A programme for Higher*

Education Transformation, was released. The White Paper 3 was a strategic document that sets out principles for a new national higher education sector that sought to repudiate the race-based foundations of apartheid tertiary education (Dison et al., 2008). These principles included equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability (DoE, 1997). Furthermore, White Paper 3 indicated that, for transformation to occur in the sector, these institutions were required to increase and broaden participation, and respond to social interest and needs, as well as co-operation and partnerships in governance. Since the release of the White Paper 3 and subsequent papers, such as the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (2001), significant changes have occurred in the sector.



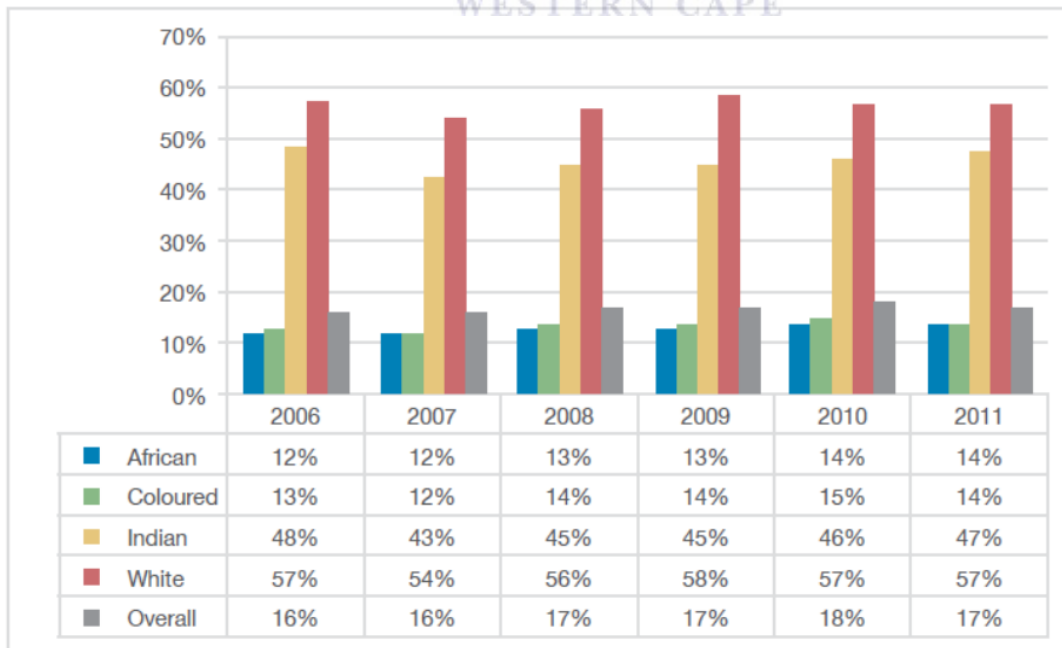
Another very important change that was effected in the higher education sector was the transformation of the student body. Under apartheid, the student composition did not reflect the South African population. Dison et al. (2008) note that the participation of black students only constituted 9% of the total population in 1993, while whites had a participation rate of 70%. Since then, the number of black, coloured and Indian students in higher education has increased from 188 600 to 266 500 by 1997 (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). By the year 2000, the landscape had changed dramatically. As illustrated by Graph 2.1, the black population grew to 640 422 in 2011, while there was a decrease in the white student population.

Graph 2.1: Headcount enrolment 2006 – 2011



Source: Centre on Higher Education (2013)

Graph 2.2: Participation rates by race from 2006 – 2011



Source: Centre on Higher Education (2013)

Despite the growth of the black student population over the post-1994 years (Graph 2.1), the actual student participation rate (especially for the black and coloured population) in higher education remains very low. Graph 2.2 gives an indication of how low the actual participation still is.

What this essentially means is that there are potential higher education students who fall into what is considered the eligible higher education age-going group of 18 – 24 years who are not accessing the sector. Thus, the reason for being concerned about the participation rate stems from the fact that there is a large number of youth outside the sector that are eligible to access higher education but are not doing so. The low higher education participation rate, further, is of great concern, given the fact that in recent years there has been increased reporting of the number of youth between the ages of 18 – 24 not in employment, education or training, referred to as NEET (CHET, 2012; Sheppard, 2011; Spaul, 2011). According to Cloete (2009), the recording of NEET youth in 2009 showed that just over 650 000 had completed Grade 12 with the ability to access further education, but did not do so. In 2010, it was recorded that South Africa had 3.2 million unemployed youth who were not in higher education and training. (Mhlatsheni, 2012; Spaul, 2011). Similarly, Gewer and Akoobhai (2013) analysed learners' movement from high school to post-secondary education and they found that, of the 408 000 learners who passed their final National Senior Certificate examination in 2012, only 179 000 went on to enrol for a higher certificate, diploma or degree programme. Thus, more than 229 000 (60%) of the learner population exiting the basic education sector did not go into the higher education sector, despite their eligibility to participate, and this is what this study is concerned about.

It is clear from the literature that there is an urgent need to better understand how to support the transition of more black learners to the post-school sector, in order to reduce the number of eligible youth who are not in training, education and employment. Having over 650 000 eligible youth outside the sector and only 14 – 16% of Grade 12 learners accessing higher education currently signifies an urgency to investigate why eligible learners do not access post-school education. Identifying the factors that hinder learners' transition to higher education, and finding enabling factors that will support learner progression to participate in higher education is, therefore, essential and are the primary concerns of this study. The study, thus, attempted to find answers to these questions and made recommendations in Chapter 5 that could assist and inform strategies that support more eligible learners to access higher education successfully.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the literature reviewed above, there seems to be a gap in transition from high school to post-school education. This gap could be ascribed to factors that influence the learners' decision making process. Thus, the theoretical framework of this study was derived from the student choice model of Chapman (1981). In the context of college choice, Chapman (1981) provides a holistic model which looks at the interaction between the student characteristics and institutional characteristics, as contributing factors that influence potential students' decisions about selecting an institution and pursuing further studies (Ngcobo, 2009).

2.5.1 Factors that influence student college choice

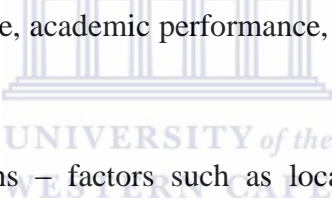
Literature and research on student college choice and post-school pathways feature mostly in the United States, the United Kingdom and, in recent years, Australia and New Zealand (Diamond,

Vorley, Roberts & Jones, 2012; Lenapa, 2008; Ngcobo, 2009). Student college choice, as an area of research interest, first originated in the 1970s in the United States of America where higher education anticipated a significant decline in student enrolment as a result of demographic, economic and public policy changes (Paulsen, 1990). This anticipated decline in student enrolment prompted college administrators to seek effective ways to attract students (Chapman, 1981). For higher education and college enrolment staff, gaining an understanding of student college choice behaviour and student enrolment patterns was considered central to informing strategies towards attracting students to their institutions (Paulsen, 1990). According to Brown, Hernandez, Mitchell and Turner (1999), student college choice and eventual enrolment decision-making is complex and involves a variety of issues. Stark and Scholder (2011) postulate that, though appreciating that the drivers of college choice is complex, it is vitally important for higher education to understand what drives students to apply, enrol and stay or leave an institution. Having this knowledge would place higher education institutions in a better position to address students' needs, and attract the right student to enrol, participate in higher education, and acquire a qualification.

Choosing to pursue further studies beyond secondary school is not a straight-forward or easy decision to make. For many learners, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds, exploring how best to navigate the world beyond secondary school is a daunting task. Brown et al. (1999:31) define student college choice as a “complex multistage process where an individual first develops an aspiration to continue formal education beyond school. This is later followed by a decision to attend a specific college, university or institution of advanced vocational training”. Research shows that decisions about whether to enter higher education are shaped by experience that starts early in a learner's life (Diamond, Vorley, Roberts & Jones, 2012). It can be said,

therefore, that the college choice process – whether a learner pursues further studies or not - is very much dependent upon an interactive set of factors over time.

A South African study by Cosser and Du Toit (2002:23) identifies the top five factors that influence learner intention to pursue entry into higher education as “the potential of enhancing employability; an intrinsic interest in a field of study; higher education leading to higher income; family urging higher education studies; and an offer of a bursary”. In a later study, Cosser (2010) states that factors, such as gender, physical ability, race, family background and schooling, all play a role in the decision-making process. Cosser (2010:7) argues that a learner’s choice process is located within a widening sphere of influence, with the learner at the centre as the individual located within the home (where the influence of the family is strong) and interacting with:

- 
- school – where peer pressure, academic performance, teachers and career guidance shape influences;
 - higher education institutions – factors such as location, reputation, modes of study, quality of provision, theoretical versus practical orientation;
 - work – meaning notions of work in relation to higher education as an alternative to higher education;
 - the country – where the state of the nation and perceptions of higher education, in relation to perceptions about the country as a whole, exert an influence on learner aspirations.

International studies have also identified various factors that play a role in the student’s college choice processes. According to Diamond et al. (2012), in the United States of America, researchers identified academic reputation, location, programme of study and employment opportunities, and career enhancements as factors affecting students’ choices. Similarly to

Chapman (1981) and Diamond et al. (2012), Brown et al. (1999) found that college choice involves an interplay between student characteristics and external factors which include significant others, institutional characteristics and communication from institutions. They explain that the student college choice process is strongly impacted on by background characteristics such as ability, parental encouragement, socio-economic status and institutional characteristics that include financial aid and cost, academic quality, location and communication efforts by the college or university (Brown et al. 1999). Reporting on factors influencing high school learners' choices in Malaysia, Jafari and Aliesmaili (2013) cite a study by Kee Ming (2000) to show that a positive relationship exists between college choice decisions and location, academic programmes, educational facilities, cost, availability of financial aid, employment opportunities, campus visits, and college reputation. Thus, it is clear that a prospective student's final college choice (to pursue post-school studies or not) is influenced by an array of factors.

According to Aamodt (2001:5), conceptual approaches for describing and analysing the student enrolment decision process can be clustered into economic, status attainment (sociological) and information processing models. Historically, economic and sociological models have dominated the discussion around college choice (Aamodt, 2001; Cosser & Du Toit, 2002; Ngcobo, 2009). Economic models regard the college choice process as a rational one, in which a learner is seen to estimate the economic and social benefits of attending college and then comparing them to those of competing alternatives before making a decision (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2009:123). Cost (direct and indirect) is a dominant factor in economic models, cost of tuition, cost of living, and opportunity cost in terms of leaving home and friends (Aamodt, 2001). The status attainment or sociological model, on the other hand, focuses on the identification and interaction of variables as students make decisions about entering higher education (Cosser, 2002: 23). Aamodt (2001:5)

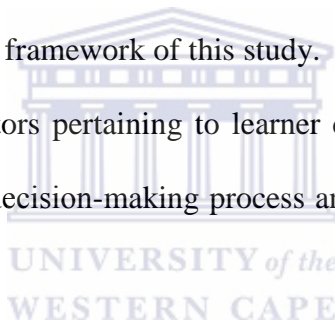
asserts that literature from a sociological perspective focuses on social processes (family conditions, school environment and peers) and assumes that behavioural variables, such as academic performance or how leisure time is spent, interact with background variables, such as parental education and occupational status. The sociological model, therefore, highlights factors, such as educational aspiration, academic ability, significant others, family socio-economic background, motivation and high school characteristics, as playing a significant role in shaping further study choices (Aamodt, 2001 & Cosser, 2002).

Aamodt (2001), Cosser (2002), Diamond et al. (2012) and Jafari and Aliemaili (2013) argue in their respective studies that economic factors and sociological factors, respectively, play a role in encouraging or limiting learners' study choice and progression. Both the economic and sociological models have yielded relevant data on which factors influence student college choice. Despite the usefulness of these models, information processing models are mostly used by researchers and practitioners, as they provide comprehensive detail about the college choice process and factor that influence learners' choices (Aamodt, 2001; Cosser & Du Toit, 2002). Information processing models, also known as combined models, try to describe various economic and sociological factors that affect individuals' decision making in order to find opportunities for intervention in the process of student choices (Aamodt, 2001:5). In addition, Aamodt (2001:5) points out that a distinctive feature of these models is that they provide a conceptual framework that hopes to explain the effects of policy-making intervention on the college choice process.

Four major information processing models have been identified in the literature, namely, the Jackson model (1982), the Chapman model (1981, 1984), the Hanson and Litten model (1982) and the three-phase model by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). Each model provides a framework

that incorporates both economic and social factors to better understand which factors impact on student college choices. The Jackson, Hanson and Litten, and Hossler and Gallagher models emphasise student choice as a process, identifying different phases/stages students move through where they are influenced by both social and economic factors before making a final enrolment decision (Aamodt, 2001, Cosser, 2002; Ngcobo, 2009). The Chapman model provides a framework that uses both an individual and institutional perspective, suggesting that student characteristics (individual) and external influences (institution) interact to form a student's general college choice (Aamodt, 2001:6).

Although all four information processing models are relevant to this study, the Chapman model has been selected as the theoretical framework of this study. It was deemed the most appropriate model because it incorporates factors pertaining to learner characteristics, and external factors that could influence the learner's decision-making process and their ultimate choice of pursuing post school education or not.



2.5.2 The Chapman Model of Student College Choice

The Chapman model is a student college choice model that was formulated in the United States during the 1980's at a time when a decline in student enrolments rates were expected and more money was placed into marketing strategies for student recruitment (Confer & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Sia, 2013). Chapman conceptualised a causal model which sought to show the relationship between student, institutional characteristics and college choice behaviour (Paulsen, 1990). According to Chapman (1981, 1984), to understand a students' choice it is necessary to take into account both background and current characteristics of the student and that of the college. These characteristics include various aspects of the students' background, the institution and how the institution engages with the student. The Chapman model essentially seeks to provide college and higher education recruitment administrators with a framework to understand and identify factors which influence students' college choices. Having this information would help these personnel identify strategies which would encourage enrolment at their institutions (Sia 2013).

One of the reasons for choosing the Chapman model as the theoretical framework for this study stems primarily from the fact that it reveals that there is a process of student and external variables that interact leading to a final choice. It was also deemed an appropriate model to use because it focuses on describing the factors that affect the traditional age (18 - 21) of prospective students (Chapman 1981). Chapman (1981) states that students falling outside this age range have a different set of factors which affect their college choice and this is not reflected in his model. Furthermore, the Chapman's model has been selected as it correlates with the work of Vincent Tinto on student retention and success. According to Tinto's Student Integration Model (1975), to decrease the likelihood of student dropout, students need to be integrated into the higher education environment both academically and socially for successful learning to take

place. In his model, Tinto (1975) underlines the importance of students' pre-university factors, as factors which play an important role in whether students would be able to integrate successfully and remain at a higher education institution after enrolling. Tinto's (1975) argument, therefore, makes the Chapman's model appropriate to use, as it highlights the importance of knowing the pre-university factors in the college choice process. Figure 2.1 below represents the Chapman's student college choice model:

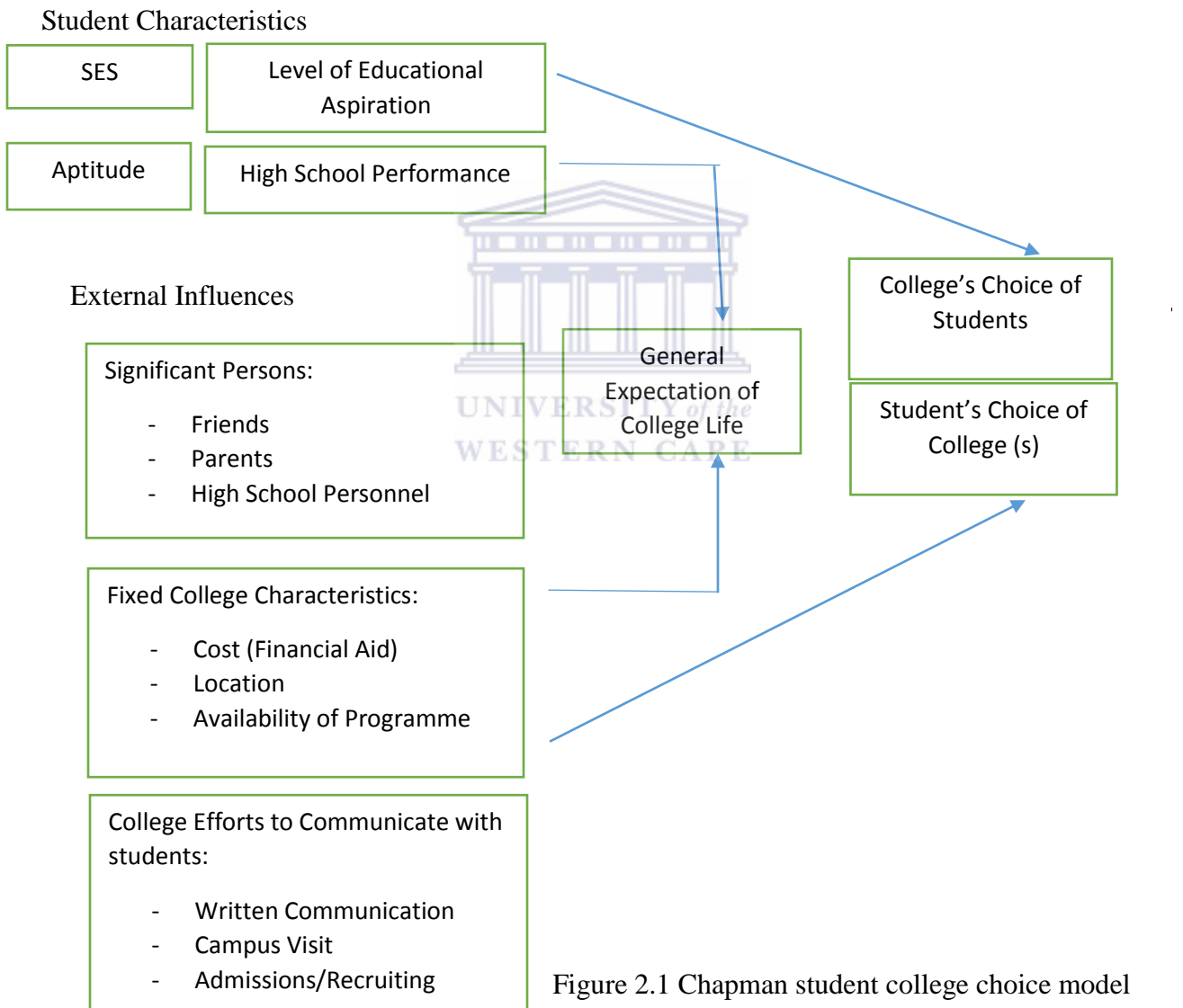


Figure 2.1 Chapman student college choice model

The Chapman model incorporates student characteristics, such as, student's socioeconomic status (SES), and external influences, including significant others, college characteristics, college efforts to communicate with students, and the students' perceptions of a college. Chapman (1981) points out that researchers concerned with college choice, must recognise the complexity of college choice in deciding which variable to investigate, control and ignore. For this study, both the variable of student characteristics and the external influences were considered, and these informed the data analysis and the discussions.

2.5.2.1 Student Characteristics

- **Socio-economic Status (SES):** Chapman states that SES manifests itself in complex ways in influencing the college choice process. Family income is an important aspect of SES. It operates in a very direct way on college choice, as it interacts with institutional cost and financial aid to limit what students believe are their realistic options. In addition, youth from affluent backgrounds view higher education as being vital, while youth from less affluent backgrounds find it less important (Archer & Hutchings, 2000). SES also influences a series of attitudes and behaviour, such as aspiration and expectation that relate to college choice. As James (2002) points out, students from low SES are less likely to find university courses relevant and rewarding, less confident that their parents want them to do a university course, and more likely to have a stronger interest in earning an income as soon as they leave school.
- **Level of aspiration and expectation:** Chapman argues that educational aspiration and expectation both influence a student's college plans in different ways. "Aspirations" refer to wishes or desires expressed by the prospective student about their future, while "expectations" refer to what the prospective student perceives he or she will be able to do or have accomplished at a future date. A considerable amount of research has shown that the college choice process originates in a prospective student's aspiration and expectation to pursue further studies (Cosser & Du Toit, 2002; Brown et al., 1999; Paulsen, 1990). Literature has also shown that aspiration and expectation show a positive relationship with family SES and student's high school performance (Chapman, 1981, Paulsen, 1990).

- **High school performance:** High school or secondary school, as it is also known, provides the most reliable evidence that colleges and universities look at when selecting applicants. Most institutions require that students exit high school with a certain level of pass. For example, in the South African context it would be a Higher Certificate, Diploma and a university's endorsement pass to gain access to university or university of technology courses. High school performance also indicates to the prospective student whether to aspire to post-school studies. Chapman states that students with good academic records receive encouragement from their teachers and parents to pursue further studies (Chapman 1981).

2.5.2.2 External influences

- **Significant others** refer to family, peers and high school personnel, who through either comment or advice encourage or hinder the prospective student in the pursuit of further studies. According to Chapman (1981), the influence of these individuals may shape the students' expectations. They may offer direct advice on what to do once students finish with school, while the choice of peers influences students whether to pursue further studies or enter employment.
- **Fixed College Characteristics:** Cost, availability of financial aid, location and availability of programme are characteristics associated with the institution. Tuition cost, flexibility of payment and financial aid have been highlighted by studies as having a strong influence on college choice (Chapman, 1981; Sia, 2013). Studies have shown that geographical location (proximity from home) of an institution also impacts on college choice, while the availability of programmes attracts students based on programme fit.
- **College Efforts to Communicate with students:** The way an institution engages with prospective students is indicated as a very important factor in the college choice process. Colleges or higher education institutions use written communication, campus visits and, more recently, social media and other website platforms to communicate and showcase to prospective students their programmes and the campus environment. According to Sia (2013), campus visits provide value to both the student and the institution, as it can

ensure a good match between the student and the respective college or higher education institution.

Each of the variables that Chapman has selected in his model highlights key factors that could impact on the choices of prospective college or university students. According to Chapman (1981:499), the combined and interactive effects of the factors identified influence and shape student's college choice. The Chapman model assisted me to identify the factors in the data gathered that could facilitate or hinder the learners' transition from high school to pursue post-school education. The Chapman model, as theoretical framework, therefore, formed the basis for the data collection process, the analysis of the data and the interpretation thereof, as well as the findings and the recommendations that are made in Chapter Five.

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I contextualised the study area of this thesis. This was done, firstly, through a discussion of the educational landscape in South Africa prior to 1994, and, secondly, through a detailed discussion of the educational transformation that took place after 1994 when a new democratic government was elected. Trends in both the basic education and the post-school education sectors were discussed and statistics provided that reflected the progress made. Lastly, the theoretical framework used in this study was described and the reasons for using it were justified. I now move on to Chapter 3 in which I describe and explain the research methodology process followed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, literature pertaining to an educational discourse from basic education to post-school education was reviewed, and the chapter was concluded with a discussion of the theoretical framework used in the study. In this chapter, I describe and explain the research process, justifying the choices made and actions taken. I begin with the aims and objectives of the study, and proceed to the main research question and sub-questions. Thereafter, I substantiate why the study is situated within an interpretive, qualitative research paradigm. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the research design used in the study, the research site, the research participants, the data collection instruments and how the data was collected and analysed.

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study, as stated in Section 1.3, was to investigate and identify factors that could facilitate the successful transition from high school to post-school education for learners who complete Grade 12 successfully. In addition, the study attempted to identify interventions that could address the factors that challenge learners' progression towards accessing post-school education.

The objective of the study was to make recommendations based on the findings of the research data that could assist the different role players on how best to facilitate and guide high school learners' post school educational choices. It was envisioned that knowing these factors would enable more learners to access higher education and, in so doing, increase the participation rates of the Black youth in higher education in South Africa.

3.3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

The main research question was: What are the enabling factors that could successfully facilitate Grade 12 learners' transition to post-school education? In order to unpack the main research question, the following sub-questions were used as a guide in the data collection process and the analysis of the data:

1. How do learners' view post-school education and its role in realising their career aspirations?
2. What are the enabling or inhibiting factors that influence the decision-making process of high school learners in transitioning to post-school education?
3. How could the barriers that discourage learners from transitioning to post-school education be addressed and the enabling factors promoted?

3.4 SITUATING THE STUDY IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

As this study focused on learner's perceptions in identifying which factors would affect their choice to pursue further studies, this study is best positioned in a qualitative, interpretive research paradigm. According to Creswell (2003), the qualitative approach seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants. De Vos et al. (2005) add that the qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense refers to research that elicits the participant's account of meaning, experience or perception. Creswell (2007) adds that qualitative research is conducted when we want to understand the context or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011:9) state: "Qualitative research allows a researcher to examine in detail the experiences of people within their natural setting and to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the social, economic, cultural and physical context that they live in". A key feature, therefore, of the qualitative approach is its attempt to view the world through the eyes of the actors themselves and to understand social life

and the meaning that people attach to everyday life (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; De Vos et al. 2005). This is the first reason why this study is situated in a qualitative paradigm.

The objective is to elicit from Grade 12 learners, their meaning, understanding and experiences that influence their choices about pursuing post-school studies. As the literature and the theoretical framework have highlighted, the decisions that the learners make are socially embedded and, therefore, not only the individual but the context in all its facets needs to be viewed. The qualitative paradigm allows for such a framework where I am able to engage with the learners in their social context.

The second reason for situating this study in a qualitative paradigm is because qualitative research has a primary interest in describing the experience and action of participants in great detail and attempt to understand this in terms of the actor's own belief, history and context (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Creswell (2007) explains that in the entire qualitative research process, the researchers' focus is on learning the meaning that the participants hold about a problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research. The in-depth and rich detail of "what" influences learner's choices and "how" factors in their context influence their decision is imperative in answering the research questions (refer Section 3.3).

A third and final reason why this study is situated in a qualitative research paradigm is because, as Babbie and Mouton (2007:270) state, "Qualitative research is appropriate to a study where the attitudes and behaviours can be best understood within their natural setting". As explained in the theoretical framework, there are various factors that may influence learners post-school choices (refer Section 2.5). By positioning this study within a qualitative research paradigm, I had the opportunity to engage with the Grade 12 learners, the participants selected for this study, in a

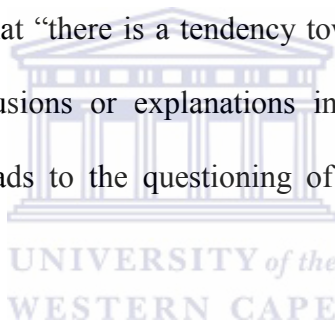
very close and intimate manner to elucidate what their experiences are and the real-life, everyday factors that influence their choice on what they will do once they complete secondary schooling.

3.4.1 Critique of the qualitative research paradigm

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) and De Vos et al. (2005), the qualitative paradigm often struggles to hold its own in the social science research. Silverman explains that the qualitative approach is considered as a minor methodology in relation to the more statistically driven quantitative paradigm and, as a result, it is suggested that it only be used during the earlier stages of a study (Silverman, 2001). Following Silverman, Richie, Lewis and Elam (2003) explain that historically qualitative research has often been seen as being “soft” and “unscientific”. As discussed earlier and shown by authors, such as Babbie and Mouton (2001), Creswell (2007) and De Vos et al. (2005), qualitative research is fundamentally explorative and concerned with gathering in-depth descriptive and detailed information from participants to elucidate their view, experiences, belief systems, history and context. As a result of its fundamental nature, qualitative research as Silverman aptly points out, is “stronger on long descriptive narratives than on statistical tables” (Silverman 2001:9). Silverman (2001) explains that, with its strong descriptive and interpretive nature, qualitative research runs into trouble where questions are raised as to how the researcher goes about categorising the events or activities described. This results in the reliability of the findings being questioned. According to Creswell (2007: 202), qualitative research has over the years received much criticism in the scientific ranks for its failure to adhere to the principles of reliability and validation (soundness).

Based on Creswell (2007) and Silverman’s (2001) views, it is clear that reliability and validity (soundness) are the two main critiques levelled against qualitative research. Firstly, the concern with reliability is whether the research findings would render the same findings, if the research

process were to be repeated (using same or similar methods) (Lewis & Richie, 2003). Lewis and Richie (2003) posit that, for reliability to be ensured, there needs to be some certainty that the internal elements, dimensions, factors, found within the original data, would recur outside of the study population. In terms of validity, they explain that validity refers to the “correctness” or “precision” of a research reading and they highlight that, to ensure validity, the primary question asked is whether or not the researcher is accurately reflecting the phenomena under study, as perceived by the study population (Lewis & Richie, 2003: 274). Similarly, Silverman (2001) states that the soundness of the explanations that come from using the qualitative method is often raised. According to Silverman (2001:10), this concern is sometimes known as the problem of “anecdotalism”. Silverman adds that “there is a tendency towards an anecdotal approach to the use of data in relation to conclusions or explanations in qualitative research” (Silverman, 2001:10). This “anecdotalism” leads to the questioning of the validity of the research work (Silverman, 2001:10).



As a response on how to strengthen reliability and validity within qualitative research, various authors identify similar strategies to overcome this challenge. Babbie and Mouton (2001) list these as: triangulation (using multiple and different sources of data), writing extensive field notes, member checks, peer review, reasoned consensus and audit trail as ways to enhance reliability and validity. According to Creswell (2007), to enhance reliability the researcher should obtain detailed field notes by making use of a good quality tape recorder for recording and transcribing the tape. Creswell makes a further point, explaining that the tape must be transcribed, detailing pauses and overlaps (Creswell, 2007). To enhance validity, Silverman (2001:177) stresses the importance of using triangulation, stating that it is “getting a true fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings”. Triangulation,

according to Babbie and Mouton (2001), is generally considered the best way to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research. Babbie and Mouton (2001) and Silverman (2001) identify respondent validation or member checks as a way to validate research findings. Member checks, Babbie and Mouton (2001:275) explain, “allow the researchers to take their transcripts and analysed findings back to the respondents and check with them whether, what has been constructed from the data, is actually what they said”. Creswell (2007) suggests that, because researchers engage and get to know their participants in the field, member checks allows them to build trust with participants, learn their culture, and check for misinformation that could validate the findings.

Therefore, to ensure that my study’s findings are reliable and valid, I incorporated some of the strategies identified by the authors mentioned above. In addition, to further strengthen reliability, I made use of a tape recorder to accurately record respondents’ feedback in the focus group interviews and I had three different data collection instruments (refer Section 3.6.3).

3.5 CASE STUDY DESIGN

A study’s research design is described as a blueprint for empirical research that is aimed at answering specific research questions or testing certain hypotheses (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Kelly (2011) adds that the research design provides an outline for the data gathering methods, data collection, and analysis of data. According to Yin (2014:26), a research design details the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research question and, ultimately, its conclusion. As the focus of the study was on a group of twenty-eight Grade 12 learners at a specific high school, a case study design was used.

The first reason why I have opted for a case study design was because it allowed me to gather in-depth and descriptive data from my research participants and elicited information about their context, as it pertains to the research questions. According to Schrank (2009), a case study design allows the researcher to conduct an extensive examination of a particular phenomenon. Yin (2009: 18) explains: “A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real life context”. Thomas (2011:32) provides a similar explanation, stating that a case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a “real life” context.

A second reason for using a case study design was, as Yin (2014:30) points out, a case study design should be considered when a researcher seeks to answer the “how” and “why” questions and/or seeks to uncover contextual conditions, as they see it relevant to the phenomenon under study. Merriem (1998) explains that a case study approach is best suited in studies where the researcher is interested in insight, discovery and interpretation, rather than hypothesis testing. Yin (2014) further states that the need for the case study arises out of a desire to understand complex social phenomena. Similarly, Thomas (2011:10) states: “The primary purpose of the case study is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic, programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action”. Merriem (1998) adds that knowledge derived from a case study is seen as more concrete, more contextual, as this knowledge is based and derived more from selected population and is not based on generalisations, as is characteristic of traditional research.

A final reason why a case study design was deemed most suitable for this study was that rigour and quality could be achieved through the application of five important components (Yin 2014). According to Yin, the five components comprise the study question(s), its propositions, the unit

of analysis, linking the data logically to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin 2014:23). Similarly, Babbie and Mouton (2007:282) discuss four principles on which a case study design is based. They postulate that case study research is based on conceptualisation - the importance of clearly stating the purpose of the study, presenting the research questions, rationale for the research questions and defining concepts used. The research question that guided this study was presented in Section 1.4 and Section 3.3.

Chapter 2 presented the literature and theoretical framework which provided guidance and structure to the study, and informed the research questions. The theoretical framework provided concepts and terms that informed the structuring of the questions in the data collection instruments and the analysis processes (refer Sections 3.6.3 and 3.6.4). In addition, the case, importantly, provided contextual detail, that is, a description of the participants (unit of analysis) and a description of the external context surrounding the participants (the research site). By detailing the study in this manner, Babbie and Mouton (2007) explain that the researcher allows other readers to judge the suitability of the method and permits replication.

Sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 described the context within which my study was situated, sketching the surroundings that form part of the participants' daily lives and which, potentially, affect the decisions they make. Furthermore, using multiple sources of data, case study research provides rich and thickly described experiences and views of the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell 2007). Lastly, the description of what strategy/method will be used to analyse the data is an important component in a case study design. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), analytical strategies provide guidance to how findings will be organised, if generalisation is appropriate and address the issue of theory development. Yin (2014) presents two modes of case study analysis, namely pattern matching (patterns emerging from data is matched) and

explanation building (generate explanations about the case). Content analysis (Henning, 2004) was used in the data analysis process, allowing me to identify and categorise patterns and themes (thus, pattern matching that I could explain) that arose from the data collected. Patterns and themes, according to Yin (2014), may enhance internal validity and that is why I opted to use this analytical strategy.

3.5.1 Critique of case study design

According to Lewis (2003), in practice, case study research is complex and, as a result of this, challenges arise. Researchers, such as Baxter and Jack (2008) and Creswell (2007), outline three challenges that researchers selecting the case study method might face. These challenges are: identification of a case, number of cases to be studied, and deciding on the boundaries of the case.

Firstly, the identification of a case, according to Baxter and Jack (2008), is not an easy task but challenging for both seasoned and new researchers. Baxter and Jack state that the case is essentially the unit of analysis and determining this unit is dependent on the questions the researcher wishes to answer (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Examples of these questions are; *Do I want to “analyse” the individual? Do I want to “analyse” a programme? Do I want to “analyse” the process? Do I want to “analyse” the difference between organisations?* In this study, learners were identified as the case (primary unit of analysis), as their experience and views are central to the answering of the research questions. Secondly, identifying whether the researcher should use a single or multiple cases is not clearly outlined in the literature. Some guidance on this matter is provided by Baxter and Jack (2008), who explain that researchers must consider if it is wise to

conduct a single case study or if a better understanding of the phenomenon will be gained through conducting a multiple case study. Creswell (2007:76), however, does provide motivation for a single case study stating that, where an in-depth analyses is desired, “The study of more than one case dilutes the overall analysis and the more cases an individual studies, the less depth is obtained”. As in-depth, rich and thick description is central to the study, a single case study was deemed more appropriate.

Lastly, deciding on the boundaries of a case is seen as problematic (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriem, 1998). Creswell (2007) suggests that in a research project there might be several potential aspects of/or related to a case which may be seen as worthy to be selected or included in the study. The problem that this may lead to is that the researcher’s scope results in long and lengthy data collection gathering which may or may not be useful, resulting in money and time being wasted (Merriem, 1998). To avoid this problem, Baxter and Jack (2008: 546) suggest that researchers need to “bind a case” by situating the case (a) by time and place, (b) time and activity, and (c) by definition and context to ensure that the study remains within the research scope. I have attempted to achieve this by having a defined group of thirty-one research participants (twenty-eight learners and three educators) within a specific high school setting, through the time frame within which the data was collected, as explained in Section 3.6.3, and through a detailed discussion of the research site, and the contextual and historical factors that influence the learners’ decision-making patterns (refer Sections 2.5 and 3.6.1).

3.6 RESEARCH PROCESS FOLLOWED

I had to submit my research proposal to the Higher Degrees Committee of the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty in compliance with the master's degree requirements before I could embark on the selection of the research site, the research participants and the data collection process. Following this, I obtained my ethical clearance from the Senate Research and Study Leave Committee at the end of 2013 (refer Addendum 1a) and I could proceed with the research process, which is described below.

3.6.1 Research site

The research site for this study was High School X in Philippi, which is an area geographically located between Nyanga and Mitchell's Plain on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape Province. The school is one of eight high schools situated in Philippi and is categorised as a quintile 3 school (Amandla Development, 2013). High School X is an English medium school, with a total learner count of 1119 of which 140 were Grade 12 learners in 2014. The township houses a predominately Black community with a population of 199 025 (Census, 2011).

Similar to many other townships on the Cape Flats, Philippi faces many social problems, including a lack of education, violent crime, substance abuse, environmental degradation and a rise in the number of residents suffering with HIV/AIDS (SAEP, 2011). It is a community that is severely impoverished, with the majority of its residents living in informal wood-and-iron structures, often without electricity or running water, while only 44 % of the population lives in formal dwellings (Census, 2011). Nearly half of the working-age population is unemployed, only 32% (20 years and older) completed secondary school (Grade 12) or higher, while only 5% of

the population obtained a higher education qualification. Census (2011) further states that the 78% of the households' income is R3200 per month or less. This low income level is an indication of the low-income jobs that most of the residents hold.

This school was selected as the research site because I already had a long-standing working relationship with the principal and the school through my employer, a non-government organisation named South African Education Project (SAEP). I hold the position of Academic and Career Support Officer, and part of my responsibilities is to support and work with the learners from the school. The principal, therefore, granted me permission to conduct my research at the school (refer Addendum 1b). My relationship with the school and being immersed in high school support-activities in the area assisted with the smooth running of the data collection process.



3.6.2 Research participants

Thirty Grade 12 learners at High School X were selected as research participants for this study but in the end, only twenty-eight participated. The focus was on Grade 12 learners because it is the final year of secondary schooling in South Africa, and the year-end results play an important role in determining whether these learners will go on to pursue post-school educational opportunities. In addition, three educators who taught Grade 12 were also selected as research participants.

Purposive sampling was the sampling method used to select the learners who participated in this study. According to Silverman (2000), purposive sampling allows for a sample to be selected because it elucidates a process or feature that one is interested in. By using purposive sampling, a

researcher selects the sample (individual(s)/group(s)/site) because they purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and phenomena of the study (Creswell, 2007). Similarly, Richie, Lewis and Elam (2003) explain that a certain sample is selected because it has a particular feature or characteristic that will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes, which the researcher wants to study. Examples of characteristics listed by Richie et al. (2003: 78) are socio-demographic characteristics that may relate to specific experiences, behaviours or roles. In this case, I selected thirty Grade 12 learners as participants because they are in the process of deciding whether they will pursue higher education studies upon completion of Grade 12, or other opportunities.

Their experience and the factors that influence whether they do go on to study are of interest in this study. Purposive sampling methods form part of non-probability sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Babbie and Mouton (2001) explain that non-probability sampling is a sampling approach most appropriate for qualitative studies. Unlike probability sampling, which is used in quantitative studies (where the aim is to produce a statistically representative sample), non-probability sampling allows for the selection of a sample based on a set of criteria that is determined by the characteristics of the population (Richie et al. 2003: 78). It is for this reason that Richie et al. explain that non-probability sampling is most appropriate to small scale in-depth studies.

The criteria used to select the thirty learners were as follows: As the school had five Grade 12 classes, six learners from each class were selected, based on their Grade 11 results. The results were in the range of 40% – 60% (level 4 to level 6). Learners, who had an average higher than 60%, were not considered because these are normally the learners who would continue to higher education, while learners with an average lower than 40% also were not selected because their

results will not meet the minimum admission requirements for higher education institutions. This selection criterion narrowed the scope (fifty learners had an average higher than 60%, while 22 learners had an average below 40%). I then selected thirty learners from the remaining fifty-two, who had average results between 40% and 60% in their final Grade 11 results. The principal and educators assisted me with the selection process. I then selected three educators from the classes from which most of the learners were chosen as participants.

The principal gave me permission to use a classroom where I met with the thirty learners and the three educators for 40 minutes. Once the learners and the educators had arrived and were seated, I provided each of them with an information sheet (refer Addendum 2) that detailed the research and its purpose. Thereafter, I allowed for questions and clarifications. After this, the learners and the educators were given consent forms which they read, signed, and handed back to me (refer Addendum 3). I then explained to the learners that we would meet on three different afternoons in order to collect the data and we agreed on the different days and times.

3.6.3 Data collection instruments and process of data collected

According to Creswell (2007), data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering information to answer emerging research questions. In qualitative research and, more specifically, with the case study design, multiple sources of data are gathered and, therefore, multiple data collection instruments are used. Data collection tools in qualitative research include, but are not limited to, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations, content analysis, visual methods and life histories (Hennink et al., 2011).

Using multiple data collection tools in qualitative research is good for two reasons. It ensures that rich, in-depth and thick data is available to answer the research question(s), and it strengthens the validity of the research by allowing the researcher to triangulate the data (Yin, 2009; Silverman, 2001). I, therefore, used a biographical information sheet, a self-reflective questionnaire and three focus group interviews as data collection instruments and secondary data. Both the biographical information sheet and the self-reflective questionnaire were translated into IsiXhosa for the learners. The secondary data consisted of the learners' Grade 11 results, and statistics and geographical information from Census 2011 about the area the learners lived in.

3.6.3.1 Biographical information sheet

The biographical information sheet was used to collect biographical details from the learners, such as their age, gender and race. Data relating to their family income and structure were also included in this tool. The biographical information sheet was the first data collection tool that the students completed on the agreed day and time, as stated in Section 3.6.2 above. However, as mentioned already, only twenty-eight learners returned the forms and thus, only twenty-eight learners participated in the study.

3.6.3.2 Self-reflective Questionnaire

De Vos et al. (2005) define a questionnaire as a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondent on respect of a research project. The basic objective of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are informed about the particular issue (De Vos et al., 2005:166). Babbie and Mouton (2007) advises that if the researcher is interested

in determining the extent to which respondents hold a particular attitude perspective, one should use a questionnaire that can elucidate this information - and that was why I used a self-reflective questionnaire. The self-reflective questionnaire was the second data collection instrument that the learners completed. It consisted of nine questions and provision was made on the form for their answers and explanations. Simple language was used to ensure that learners understood the questions easily. Once the learners had completed the questionnaires, they handed them back to me. I thanked the learners for their participation and informed them about the focused-group interviews taking place the next day. The educators were also given a questionnaire to complete; this was the only instrument that I used for them.

3.6.3.3 Focus group interviews

In addition to the self-reflective questionnaires, three focus group interviews (ten learners in the first two groups, and eight learners in the last group) were conducted. According to Kitzinger and Barbour (2001), focus groups are ideal for exploring specific issues; elucidating people's opinions, experiences and wishes; as well as examining different perspectives of people as they operate in a social network. Furthermore, explain that focus groups present a more natural environment than that of the individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others - just as they are in real life. It is for these reasons that I used focus group interviews as a data collection tool. The primary focus of this study is the learners, and the objective with using the interview instrument was establishing their views, opinions and concerns, as they occur in a natural setting (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Hennink et al., 2011).

The focus group interviews were conducted on day three, after the research participants had completed the questionnaires. The learners and I sat in a circle. Before starting the interviews, I

asked their permission to switch on a tape recorder, so that I could record the discussions for accuracy purposes. I started the interview process by introducing myself and stating the purpose of the interview. The interviews lasted forty minutes per session and four questions as discussion points were covered. I posed the questions (as the researcher) and facilitated the discussions. In this process, I had to be aware of my own biases and to be careful not to impose my own opinions and views on the group. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the empirical process followed.

Table 3.1: Summary of the empirical investigation process followed

| Phase 1: Selection of participants Third week in July 2014 | Phase 2: Data collection process First week in August 2014 |
|---|---|
| <p>Met with the school principal in order to ask permission to conduct research at the school.</p> <p>Selected the learners based on the criteria explained with assistance from the principal and educators.</p> | <p>First meeting with the learners and three educators where the research process was explained and three further meeting dates agreed upon.</p> <p>Second meeting alone with the learners where the biographical information data sheets were completed.</p> <p>Third meeting with the learners and the educators where the self-reflective questionnaire (for the learners), and the questionnaire for the educators were completed.</p> <p>Final meeting with learners only where the three focus group interviews took place, one after the other, and where the data collection process was finalised.</p> |

3.6.4 Data analysis

The quantitative data set was analysed first, and thereafter the qualitative data sets. The responses from the research participants are presented in the form of a summary table or a graph.

3.6.4.1 Quantitative data set: Biographical data sheet

As discussed in Section 3.6.3.1, the biographical data information sheet (refer Addendum 4) was used to collect information from the learners to determine their age, gender, number of siblings, family position, who they are living with, and the household income.

Table 3.2 Biographical information according to age, gender, siblings, family position, who they live with and family income.

| Learner | Age | Gender | Siblings | Family position | Living with | Family income |
|---------|-----|--------|----------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 001 | 17 | Female | 4 | Eldest | Parents | 3000.01 – 5000 |
| 002 | 18 | Female | 3 | Youngest | Siblings | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 003 | 18 | Male | 2 | Eldest | Aunt/Uncle | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 004 | 19 | Male | 4 | Middle | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 005 | 20 | Female | 2 | Eldest | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 006 | 19 | Male | 7 | Middle | Other | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 007 | 20 | Male | 4 | Middle | Aunt/Uncle | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 008 | 17 | Female | 0 | Only child | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 009 | 18 | Female | 5 | Middle | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 010 | 19 | Female | 4 | Middle | Aunt/Uncle | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 011 | 18 | Female | 1 | Youngest | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 012 | 19 | Female | 4 | Middle | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 013 | 17 | Male | 3 | Middle | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 014 | 16 | Female | 1 | Youngest | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 015 | 20 | Female | 2 | Eldest | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 016 | 19 | Female | 2 | Eldest | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 017 | 18 | Female | 0 | Only child | Parents | N/A |
| 018 | 19 | Female | 4 | Youngest | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 019 | 18 | Female | 2 | Youngest | Aunt/Uncles | 1000.01 – 3000 |
| 020 | 20 | Female | 6 | Youngest | Aunts/Uncles | 0.00 -1000.00 |
| 021 | 19 | Female | 2 | Middle | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 022 | 20 | Male | 4 | Eldest | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 023 | 19 | Female | 3 | Eldest | Grandparents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 024 | 20 | Female | 5 | Youngest | Aunts/Uncles | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 025 | 18 | Female | 2 | Middle | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 026 | 20 | Female | 3 | Eldest | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 027 | 17 | Female | 2 | Eldest | Parents | 0.00 – 1000.00 |
| 028 | 18 | Male | 3 | Middle | Parents | 1000.01 – 3000 |

Table 3.2 shows that the research participants consisted of twenty-one females and seven males.

Based on the selection of the learners (as explained in Section 3.6.2), it appears that the female

learners perform better academically than the male learners. The table further reflects that eight of the learners were nineteen (19) years old and seven were twenty (20) years old. These ages are beyond Grade 12 learners' ages (the norm is normally that learners who are in Grade 12 are either seventeen (17) or eighteen (18) years old, as reflected in most of the other ages in the table. This could mean that some of these learners started school later than usual, or they might have repeated a grade before Grade 12. The sixteen-year-old learner is not the norm either (very young), which could mean that she started to attend school at a very young age (five years) or she excelled in her lower grade years and was promoted to a higher grade prior to Grade 12.

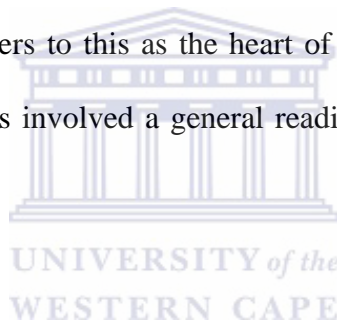
In terms of their position in the family, nine of the learners indicated they were the eldest, with ten as the middle child falling between other siblings, seven were the youngest, and two learners were the only child. Nineteen learners live with their parents, while six indicated that they live with an aunt or uncle. One learner reported that she lived with a sibling and one with the grandparents. Furthermore, Table 3.2 shows that fifteen learners (53%) had a family household income between R1000.01 and R3000.00; eleven (39%) revealed that their household income was between R0.00 and R1 000.00; while one indicated R3000.01, another R5 000.00, and one participant did not answer this question.

The range of household income given by the participants corresponds with the average household income for Philippi residents, as discussed in Section 3.6.1. In addition to this, the table shows that the household size (siblings and participants only) ranges from 2--7. Examining the household size and the household income, we see that a large family is dependent on a very low income. It is as a result of this that a lack of finances, needing a bursary and feeling the pressure to work to support the family, came up continually in the discussion on what the

enabling or inhibiting factors were. These findings are discussed under sub-questions two and three in Chapter 4.

3.6.4.2 Qualitative data sets: Self-reflective questionnaire of the learners, educators' questionnaire and focus group sessions

Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. I used a three-stage open coding process for the content analysis (Henning, 2004; Neuman, 1997; Yin, 2009). According to Neuman (1997:422), "Coding is two simultaneous activities: mechanical data reduction and analytic categorization of data". This is a process where one begins to sort the data collected into smaller, manageable and orderly pieces of information and assign a label, category or theme to each of them. Creswell (2013) refers to this as the heart of a qualitative data analysis process. Stage 1 in the open coding process involved a general reading and noting of all the qualitative data (refer Addendum 5).



In Stage 2, the data were sorted into categories and themes. The categories were based on the three sub-questions of the study (refer Section 3.3 above), while factors identified in Chapman's model, as discussed in Section 2.5, were used as broad themes (refer Addendum 6). Stage 3 was the last stage of the open coding process and the data were further reduced to related sub-themes under the broad themes identified (refer Addendum 7). These categories, themes and sub-themes served as the basis for the analysis and discussion in Chapter 4, and it placed the study analysis within a deductive approach. However, new sub-themes emerged from the data collected which added an inductive approach to the analysis as well.

The learners were asked eight questions in the self-reflective questionnaire (refer Addendum 8), the educators seven questions (refer Addendum 9) and six questions were posed and discussed in the focus group interviews (refer Addendum 10). Two of the questions asked in the self-reflective questionnaire of the learners, and three questions posed and discussed in the focus group interviews are analysed under category 1. The reminder of the questions and responses are analysed under categories 2 and 3.

3.6.4.3 Sub-question 1: How do learners' view post-school education and its ability to realise their career aspirations?

At the beginning of the data collection process, I wanted to establish how many of the learners intended to go to university once they had completed Grade 12. The question: *Are you planning on studying further after school?* was posed to the learners in the self-reflective questionnaire to determine their intentions. Twenty-seven of the learners answered “yes” to this question (96%) and one learner (4%) did not provide an answer.

To further establish this aspiration and what informs it, four follow-up questions were posed - the first two in the self-reflective questionnaire and the latter two in the focus groups interviews.

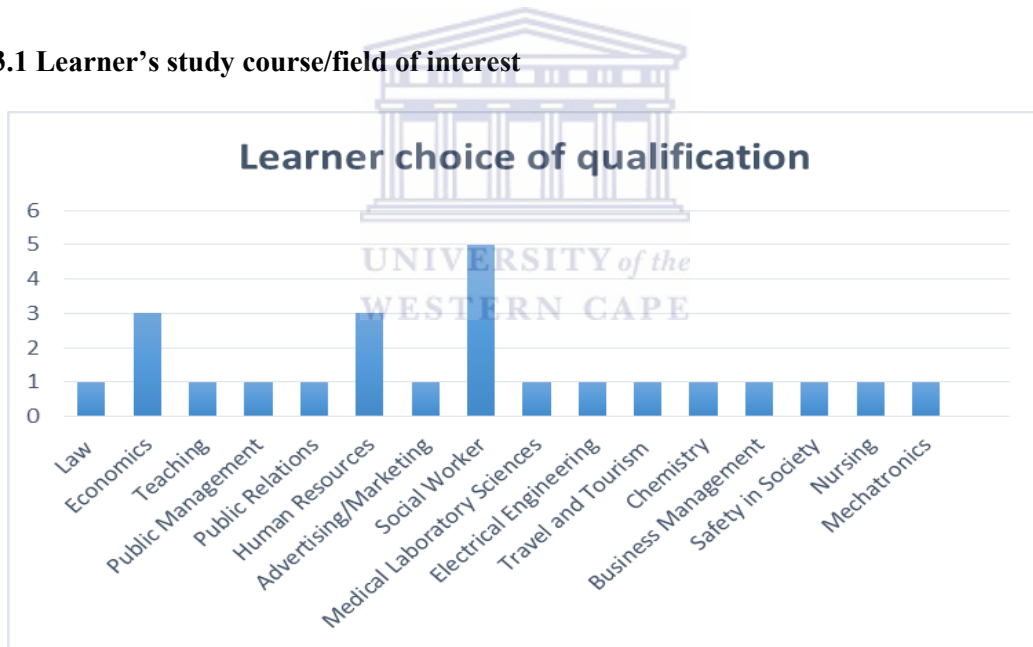
These questions were:

1. *Do you know what the name is of the course/field/subject you would like to study?*
2. *Do you think it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12?*
3. *What are your thoughts about university?*
4. *Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career /study goals?*

Asking learners these questions had a two-fold purpose. Firstly, I wanted to determine what motivated their intention to study further; and, secondly, I used their responses in the focus group interviews for triangulation purposes, and to test the validity and reliability of their responses in the questionnaire.

In response to the second question posed in the self-reflective questionnaire: *Do you know what the name is of the course/field/subject you would like to study?*, twenty-four learners (86%) responded positively and identified their study course of interest, while four learners (14%) were uncertain. As Graph 3.1 depicts below, learners show a wide range of interest from Commerce, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering and Natural Sciences. There is a strong interest in the fields of Social Work, Human Resources and Economics. It should be noted that the Safety in Society qualification is offered by Further Education and Training Colleges (FET). The learner who selected this qualification felt that a FET college would be a better choice because their practical component makes the student more employable (refer Table 3.4).

Graph 3.1 Learner’s study course/field of interest



The four learners, who expressed uncertainty about what they want to study, raised concerns of not having enough information about a particular course, the lack of finances, and being confused about what to study.

Responses to the question asked in the self-reflective questionnaire: *Do you think it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12?* are presented in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3 Importance of studying further

| Do you think it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12? |
|---|
| <p>Responses from 24 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not easy to find a proper job when you do not have a degree. • With a university education you will get a good job and permanent job; when you have a good qualification it is easy to find a good job that will benefit you for the rest of your life. • With university education you will earn a good salary. • It will help you to achieve your goals and also to do what you have wanted to do. • You are more independent. • By studying further you will help reduce the level of unemployment in South Africa. Also, your money can help other people who need financial support e.g. tax. • You can't do much with grade 12 in our times. Many grade 12s are unemployed and many are involved in the informal sector. • If you don't study further you become lazy, you become involved in other things such as crime and gangsterism. • When you are educated everything is easy for you than those who are not educated in life. • Body and brain (are) still good because you have just passed matric if you don't study, you let your brain rot if I may say so. |

Table 3.3 shows that twenty-four learners (85%) responded positively, viewing studying after school as something that is important. They indicated that through attending university, they would gain a good education that will lead to “better job opportunities” and “earn a good salary”. Four learners (15%) did not respond to this question.

The responses to the first question asked in the focus group interviews: *What are your thoughts about university?* are presented in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: Learners thoughts about university

| What are your thoughts about university? | |
|---|---|
| Positive responses: | |
| 3 learners said: | University means status – better opportunity, better life. |
| 2 learners said: | University is different to school – it is a whole new world. It offers me the opportunity to specialise. At school we get general information and this is not enough to get a proper job. |
| 1 learner said: | My first thought about university is freedom and being in charge of my life, responsible, being my own boss. |
| 1 learner said: | University will give me the opportunity to meet different people. I am looking forward to meeting people from different countries and cultures. |
| 1 learner said: | I am nervous about university but I want to be there and change from being a high school learner |
| 1 learner said: | University changes one’s life |
| Negative responses: | |
| 1 learner said: | I think university is for people who can afford it; not having better clothes would make me feel less. |
| 1 learner said: | I feel that I am not clever (enough) for university |
| 3 learners said: | University possesses high goals, sometimes they seem impossible to achieve. |
| 2 learners said: | It seems when we talk about university it is as if we are thinking we are better or more clever than any student in my class. |
| Other: | |
| 1 learner said: | I think college is better. I stand a better chance of being employed if I study at college because I will have practical skills. |

Table 3.4 shows that the learners had different thoughts about university. Nine learners perceived university in a very positive light, as a place of opportunity, new experiences and better life.

Seven learners viewed university as a place that they don't associate with: "It is for clever people". It is seen as a place that requires high academic goals that learners feel they cannot achieve, and university is seen as a place for people who have money. One learner felt university would not provide the practical skills for employment. Fourteen (50%) of the learners did not respond to this question in the interviews.

The next question asked in the focus group interviews was: *Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career/study goals?* I wanted to establish whether learners regarded university as linking them to their career or study goals. The responses are presented in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5 Learners view of university's connection to career/study goal

| Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career/study goals? | |
|---|---|
| 4 learners said: | Having a university degree will open a lot of doors for me. |
| 3 learners said: | I will be able to change my situation at home. We will be able to afford. |
| 1 learner said | Education will make me a better person. |
| 1 learner said: | I want to do biomed and university will help me achieve that. |
| 1 learner said: | I want to do Journalism and university will help me – I want to do Civil Engineering. |

As Table 3.5 shows, nine (32%) learners responded positively, expressing their view that university prepares them for the type of work they are interested in, while one learner made reference to universities equipping her to change the home financial circumstances. The remainder of the learners (68%) did not respond to this question.

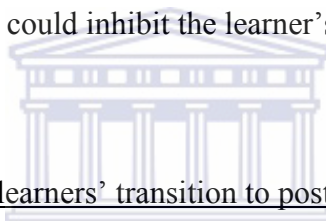
This concludes the first part of the data analysis which seeks to establish learner’s view of university. A detailed discussion and interpretation of these findings are presented in sub-questions one and two in Chapter 4.

3.6.4.4 Sub-question 2: What are the factors that influence the decisions of high school learners and are those enabling factors or barriers to post-school education?

To answer this question, I posed two questions in the self-reflective questionnaire:

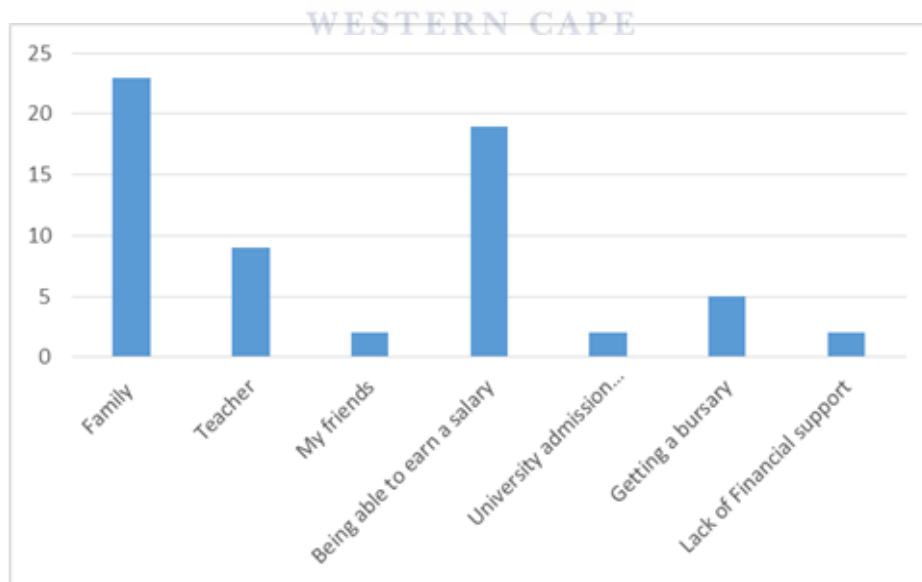
- *What or who would you say influenced your decisions to study further after you have completed Grade 12?*
- *Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?*

The positive responses, which I referred to as the enabling factors, are analysed first, and, thereafter, the negative factors, that could inhibit the learner’s decision to continue with post-school education, will be analysed.



3.6.4.4.1 Which factors impact the learners’ transition to post-school education positively?

Graph 3.2: Factors impacting positively on learners’ transition



Graph 4 shows that family (23 responses which is, 82%) had the greatest impact on learners’ decisions to pursue higher education. It is not clear in the responses from learners which specific

family member influenced them but, from the biographical data sheet (Section 3.6.4.1), one gets the sense that parents have the greatest influence but support also comes from grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings.

Table 3.6: Learner’s responses on why the factors could influence them positively

| |
|---|
| <p>Family: Responses from the 23 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family supports within the home. They encourage learners to do well in school so that their grade 12 marks can be good to gain access to university • Parents value education. They speak of the importance of education and how through education a better life can be achieved. • Parents are also saying that better money can be earned with a university education. |
| <p>Being able to earn a salary: Responses from the 19 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a degree or diploma, it is viewed that better employment can be obtained with better salary which will support the family and living a better life will be achieved. • I will be taken out of the difficult situation that I am faced with. |
| <p>Educators: Responses from 9 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are support structures outside of the home, encouraging learners to study further. • Teachers encourage us to work hard to change the situations at home. • Teachers motivate us, telling us education is the most powerful tool in life. • Teachers always tell us that we must work hard and get to university and continue studies. • Teachers tell us about how to achieve and the ways that I can achieve (it). |
| <p>Getting a bursary: Responses from 5 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a bursary, studying is hassle free, no worries of paying my fees. • I will be focused on studies (and) not having to worry about money. • Less financial stress on parents and they would also not worry. |
| <p>Peers: Responses from 3 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends encourage me by asking questions about what my plans are after school. • My friends encourage me to study further for better opportunities. • They ask about what I want to study at university and they tell me about university |
| <p>University admission requirements: Responses from 2 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without meeting the university requirements, I will not gain access, • Knowing the university requirements (makes) me aware, so I am motivated to work hard so that I meet university requirements. |
| <p>Lack of Financial support Responses from 2 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where I live there is lack of financial support so I want to study further so that there will be financial support at home. • Also I want to work and earn a great salary so that my family will not live in poverty |

Being able to earn a salary (19 responses which is, 68%) comes in second as positively impacting learners (refer Table 3.6 above for reasons why learners rate this factor highly). The graph further show that educators (9 responses which is, 32%) and getting a bursary (5 responses which is, 18%) have a positive impact as well, followed by friends (3 responses which is, 11%), university admission requirements (2 responses, which is, 7%) and lack of financial support (2 responses, which is 7%). Table 3.6 above outlines the learners' explanation on why the factors (Graph 4) act as enabling factors. Table 3.6 reveals common themes that surface in learners' responses as reasons why and how the factors, mentioned in Graph 3.2 above, may impact their decision-making process positively.

The learners also identified other factors that would encourage them to pursue university studies. These are listed below in Table 3.7.

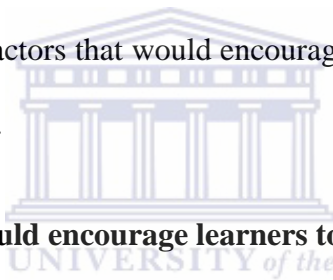


Table: 3.7: Other factors that would encourage learners to pursue university studies

| |
|---|
| Improving my marks – my marks are poor : 7 responses |
| Passing well: 6 responses |
| Money/bursary to help with registration and tuition: 10 responses |
| Career choices – making the right choices and knowing more about choices so that I don't drop out or lose interest: 5 responses |
| Having more information on what courses university offers so that I know where to apply to and what the right requirements are: 5 responses |

Table 3.17 reflects that thirteen learners (46%) view academic performance as an important enabling factor, ten (36%) stated that having money or a bursary was an important enabling factor, while five learners (18%) wanted to make the right choice and together with another five,

wanted to be knowledgeable about admission requirements, courses offered at universities, and where to apply to.

Table 3.8: Educators' views of support provided by the school

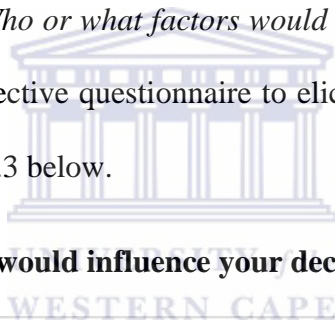
| |
|---|
| <p><i>Question 1: Do learners at Grade 12 have access to career guidance counsellors at school?</i></p> <p>Yes = 3 responses</p> |
| <p><i>Question 2: What type of career support is offered to Grade 12 learners at the school?</i></p> <p>2 teacher responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career exhibitions and open days. • They are encouraged to make use of the internet so that they can find out more about career choices. <p>1 teacher response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a school, we sometimes ask our former learners (successful) to give support to Grade 12s. • Educators also support learners in a way or the concerning career guidance |
| <p><i>Question 3: Do learners attend University/ University of Technology open days?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes = 2 responses • No = 1 responses |
| <p><i>Question 4: In what ways do the school support Grade 12 learners post- school choices?</i></p> <p>2 teacher responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a chapter for careers in the Life Orientation whereby the teacher explains to the learners. • Teachers in Life Orientation take them to these institutions and guide them through. |
| <p><i>Question 5: Are there any activities within the school that supports learner's career/study choices?</i></p> <p>1 teacher response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, they do career choices - LO class. |
| <p><i>Question 7: What would you say are the most appropriate support strategies to encourage learner's transition to higher education studies?</i></p> <p>1 teacher response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is for them to attend open day – University. • Invite different people from different sectors – graduates, business people, engineers, doctors, CAs and others. • Organise career exhibitions. • Take the learners to excursions (educational) Eskom, PetroSA, Wine Estates, etc. |

To establish whether the learners had support within the school that could assist them with their transition from high school to university, seven questions were posed to the three educators. The teacher responses are by Table 3.8.

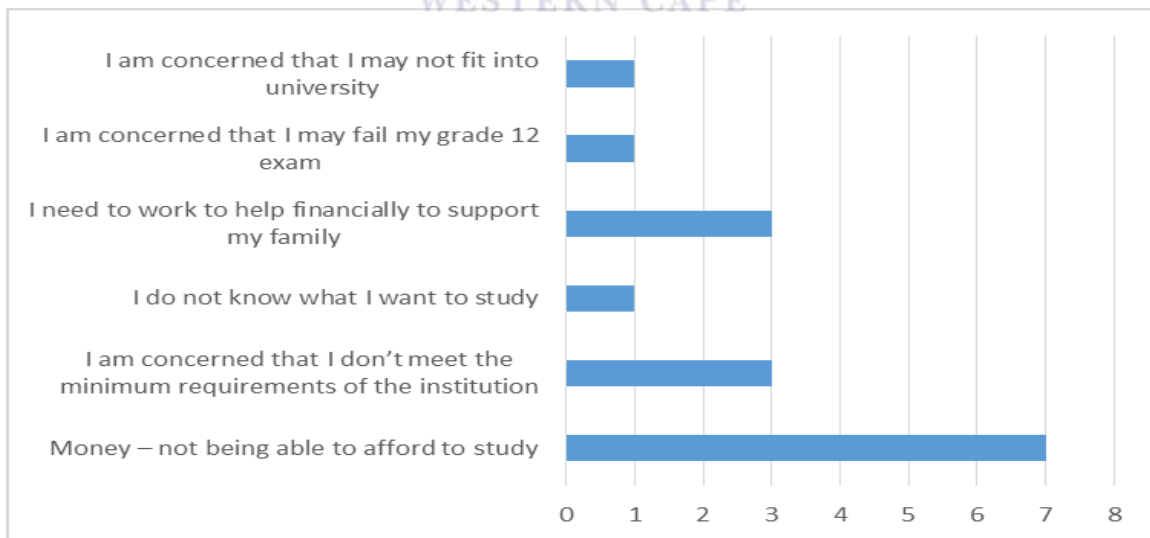
Overall, the responses from the educators in Table 3.8 indicated that the school provided support for the learners' transition to university studies.

3.6.4.4.2 Which factors were barriers to the learners' transition to post-school education?

With a large percentage of eligible youth outside of university (refer Section 1.1), I wanted to find out what the potential barriers could be that would prevent the learners from pursuing university studies. The question: *Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?* was posed in the self-reflective questionnaire to elicit responses from the learners. The responses are presented in Graph 3.3 below.



Graph 3.3: Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?



Graph 3.3 shows that 6 factors were identified by learners as potentially hindering their transition to university. These factors are money (not being able to afford to study) which was listed as a

major concern for 7 learners (25%) Two factors were ranked second to money as a barrier – having to work to help and support the family (3 learners which is, 11%) and not meeting the minimum requirements of the university (3 learners which is, 11%). Other factors that were identified as barriers were a concern of not fitting in at university (1 learner, 4%), not passing Grade 12 (1 learner, 4%) and not knowing what to study (1 learner, 4%).

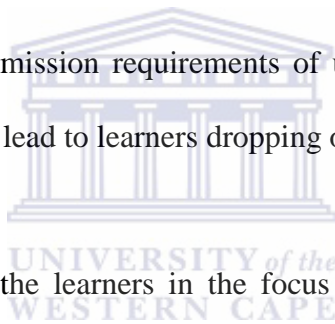
Table 3.9: Explanations of how the hindering factors impact on learners

| |
|--|
| <p>Money – not being able to afford to study Responses 7 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact is money matters. Without money I can't go study. • Family can't afford university fees • Don't have the money to pay for application fees and won't have money to register |
| <p>I am concerned that I don't meet the minimum requirements of the institution Responses 3 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not performing well academically. • Minimum requirements of university too high, school marks not good. |
| <p>I do not know what I want to study Responses 3 learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure what to study – confused. • Don't know enough of what university offers and if it has what I am interested in. |
| <p>I need to work to help financially to support my family Response 1 learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I need to support family and other siblings at home • There is no money to study so working is the other option |
| <p>I am concerned that I may fail my grade 12 exam Responses 1 learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results thus far don't look (good) and (I) have a feeling that I may fail grade 12. |
| <p>I am concerned that I may not fit into university: Response 1 learner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University is different |

Table 3.9 shows the learners' responses on how each of the factors represented in Graph 3.3 is a barrier to their transition to university. The Table reveals that learners are acutely aware that

having money is an important factor for them to study and that university costs can place a strain on family finances which is already low (refer Table 3.2 above). Rows 2 and 5 show that poor academic performance is also a potential barrier to accessing university studies. Learners also expressed a lack of information as a factor that can prevent them studying further, while the last row indicates that the university’s culture might be a barrier for one learner.

To further validate the learners’ responses from the self-reflective questionnaire, this question was posed to the educators: *What would you say are the factors that hinder learners from progressing to higher education studies?* Only one of the three educators responded to this question. Her response was that some of the learners’ marks were lower than expected, that some of them do not meet the admission requirements of university, and that there is a high pregnancy rate in the school which lead to learners dropping out of school.



A further question was posed to the learners in the focus group interviews for triangulation purposes: *What about university makes you NOT want to study?*” The learners’ responses are listed in Table 3.10 below

Table 3.10: What about university makes you NOT want to study?

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 11 learners said | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The culture being better or acting like I am better than anyone else in my community (speaking, dressing and acting differently). |
| 4 learners said | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The English language at university is scary, That I have to communicate in English, during lectures and speak English with new friends and other students |

Table 3.10 reflects that eleven learners (39%) had strong feelings of belonging to their community (home) and they were afraid that going to university would change them, thereby

alienating them from their home community. Four learners (14%) were afraid of the English language, which means that they were second or additional language speakers of English.

3.6.4.4.3 What will you do if you do not go to university (other possibilities)?

I ended off the self-reflective questionnaire by asking learners what they would do if they were not able to go to university. Their responses are summarised in Graph 3.4 below.

Graph 3.4: Other opportunities learners will access



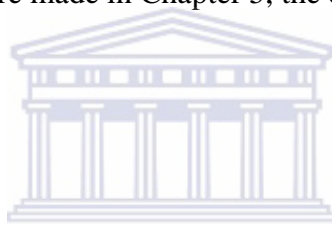
Graph.3.4 shows that 17 (62%) of the learners will find work in order to support their families; 5 learners (17%) indicated that they will improve their results in order to apply to a university the next year; three learners (11%) identified other work opportunities, such as the army (one) and the police force (two), while two learners (10%) responded that they would feel too discouraged and would not know what to do. Lastly, one learner (5%) indicated that he will become involved

in criminal activity with his siblings. These findings are discussed in detail in all the sub-questions in Chapter 4. This concludes the analysis of the qualitative data collected.

3.6.4.5 Sub-question 3: How could the barriers to learners' transition be overcome in order to direct and guide the learners to the enabling factors?

The previous section analysed the learners' and educators' responses to what they thought the enabling factors and the barriers were. Based on that, in Chapter 4, this section looked at how the enabling factors could be strengthened, and how the barriers to the learners' successful transition from high school to university studies could be addressed and overcome. Finally, recommendations in this regard were made in Chapter 5, the concluding chapter of this study.

3.7 SUMMARY



In this chapter, the research process followed in this study was comprehensively explained and justified. I also analysed the data collected and presented the analysed information in the form of tables and graphs. Upon reflecting on this process, I realised that it was very challenging. It was challenging because I had to be very conscious of my own biases, and because of that, I tried to be diligent, and went back and forth while working through the data. Having analysed the data myself, I gained good insights and a better sense of what the issues were that the learners are grappling with and how the issues impacted their decision-making processes. I now move on to Chapter Four where I discuss and interpret the analysed data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I described and explained the research process followed in this study and I also presented the analysed data. In this chapter, the discussion and interpretation of the data analysed are presented. The data is organised into three categories with corresponding themes and sub-themes, as identified in the theoretical framework. These categories are based on the three research sub-questions (refer Section 3.3). The first category, themes and sub-themes, deals with the learners' views about obtaining post-school education. The second category, themes and sub-themes discusses the enabling and inhibiting factors that emerged from the data analysis process. The last category presents recommendations on how the inhibiting factors could be overcome and the enabling factors supported. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the analysis. It should be noted that the responses of the research participants are quoted verbatim, and that I attempted to link the responses of the participants to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the theoretical framework used in this study.

4.2 HOW DO LEARNERS' VIEW POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ITS ABILITY TO REALISE THEIR CAREER ASPIRATIONS?

Graph 2.2 in Section 2.4 illustrates that the participation of the black youth in higher education is still very low. Given this low participation rate, it was deemed important to establish the research participants' view of university and whether they considered going to university as a necessary step to fulfil their career aspirations. The assumption is that, if learners regard university as a valuable route to attain their career goals, they are more likely to want to pursue university

studies. As was noted in Section 3.6.4.3, the learners responses to the question, *Are you planning on studying further after school?* in the self-reflective questionnaire showed that a high proportion (twenty seven - 96%) of learners demonstrated that most of them wanted to further their studies after completing Grade 12.

To further establish this aspiration and what informs it, four follow-up questions were posed - two in the self-reflective questionnaire and two in the focus group interviews (refer Section 3.6.4.3). The responses to these questions are now discussed and interpreted according to the three themes identified in the theoretical framework as student characteristics, namely the level of aspiration and expectation (interest); their views (value) of university; and internal and external motivation (refer Section 2.5.2.1).

Theme 1: Level of aspirations and expectations

According to Chapman and others (refer Sections 2.1 and 2.2), the aspiration for higher education studies is a precondition that needs to exist if any learner wishes to pursue and access university studies. The learners' responses in Section 3.6.4.3 reveal that the learners displayed high intentions for pursuing studies on completing Grade 12. Their responses to the question, *Do you know what the name is of the course/field/subject you would like to study?* showed that twenty-four learners (85%) knew what they wanted to study and pursue as a career (refer Graph 3.1). Only four learners (15%) were not sure what they wanted to study. This uncertainty was mainly because learners felt that they did not have enough information to make an informed decision. Their responses were:

- I don't know the name of the course.
- I want to be a social worker but not sure what I must study to be a social worker.
- I don't know what I can achieve. I don't know nothing about what I want to study. Also I don't know where I will get the money.

- I don't know what to study, I am confused what course I must choose.

Not knowing what to study or the name of the course or degree is an indication that the learners did not have enough information to make a decision, or they might have had access to the information but did not understand the information because it was written in English (and not in their first language). Or it could be due to the fact that the school did not have a career guidance counsellor who could have explained the information to them.

Only ten learners responded to the question, *Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career/study goals?* This question was asked to further probe their aspirations for and expectation of university studies. The ten learners who responded to this question were part of the twenty-four learners who indicated that they wanted to continue with post-school education. Table 3.5 shows that they regarded university as a “door to opportunity”, that it would enable them to access their desired professions, and that it would allow them to change their situation at home. Having only a Grade 12 qualification was viewed as “useless” by the learners, as they felt that it would not enable them to access gainful employment opportunities (refer Table 3.3). Their responses, therefore, revealed that they aspired to attend university because they regarded it as a place to gain access to various opportunities that would not only benefit themselves but their families, as well. Their responses are in line with three of Cosser and Du Toit's (2002: 23) five top factors that influence learner intention to pursue entry into higher education, namely: “the potential of enhancing employability; higher education leading to higher income; and family urging higher education studies”. However, their responses contradict the literature (James, 2002) that suggests that learners from low socio-economic status/backgrounds are less likely to find university courses relevant and rewarding, less

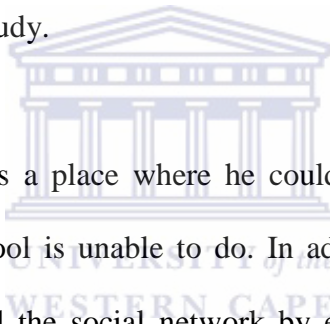
confident that their parents wanted them to do a university course, and were more likely to have a stronger interest in earning an income as soon as they leave school (refer Section 2.5.2.1). One could argue that it was because of their socio-economic backgrounds that these learners wanted to go to university in order to prepare themselves for a better future that would improve, not only their own living conditions and status, but that of their families, as well.

Theme 2: Learners' views (value) of university

Following the theoretical framework, the question, *What are your thoughts about university?* was asked to ascertain how the learners viewed university. There were positive and negative responses, as well as one other response, to this question. Based on the responses reflected in Table 3.4, learners clearly had mixed views on what university meant to them. The learners' positive responses indicated that the learners had a high regard for university, referring to it as a place of "status" which means that they view university as a place of importance, prestige and significance. This importance, prestige or significance could stem from the fact that learners associate university with prospects of better employment (refer Table 3.3), skills and resources that will give them access to career interests (refer Table 3.5) and, thus, affording them the opportunity to improve their socio-economic conditions. It can also be inferred that the views learners held were shaped by society, as the higher education sector is valued in South Africa and regarded as the engine of social and economic transformation (refer Section 2.4).

The theoretical framework advocates that the image prospective students have of an institution is formed by the institution's reputation. This reputation is defined by institutional characteristics which can be formed by the institution itself or by views expressed by significant others or

society (Chapman, 1981). Also, in their respective studies, Cosser (2010) and Diamond et al. (2012) mention the reputation of a university as a factor that influences a learner's decision about furthering their studies at that institution. Therefore, given its reputation, the learners associated university with a "better opportunity" and "better life". This view corresponds with the learners' thoughts expressed in the self-reflective questionnaire and, as discussed under Theme 1, better job prospects and increased earning potential which would in turn lead to improvement of their lives. Their views are in line with Cosser and Du Toit's (2002) point that employability and earning potential are among the factors that encourage learners to pursue university studies. Diamond et al. (2012) and Jafari and Aliesmaili (2013) also refer to the prospect of employment as a motivating factor for further study.

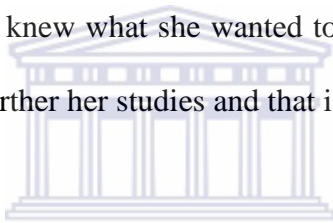


One learner regarded university as a place where he could learn the necessary skills for his chosen profession, something school is unable to do. In addition, a university is also a place where learners are able to expand the social network by engaging with peers from different cultures, as one learner noted: "University will give me the opportunity to meet different people. I am looking forward to meeting people from different countries and cultures".

The negative views expressed by the learners conveyed that they felt out of place and did not identify with the university environment. As highlighted by the discussion above, the university was associated with status and prestige by three of the learners, but the learners who responded negatively did not identify with this image. They, instead, viewed university as a place not for themselves, but for people "who can afford"; they felt that they were not "clever enough" and that the university "possess high goals, sometimes they seem impossible

to achieve”. Thus, an inference could be drawn that these learners did not think that they would fit in at university; university represented an identity that they were not familiar with. The experiences and expressions of learners are further discussed under Theme 3 below.

Lastly, one learner did not see the relevance of university, as it could not contribute towards what she wanted to pursue. She said: “I think college is better. I stand a better chance of being employed if I study at college because I will have practical skills”. It seems as if this learner was knowledgeable about what employers wanted, and decided that attending a college would provide her with the necessary “practical skills” which would make her more employable. She was on the right track because she knew what she wanted to do and where she wanted to do it. More importantly, she wanted to further her studies and that is what this study was about.



Theme 3: Internal and external motivation

Again, following the theoretical framework, the question, *Do you think it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12?* was asked in the self-reflective questionnaire to determine whether the learners were internally or externally motivated to continue with post-school studies. Similar to the previous section, twenty-four learners responded to this question and four learners did not respond. There were five internally motivated responses and five externally motivated ones (refer Table 3.3).

The learners’ responses indicated that they hold the belief that by going to university they can achieve the goals that they have set for themselves; they can become independent because a degree could assist them in getting a good income which would make their lives easier, compared to people who do not have degrees and who are in low paying jobs. They suggested

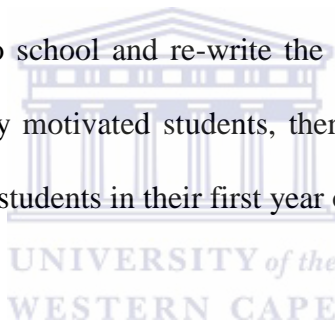
that going to university immediately after Grade 12 is good because, as one learner puts it, “body and brain is still good” and another wrote - you will not “become lazy”. One learner alluded to the crime and gangsterism situation which is a general societal problem for most of the townships on the Cape Flats. For that learner, going to university will “keep him out of trouble and mixing with the wrong crowd” so to speak. One could infer that university is seen by the learners as a gateway towards becoming the professionals they see themselves as and creating the better life they desire.

In the event that learners did not pass Grade 12 well enough to obtain access to their desired university courses, 5 learners (17%) indicated that they would improve their academic grades and re-apply to university the next year. Thus, one can conclude that these learners displayed a strong internal motivation to study further after Grade 12. These answers which the learners provided here are a little different to the ones they gave under Theme 1 for their aspirations for and expectations of university studies. Here, the focus was on themselves and what they wanted, and not so much on their circumstances and families’ needs.

The responses reflect that learners were strongly influenced by their external circumstances. As discussed already, most of the learners (twenty-four, thus 85%) in this study expressed a desire to attend university because they wanted to escape their poor circumstances and support and assist their families (refer discussion under Themes 1 and 2 above). Also, learners viewed university as a gateway to opportunities for better employment and prospects in order to have a better life to that of their parents. But the responses above also indicate that there was a sense (which could be interpreted as fear or an anxiety) of not wanting to be unemployed. This could

be as a result, again, of their circumstances and the fact that they lived in a township that had almost a 50% unemployment rate (refer Section 3.6.1). They were, therefore, externally motivated to further their education to escape their low income status and avoid becoming another statistic in the unemployment rate.

However, the result of being motivated mainly by external factors could lead to a lack of commitment once learners face challenges. As seen in Graph 3.4, of the 96% (27 learners) who reported high aspirations for university study, when posed with the question, *What will you do if you do not continue to study?*, 17 learners (62%) said they would work, while only 5 learners (17%) said they would go back to school and re-write the exams to improve their chances of being accepted later on. Externally motivated students, therefore, could be one of the reasons why there is a high dropout rate of students in their first year of study.



4.3. WHAT ARE THE ENABLING OR INHIBITING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS IN TRANSITIONING TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION?

The argument in this study was that there are many eligible learners who had completed Grade 12 with university endorsement but who were not in higher education, training or employment (refer Section 1.1). The objective of the study was to conduct research in order to uncover what the enabling factors were that could assist learners attain post-school education, and equally importantly, to identify the inhibiting factors that prevent learners from pursuing higher education studies. Thus, two questions were posed in the learners' self-reflective questionnaire to elicit responses from them in this regard, and this issue was further discussed in the focus group interview sessions. The two questions were:

- *What or who would you say influenced your decisions to study further after you have completed Grade 12?*
- *Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?*

The first question was asked to elicit the issues which the learners thought positively influenced their decision-making process (or supported their decision) (refer to as the enabling factors); while the second question required the learners to identify the issues that could prevent them from going to university (refer to as the inhibiting factors). The enabling factors are discussed first, and thereafter, the factors that could inhibit their transition to post-school education. Note that the responses are discussed according to the themes identified in the theoretical framework (refer Section 2.5.2).

4.3.1 Enabling factors

Theme 1: Support and encouragement from family members, friends and teachers

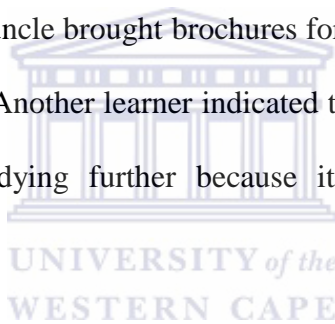
A common theme in the self-reflective questionnaire and focus group discussions was the significant support and encouragement respondents received from their families, friends and teachers to pursue university studies. The theoretical framework refers to family, friends and teachers as “significant others” who strongly influence or persuade learners, through their comments and advice, to further their studies (refer Section 2.5.2). McDonough (1997) reflects this view when he states that (prospective) students make plans for attending college (university) as a result of implicit and explicit messages from their social networks (family, teachers and peers). Each sub-theme (family, friends and teachers) are now discussed.

Sub-theme 1.1: Family support

The responses from the learners in Graph 3.2 indicate that the family was a key influence in encouraging learners to pursue further studies after completing Grade 12. Family, according to

the learners, provided support and encouragement, and they regarded post-school education as important and the means to gain better opportunities in life. In addition, the responses in Table 3.6 clearly show that family support is valued by the learners and that they are primary motivators for learners to pursue studies beyond Grade 12.

Responses from the focus groups corresponded to the responses reflected in the self reflective questionnaire. The learners, however, elaborated further on the support they received from other family members. One learner explained in detail how a sibling encouraged him to do well at school, so that he could study further and not get involved in crime, like their other siblings. Another learner indicated that his uncle brought brochures for him from different institutions and he could ask his uncle for advice. Another learner indicated that her eldest sister who is working always speaks to her about studying further because it will provide better employment opportunities.



The learners' responses in the focus group discussions further indicated that their families realised a Grade 12 qualification was not enough and that university education would give learners a better chance of improving their lives. Examples of their responses were:

- My family has told me that I have to study so I can get a degree so can get a job and earn money so I could be able to help out.
- My family influenced me to study further cos my mother says I must continue with my studies so that I can get a permanent job.
- My family influence me by telling me that I have to work hard to achieve my goals and become educated so that I can earn enough money.

These responses show that the family members encouraged learners to pursue university studies mostly for a better life and better income, but not necessarily to pursue a career for its intrinsic

value or pursuing studying for the interest of a specific career. It seems as if the families' encouragement and support largely stems from a need to change their social status and financial circumstances. As a result of this, there was a sense of obligation on the part of the learners to take on the responsibility of having to study in order to contribute to their households and help to improve the lives of their family members. Evidence for this inference can be found in the two responses below:

- Because my parents are working in factory so they both earn the wages which is less than R1000.00 and I want to take care of them and also my sisters. I just want to be the light of that home to make my sisters proud and so that they can be able to go to school and I want to live a nice life.
- My family have influenced me by giving me the support that I need in each and every time and also as a person when I am an adult. I will need a good job that will give me enough money to myself and my family.

Therefore, one could argue that the learners' aspirations to continue with post-school education were based mainly on the encouragement of their parents, and the need to assist their families financially. It is evident that the learners and their families were part of the population in Phillipi who, according to the 2011 Census, was severely impoverished, with the majority of its residents living in informal settlements and half of the population unemployed (refer Section 3.6.1). Consequently, wanting to go to university was externally motivated by their circumstances and not internally; they did not want to do it for themselves. As mentioned in the previous section, this could be one of the reasons why many black students drop out in their first year of university study – they are not intrinsically motivated and once the challenges arise, they do not have the will to learn that could have assisted them to persist and overcome the challenges (McGhie, 2012). Despite the reasons why, it was clear from the learners' responses that family played a very active role in motivating and encouraging learners to study after Grade 12. These responses

were in line with what Cosser and Du Toit (2002) found in their research - that family plays an important role, as family members are the ones who often urge learners to pursue studies beyond Grade 12. They are also in line with what Chapman suggests is part of the external influences on learners' decision to pursue higher education or not (refer theoretical framework, Section 2.5.2.2).

Sub-theme 1.2: Friends' (peers) support

Table 3.6 shows that only three learners identified their peers as having influenced their decision to study further. These learners' responses indicated that they valued the engagement they had with their peers. The learners made reference to the fact that their friends enquired and questioned them about what they intended to study after school, engagements that supported their choices about studying further. These responses also indicated that through their friends, learners were informed about the everyday experiences of university life. From their peers, they heard first-hand what the challenges were, what the learning environment was like, and the different opportunities that were available. Learners valued the experience of their peers that represented what they aspired to; they viewed the experience as a motivating factor because their peers came from the same backgrounds as themselves.

A possible reason why the other learners did not indicate that they received support from their peers could be that they did not have friends who were at university, unlike the three who did. It could also be that the learners' peers in the school might not have the same aspirations which the learners participating in this study had, and, therefore, going to university was not a topic that was discussed among the learners at school. Nonetheless, the responses of the three learners who indicated that their peers supported and encouraged them are in line with what the theoretical

framework suggests – that peers could influence the decision-making process of learners. In the case of the three learners in this study, it seems as if this influence was a positive one.

Sub-theme 1.3: Teacher support

Table 3.6 further reveals that teachers are third among the factors that learners positively identify as influencing their decisions about studying after school. Cosser (2010) states that teachers are support systems outside the home (external influences) who encourage and support learners regarding their options after school. In their responses, learners expressed valuing their teachers and the support that they provided. The value that learners attached to their teachers stems from the fact that their teachers encouraged and motivated them to do well at school. The learners responses revealed that their teachers placed emphasis on the importance of good academic results and that achieving well academically would improve their chances of accessing university studies. Teachers also encouraged learners to study further so that they could improve their situations at their homes and this encouragement is similar to the parents' encouragement of improving their households. Again, it could be interpreted that the encouragement and support from the teachers, similar to that of the parents, is based on improving the learners' socio-economic status and circumstances (refer Section 3.6.1). Thus, the responses from the learners correspond with what the theoretical framework refers to as external factors that could influence their decision (positively) to continue with post-school studies.

Theme 2: Academic performance

A prospective student's academic performance is the foremost criteria that universities use to select which students will be accepted into their programmes (Chapman, 1981). Table 3.7 shows

that thirteen learners (46%) regarded academic performance as an important enabling factor. These were the learners who had an average of 60% in their Grade 11 final results. It also shows that learners associated improving their academic performance at school as a factor which would encourage them to attend university and enrol in the programmes of their choice. Therefore, the responses of these learners reflect that they recognised the importance of performing well academically in order to access higher education studies. This insight from the thirteen learners could be as a result of being aware that university admission requirements are quite stringent.

Performing well academically can have many benefits. The theoretical framework suggests that high academic performance is linked to learners' developing high aspirations to study further (refer Section 2.5.2.1). Similarly, Cosser and Du Toit (2002) found that Grade 12 learners who had high academic grades also had high intentions of attending university. The theoretical framework further suggests that learners who perform well academically are more likely to receive support from their schools and their teachers. In addition to the support and encouragement received from teachers, performing well academically could mean gaining acceptance into a university programmes and qualifying for a bursary, as five of the learners indicated in Table 3.6.

Moreover, the theoretical framework advocates that academic scores are predictors, not only of the choice learners make of studying further, but also which institution the learner will attend and which course they will enrol in (refer Section 2.5.2.1). McDonough (1997) made this point when he states that prospective students filter their college or university options through the lens of their academic achievement. Twenty-four learners (85%) indicated that they wanted to continue

with university studies and identified the study course of interest that they had. As Graph 3.1 reflects, the learners had a wide range of interests from Commerce, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering and Natural Sciences, with a strong interest in the fields of Social Work, Human Resources and Economics.

Theme 3: Having knowledge about admission requirements and being more exposed to the university environment

As discussed above, knowing that a good academic performance is important for access to a university degree is the first step in becoming familiar with the university environment. Being knowledgeable about the admission requirements and what university study required of prospective students are equally important (McGhie, 2012). Table 3.6 reflects that one learner indicated that “knowing the university requirement puts me aware, so I am motivated to work hard so that I meet the university requirements”. In response to the focus group question “*What are the things that would encourage you to pursue university studies?*” Table 3.7 shows that five learners spoke of “knowing more about choices so that I don’t drop out or lose interest” as an encouraging factor to pursue studies at a university. A follow-up question, *What would assist you to pursue university studies*” was asked for triangulation purposes and, as Table 3.8 indicates, the same five learners listed “having more information on what courses university offer so that I know where to apply to and what are the right requirements” as a factor that would assist them.

Two inferences could be drawn from these responses. Firstly, knowing the university admission requirements was important because it would help learners set the bar academically so that they knew what they should aim for to be eligible for access to a university course. Therefore, university requirements were seen by learners as an encouraging factor to pursue post-school

education. Secondly, the fact that the other twenty-four learners (85%) did not list knowing the requirements could mean that they did not think that it was important to know what the admission requirements were. If this inference is correct, it points to the fact that there might have been a lack of knowledge and information. Evidence for this inference could be found in the fact that, in the focus group discussions, the learners repeatedly mentioned needing to know what the university requirements were and what the university environment was like. Thus, most of the learners were not knowledgeable about what university study entails and this indicates that they might not have received adequate information from their school, or from the university's open days which they attended.

However, the teachers' responses reflect a different picture. Six questions were asked in the teachers' questionnaire to elicit the type of support Grade 12 learners received from the school that supported their transition to post-school opportunities (refer Table 3.8). The teachers' responses to the questions reflected that learners receive adequate support from different sources. According to two of the three teachers, the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum and the LO class provide information and guidelines that assist and guide learners in their choices. Their responses were:

- There is a chapter for careers in the Life Orientation whereby the teacher explains to the learners.
- Yes, they do career choices - LO class.

One of the two teachers reported that the Life Orientation teachers take a very active role in supporting their learners by exposing them to post-school institutions. This teacher said: "Teachers in Life Orientation take learners to institutions and guide them through". In addition, the teachers indicated that the school partners with other schools in the community to arrange for

universities to visit the high school to engage with learners. The third teacher, however, did not agree and said that learners did not attend open days. Her recommendation was for learners to attend and organise open days. This response from the one teacher contradicts the other two teachers' responses. Another measure of support teachers indicated was that the school invites their past learners to speak to the Grade 12 learners about their experiences at university.

Based on the learners responses, being knowledgeable about the university requirements encourages and motivates them to work harder academically because they were aware of what they were aiming for. This can be considered as an enabling factor, while the lack of this information that learners experience, can be considered an inhibiting factor. The teachers' responses give a sense that the school and teachers are attempting to provide information to the learners with regard to career and study opportunities. However, the fact that the learners wanted more information about university study (and with the majority of them (twenty-four) mentioning not knowing the admission requirements) indicates that the learners did not receive adequate information in the LO classes, which the teachers said was provided to them. Nor did they receive adequate information at the open days, which the teachers also said the learners attended. Not knowing what the admission requirements were and what was required of students could be regarded as an inhibiting factor because, as Bailey, Coetzee, Jones and Wickham (2008) advocates, such knowledge is important in learners' decision-making processes.

Theme 4: Socio-economic factors

The theoretical framework explains that learners' socio-economic status manifest itself in complex ways and influence their choices to pursue post-school education (refer Section 2.5.2.1).

The demographic information obtained from the learners revealed that the learners came from

homes that had a very low household income (refer Table 3.2). Fifteen learners (53%) reported a household income of between R1000.01 and R3000.00, and eleven learners (39%) reported that their families earned between R0.00 and R1000.00 per month. The household incomes reported by the learners correspond with the average income of R3 200.00 identified by the 2011 Census conducted in Philippi. This low income, thus, is indicative of households that are situated in township areas where most employment is within the informal sector or low skilled work (Census, 2011).

However, contrary to what Archer and Hutchings (2000) suggest, the learners viewed their financial status, which they experience in their home and see in their community, as an external motivating factor that encourages them to want to study further and earn a higher income to support their families. One learner said: “Where I live there is lack of financial support so I want to study further so that there will be financial support at home”. It seems as if most of the learners in this study recognised the prospect of studying further as an opportunity that they would have to earn a better income to support their families, as was discussed in Section 4.2 above.

As a result of the low income, learners feel obligated to get a better education to place themselves in an enhanced position to support their family members. As was discussed in Section 4.2, learners hold the belief that with a university education they will be more employable, and with a university qualification they will earn a higher income in relation to jobs obtained with just a Grade 12 qualification. In addition, Table 3.6 reflects that nineteen (68%) of the learners’ motivation to study is linked to a desire to earn a salary. Cosser and Du Toit (2002)

as mentioned earlier, identified in their study that the prospects of enhancing employability and earning higher income encouraged learners to pursue studies beyond Grade 12. Therefore, the need to earn money and support the family was an external motivating factor for the learners in this study to pursue post-school education and, as such, is regarded as an enabling factor.

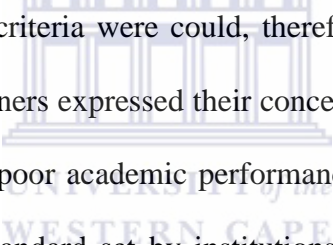
4.3.2 Inhibiting factors

Theme 1: Academic performance and university admission requirements

One of the aims in this study was to identify interventions that could address the factors that challenge learners' progression towards accessing post-school education. It was, therefore, important to ask the learner participants what they thought the factors were that could prevent them from studying further after they had completed Grade 12. In response to the question, *What would prevent you from pursuing university studies?* Graph 3.3 shows that one learner expressed a concern that he might fail Grade 12, while three learners indicated that they were concerned that they would not meet the admission requirements. All four of these learners were in the group that had an average between 40% and 50% in their Grade 11 results. Thus, one could infer that they knew that they were not performing to the level that was required by the university's admission criteria, as was mentioned by one of the teachers in the questionnaire. This teacher indicated in her response that some of the learners' marks were below the marks expected of them and that they might not meet the admission requirements of the university. Not passing Grade 12 well would automatically mean that the learners would not be able to access university studies.

It is generally known that, in order to gain entry to university, one must meet the university's admission criteria set by that specific institution. It is also important to be aware that the

requirements for entry differ between institutional types (university/university of technology), as well as programmes (degree/diploma) within these institutions. To gain access to university, Grade 12 learners need to obtain a university endorsement (Cossar & Du Toit, 2002). Once learners meet this requirement, they would have to meet the faculty (admission point score) and the subject requirements to be considered for a specific degree programme (EMS Undergraduate Calendar, 2014). From the responses in Table 3.7, only five learners seemed to be aware of the fact that they needed to know what the university admission criteria were. The other twenty-three learners did not mention anything about university requirements, which could indicate that they might not have been aware of that.



Not knowing what the admission criteria were could, therefore, be an inhibiting factor. In the focus group discussions, seven learners expressed their concern about not getting accepted into a university course because of their poor academic performance. They felt that they will not be able to meet the high academic standard set by institutions. As discussed under the enabling factors in 4.3.1 above, academic performance is used by learners as an indicator of whether they will be able to meet the university requirements and get accepted into university or not. Therefore, not meeting the admission requirements set by the university will mean that learners would not be accepted into the degree and diploma programmes on offer.

For most of the learners (eighteen which is 64%) not studying would mean finding employment so that they could work, and five learners indicated they would attend bridging programmes or courses that would allow them to re-write some of their Grade 12 subjects to improve their result in order to re-apply to university in the following year (refer Graph 3.4). Poor academic

performance could thus be a major stumbling block that will prevent learners from accessing their desired degree programmes at university.

Theme 2: Socio-economic conditions

As Table 3.2 shows and as discussed in Section 4.3.1 under Theme 4, the learners came from households whose income was very low. The theoretical framework explains that learners from financially disadvantaged background face a multitude of challenges when considering studying after Grade 12 (refer Section 2.5.2.1). Having a low income places a strain on the learner's decision to study further, as studying not only adds additional costs to the family's income (that is: paying for transport, registration and tuition) but it also removes or delays the family prospects of an additional source of income (the learner opts to study and not finding work immediately after Grade 12). A low household income status can affect the learner's decision in two ways. It could be a driving force for the learner to study and better him/herself, as was discussed under Section 4.2.1, or the result of the learner opting to find work and not pursuing higher education studies because there is no money to pay for further studies. As one learner responded: "No money to finance my studies" while seven learners indicating that they would not be able to study further because their families cannot afford it (refer Table 3.9).

In the literature reviewed under Section 2.5.2, economic conditions were presented as one of the models that dominates the discussion around college choice (Aamodt, 2001; Cosser and Du Toit, 2002; Ngcobo, 2009). According to Aamodt (2001), in the economic model, cost (direct and indirect - cost of tuition, cost of living, opportunity cost in terms of leaving home and friends) is a dominant factor. For the learners, in this instance, the cost of studying may negatively impact on the home, as an additional financial strain is placed on the family income which could result

in the immediate needs of the family not being met. As a consequence, despite the fact that most of the learners aspired to go to university, some might feel obligated to choose work over study, so that they can support their families.

Theme 3: Integration into the university environment

The integration of learners into the university's environment is an important factor, and failure to do so could become a barrier to successful learning, as Tinto (1975) advocates. As mentioned, learners responded both positively and negatively to the question asked in the focus group interviews, *What are your thoughts about university?* The negative views revealed learners' feelings of alienation, distance and disconnect with the university environment. The learners reported feelings of "not fitting in"; "feeling different"; being uncomfortable with speaking English; not meeting university academic standards; and feeling that they don't belong there (refer Table 3.10). The view of university being this foreign and distant place was also a common theme that kept occurring in the focus group discussions. These recurring themes are discussed under the four sub-themes below.

Sub-theme 3.1: Not fitting in academically

Based on the learners' (negative) responses, they regard university as a place to which they would not easily adjust because it was "different" (refer Graph 3.3, and Tables 3.4 and 3.9). The learners perceived university to be a place that would expect them to behave "differently". They should be clever, independent, have money, meet high standards set, and be able to assume the identity of a university student. The learners' concerns highlight a sense of anxiety and apprehension towards the university environment. This could be as a result of the fact that

learners do not see themselves as the “university type”. According to Archer and Hutchings (2000) and James (2002), the youth from affluent backgrounds view higher education as being vital, while the youth from less affluent backgrounds find it less important. James (2002) explains that the youth with low socio-economic status consider university courses less relevant and rewarding, as a result of their parents’ circumstances.

In addition, Archer and Hutchings (2000) and James (2002) are of the opinion that affluent learners are most likely to have the necessary social capital (educated parents, university going siblings and peers) to form an identity and association with university, while learners from poorer background do not possess this social capital. The comment by one learner in the focus group discussion that “University needs me to be independent – I need to cope without teachers like at my school” is an indication that the learner did not feel adequately prepared for university studies (Lewin and Mawoyo, 2014). This lack of preparedness can lead to a learner not being confident about doing well at university and, as a result, create a negative self-concept in relation to their university compatibility. Moreover, Bangeni and Kapp (2005) explain that learners coming into a new institutional discourse, such as a university, are required to act, think, and speak within institutional dialogues. In essence, what they are saying is that learners need to adapt to a university context and this includes the academic disciplines, where they are required to attain proficiency. The high expectation articulated by universities, might be very discouraging for a learner coming from a township high school where the academic grades are often not very good.

Sub-theme 3.2: Dress code at university:

In response to one of the questions asked in the focus group interviews, *What are your thoughts about university?* two learners said:

- I think university is for people who can afford [it]; not having better clothes would make me feel less”.
- I see my friends that go to university speaking differently, dressing and acting differently”

A few others in the focus group agreed with these learners’ remarks. Here again one could infer that learners had a certain perception of who was eligible for university study. Three issues could be inferred from the two responses: physical appearance (dress code), financial constraints, and self-worth. For example, within the schooling environment learners wear a school uniform. This uniform can be seen as representing a collective identity and creating a sense of belonging. At university there is no required uniform; the dress code is casual and students often wear branded clothing. Consequently, learners could feel “different” because their parents did not have the money to buy branded clothing for them (financial constraints because of coming from low socio-economic backgrounds) and that would prevent them from “fitting in” to the collective. In addition, if they do not dress according to the “dress code” and not “act” according to “the social behaviour acceptable for university students”, their peers might not what to be friends with them (Maunder, Cunliffe, Galvin, Mjali & Rogers, 2013) and this could affect their self-esteem and self-worth negatively. They could feel a sense of alienation, as Mann (2005) explains in her discussion about the factors that could impact students’ transition to the university’ environment; and they could experience the university as a foreign and unwelcoming place that is not “for them” which could become a real barrier in their adjustment to the university environment.

Sub-theme 3.3: Transition from high school to university

According to Bangeni and Kapp (2005) and Maunder et al. (2013), the transition process requires learners to adjust to university and this adjustment poses personal and academic challenges, as learners find themselves having to leave behind previous experiences and becoming someone new. What this implies is that the transition from high school to university requires learners to shake off being a learner within a school setting and adopt a student identity. From some of the responses in Table 3.4, one can see that these learners view university as a place of transition, where they change from one state to another, that is: changing from a high school learner to a university student and becoming more independent. Perceiving the university in this light is positive and could assist these learners with the successful integration to the university environment. However, from the discussion in the previous two sub-themes (not fitting in academically and dress code), the transition from high school to university could be an uphill battle for learners who experience the university as foreign and unwelcoming, or for learners who do not feel confident in their academic abilities. The discussion under the sub-theme about the dress code highlighted the fact that learners from low socio-economic backgrounds may be disadvantaged in more ways than one and, as a result, would not be able to successfully integrate into the university environment (both academically and socially), as Tinto (1975) explains should happen.

Sub-theme 3.4: English as a second or additional language

The dominant language of communication in the area of Phillipi is isiXhosa (Census, 2011). Learners, therefore, grow up in a predominately Xhosa-speaking community. The school that the learners in this study attended had isiXhosa as the language of communication, and English was regarded as the second, additional language (as the teachers indicated). The responses from

four learners in Table 3.10 show that they were afraid and worried about their ability to communicate in English.

The fact that IsiXhosa was the medium of teaching and learning at their high school explained learners fear and anxiety about speaking English. This was a concern for them because they knew the medium of teaching and learning is mainly English at university. Many researchers have already identified the learning challenges that students face when they have to learn and construct meaning of advanced knowledge at university (Gough, 1996; Louw, 2005; McGhie, 2012). Therefore, if English is not one's first language, and if you have studied in your own first language throughout your schooling career, adjusting to an English-only environment is a definite barrier that, severely, could inhibit learners' academic progress at university.



Theme 4: Socio-cultural factors

In the focus group discussion learners raised a concern that there would be conflict between themselves and their community. According to the learners, students who are at university think that they are better than their community and community members act differently towards students. In the focus groups some of the learners elaborated further by explaining that going to university would change them. Responses from 3 learners were:

- I feel that like I would be better than anyone in my community or they will see me as better than them.
- It seems when we talk about university, it is as if we are thinking we are better or more clever than any student in my class.
- It feels sometimes like university students think they are better.

The learner's response highlights two things. On the one hand, the learners perceived that their association with the university would lead them to believe that they were better than their community. On the other hand, the learners saw how the community treats learners once they are attending university. Bangeni and Kapp (2005) explain that, in navigating the spaces between home and university, students face immense challenges as they need to assimilate to the university environment and adopt a certain set of being and doings, while at the same time remaining in sync with their home community. It could be inferred, thus, that the students are caught in the middle – they want to go to university, but they are afraid that, by going, they will be alienated from their home community. This issue, therefore, could become an inhibiting factor by negatively impacting the learners' decision to continue with university studies.

4.4 HOW COULD THE BARRIERS THAT DISCOURAGE LEARNERS FROM TRANSITIONING TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION BE ADDRESSED AND THE ENABLING FACTORS PROMOTED?

The above section identified and discussed the enabling factors and the barriers from the data collected. This section addresses ways in which the barriers identified could be overcome and the enabling factors be promoted.

4.4.1 Overcoming the barriers identified in the previous section

Four themes were identified as factors that could inhibit the learners' transition from high school to post-school education, namely academic performance and university admission requirements; socio-economic conditions; integration into the university environment; and socio-cultural factors. These themes are discussed below.

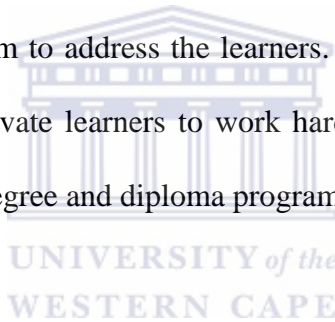
Theme 1: Academic performance and university admission requirements

Two issues were discussed under this theme. Firstly, the fact that some learners were concerned that they were not performing academically according to the admission criteria for university admission and, secondly, the fact that some learners were not aware what the admission requirements of university entrance were. To address the learner's academic performance and to improve their grades, the principal and Grade 12 teachers could identify the learners and offer extra academic support classes after school in the subject areas that needed more attention. If the school does not have the necessary resources to provide learners with extra academic support classes, the school could form working agreements with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that offer tutoring and extra support to learners in their area. In addition, the learners could be paired with strong performing learners to assist them further. Collaborative learning is a very important aspect of successful learning, as identified by Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates (2005).

Furthermore, knowledge about the university admission requirements and university study was identified as very important. Therefore, it is imperative to make the learners aware of the university's admission requirements for the courses they are interested in. This should happen as early on as Grade 10. The school should collaborate with universities and invite them to the school to host exhibitions on a regular basis. Once learners have identified the degree and diploma programmes and their admission requirements in Grade 10, class teachers should monitor the learners' academic progress. Where learners are falling behind the necessary requirements, they should be directed to the after-school academic support classes or the NGOs' tutoring clubs, as mentioned above.

Theme 2: Socio-economic conditions

There was only one factor discussed under this theme - the students' low family income status and the consequence that learners would not be able to attend a university but would have to find employment to help support their families. A suggestion to overcome this barrier could be that the school collaborates with the Department of Higher Education and Training, so that they could come to the school and explain to the learners how the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) works and that the scheme was instituted by the national government to provide financial assistance to all learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, the school could identify other companies and institutions that offer bursaries to strong performing learners and invite them to address the learners. Knowing beforehand that financial assistance is available would motivate learners to work harder in order to meet the admission requirements for their respective degree and diploma programmes.



Theme 3: Integration into the university environment

Four sub-themes were discussed under this theme, namely: not fitting in academically; dress code at university; transition from high school to university; and English as a second or additional language. Learners expressed various emotions about their sense of self and place at university, such as feelings of not belonging, of unfamiliarity, of learner versus student identity, and of not meeting the perceived academic expectation set by institutions. This sense of not fitting in academically can be overcome in two ways. From a school perspective, it would be beneficial for the school to organise events where previous learners, studying at universities, engage learners from Grade 10 onwards and sharing their experiences of university. This engagement could take the form of mentorships. Universities could also support the school by

having a peer mentorship programme where students from similar backgrounds engage and work with the learners in Grade 12. By having such engagements, learners will connect with their student peers and be encouraged to go to university.

The dress code was identified by learners as something that would hinder their social integration into the university environment because they did not have the financial means to buy expensive clothes and “fit in”, and, as a result, it could affect their self-esteem and self-worth. This is a very sensitive issue, as making friends and belonging to a group is very important for learners who come to university fresh from school (McGhie, 2012). Learners should be encouraged and motivated by the school, their families and the community to look beyond clothing and focus on their goals and objectives once they are at university.

The transition from high school to university represented a scary and unknown experience for the learners. To support learners' transition, universities host student orientation programmes in the first few weeks at the start of the academic year. The orientation is used to familiarise new students with the campus environment and orient them with regard to how the university functions and what are required of them. Based on the needs and concerns raised by learners in this study, the suggestion is that universities consider pre-university orientation programmes during the learners' Grade 12 year that include introducing them to a buddy system and peer mentoring programmes. Pre-university orientation could take different forms, such as having campus tours which expose learners to the different faculties, residences, the library and the extramural activities. The buddy system and peer mentoring programme could be used to pair learners with students who are already studying during the course of the learners' Grade 12 year. Friendships would be formed and students can induct the learners into the university environment, facilitating the transition once the learners start university.

Lastly, some learners expressed anxiety and fear regarding English as the medium of instruction at university. To assist learners to become proficient in English at university, the Department of Education should consider adding academic literacy courses, in conjunction with the language learning areas, as part of the school curriculum from Grade 10 to Grade 12. The academic literacy content should focus on teaching learners the academic skills required at university for writing and communicating in English. Likewise, in the buddy and peer mentoring programmes, the learners could practice speaking and conversing with their buddies in English. In this way, the learners would become comfortable speaking in English, with their English competencies gradually developing and their confidence levels increasing.

Theme 4: Socio-cultural factors

The socio-cultural factor related to learners' concern that, attending university, would change them to such an extent that they would no longer be accepted by their community. A suggestion on how this inhibiting factor could be overcome is that the school should work closely with the parents and members of the community, involving them more in what happens in the school. The school should play an important role in educating the parents and the community, so that they could see the value of their children attending university. If the community understands and realises the value of becoming educated, hopefully, they would change their attitude and support the students, instead of alienating them.

4.4.2 Suggestions on how the enabling factors could be promoted

Similar to the inhibiting factors, four themes were identified as enabling factors, namely support and encouragement from family members, friends and teachers; academic performance and university admission requirements; having knowledge about university study and being more exposed to the university environment; and socio-economic factors. Each theme is discussed below.

Theme 1: Support and encouragement from family members, friends and teachers

Three sub-themes were identified and discussed under this theme. These were support and encouragement received from family members, friends and teachers. The support and encouragement provided by these groups should continue and it is suggested that it be extended to the community, as well. If the community members become involved in the school and start to know the learners and understand the value of getting an education, they would encourage and motivate the learners to work harder, in order to excel and make their communities proud of them.

Theme 2: Academic performance and university admission requirements

The issues discussed under this theme were having a strong academic background and being knowledgeable about the university admission requirements. Learners recognised the importance of performing well academically and being aware of the university's admission requirements. If the suggestions made under the inhibiting factors are implemented by the school, the learners who were not performing well would receive the necessary support and, hopefully, perform better academically. In addition, having regular exhibitions and being exposed to the university

more often, will provide the learners early on with the necessary knowledge about the university admission requirements for the different degree and diploma programmes.

Theme 3: Having knowledge about university study and being more exposed to the university environment

Two issues were discussed under this theme, that of being knowledgeable about university study and being exposed to the university environment. If the suggestions in the previous section, under the inhibiting factors, are implemented, especially the buddy system and peer mentoring, the learners would become knowledgeable about what they could expect from the university and from themselves. They will also become familiar with the university environment and that will assist with their transition once they start their university studies.

Theme 4: Socio-economic factors

Again, two issues were discussed under this theme - low family income, and a need to earn money and support the family. As a result of their low household incomes, learners regarded it as their responsibility to support their families, and going to university was seen as an opportunity that would lead to a good paying job. A suggestion is that more funding should be provided to the school, so that the school could appoint a career guidance counsellor to assist the learners in making the right career choices. It is important that learners are aware of what they want to study and its relation to their career and job prospects. Not having working experience, it may be advisable for learners, who have the responsibility of providing for their family financially, to be guided to a university of technology that offers practical programmes that would make finding a job easier after they have graduated. It is also suggested that learners be matched with universities where, for example, nursing and teaching qualifications are offered, also making

employment opportunities more likely. This concludes the discussion and interpretation of the data analysed.

4.5 SYNTHESIS OF ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of the data in the preceding sections, according to the themes and sub-themes, established that the factors identified in the theoretical framework were evident in the participants' responses. The first observation is the learners' high aspirations for pursuing university studies. Twenty-seven (96%) learners felt that pursuing university studies was the best option for them because they were of the opinion that a university education would lead to better employment prospects and earning potential. Only one learner indicated that a FET College was a better option because it would equip her with skills that would make her more employable.

The second observation is the fact that most of the learners were able to identify the fields they would want to study, with their choices covering a wide range of disciplines, such as Commerce, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering and Natural Sciences, with a strong interest in the fields of Social Work, Human Resources and Economics.

The third observation is the fact that the learners' overwhelming response to pursue higher education studies after Grade 12 contradicted the literature's view that learners from low socio-economic backgrounds would be less likely to proceed to university. It was argued that the "learners' background and financial status" was an external motivating factor because they viewed going to university as an opportunity that would enable them to improve the quality of

their lives and those of their families. Only a few learners were internally motivated to pursue higher education to achieve their goals and objectives.

Observation number four relates to the fact that some of the learners regarded the university admission requirements as a benchmark and motivating factor for improving their academic performance at school. It was highlighted that being knowledgeable about the admission requirements was an important enabling factor.

Observation number five is the fact that more than half of the learners were not aware of the admission requirements, ascribed to a lack of knowledge and information. It was identified as a potential barrier to learners accessing higher education studies.

Observation number six was the fact that the teachers indicated that the learners were exposed to information about the university through the provision of exhibitions, open days and the Life Orientation curriculum, but the learners' responses indicated that this was not the case.

Observation number seven relates to the identification of enabling factors that positively could influence the learners' decision to continue with higher education studies. Four factors were identified: support and encouragement received from family members, friends and teachers; improving academic performance at school and knowing what the university admission requirements are; having knowledge about university study and being more exposed to the university environment; and socio-economic factors which served as external motivating factors for the learners wanting to pursue university studies, so that they could escape from their socio-economic circumstances and provide a better life for their families.

Observation number eight relates to the identification of four inhibiting factors which could negatively influence the learners' decision to go to university. These were academic performance and university admission requirements; socio-economic conditions; integration into the university environment; and socio-cultural factors. Two factors were identified under the first inhibiting factor - some learners were concerned that they were not performing academically according to the admission criteria for university admission, and some learners were not aware of what the admission requirements of university entrance were.

One factor was identified under the socio-economic conditions theme which was the students' low family income status and the consequence thereof - that the learners would not be able to attend a university but would have to find employment to help support their families.

Four factors were identified under the integration into the university environment, which were not fitting in academically (the high standard required at university); dress code at university (which included not being able to buy branded clothing and, thus, not fitting in due to a lack of financial means, and as a result, developing low self-esteem and self-concept); the transition from school to university; and being afraid to study in English at university.

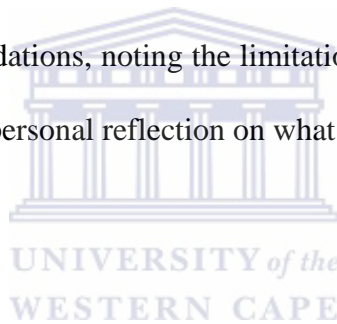
The social cultural factors related to learners' concern that attending university would change them to such an extent that they would no longer be accepted by their community. These factors were not included in the theoretical framework and, as such, are new factors.

The last observation relates to the suggestions that were made to overcome the inhibiting factors and to promote the enabling factors. These suggestions are further elaborated on in Chapter 5.

To conclude, the theoretical framework used for this study was based on Chapman's Model of factors that influence students' decisions to continue with college/university study after

completing high school. According to Chapman (1981), to understand a student's choice, it is necessary to take into account both the background and current characteristics of the student and that of the college or university. These characteristics include various aspects of the prospective student and information about the college/higher education institution. In the analysis of the research participants' responses, learners aspirations, the influence of significant others, socio-economic conditions, learners' academic performance, lacking finances to pay for studies, and being knowledgeable about university requirements emerged as factors that could either positively or negatively influence the learners' choices to study further.

I now move on to the final chapter, Chapter 5, in which I draw the study to a close by presenting the findings, proposing recommendations, noting the limitations, and identifying possibilities for future research. I conclude with a personal reflection on what the study meant to me.



CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the findings from the previous chapter are synthesised in order to respond to the aim and objective of the study and the research questions. Thereafter, the findings are related to the literature and the theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter Two, in order to ascertain whether the study achieved its aim and objective. Based on the findings, recommendations are proposed for the families and the community, the school and educators, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, higher education institutions, non-profit organisations, and companies and other institutions. The chapter concludes with the noting of the limitations of the study, some suggestions on future research, and a personal reflection of my experiences as a novice researcher

5.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study, as described in Section 1.3, was to investigate and identify factors that could facilitate the successful transition of Grade 12 learners to post-school education. In addition, the study aimed to identify interventions that could address the challenges that could prevent the learners from accessing post-school education.

The objective of the study was to make recommendations based on the findings of the research data that could assist the different role players on how best to facilitate, guide and support high school learners' post-school educational choices. It was argued that knowledge of the factors that facilitate learners to embark on post-school education would enable more learners to access

higher education and, in so doing, increase the participation rates of African and coloured youth at university.

5.3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

To realise the aim and achieve the objectives of this study, the main research question was:

What are the enabling factors that could successfully facilitate Grade 12 learners' transition to post-school education?

Three sub-questions were formulated to unpack the main research questions. These questions were:

1. How do learners view post-school education and its role in realising their career aspirations?
2. What are the enabling or inhibiting factors that influence the decision-making process of high school learners in transitioning to post-school education?
3. How could the barriers that discourage learners from transitioning to post-school education be addressed and the enabling factors promoted?

These questions were used as a guide in the data collection process and the analysis of the data.

The learners and educators' responses were comprehensively analysed in Chapter 3 and further discussed and interpreted in Chapter 4, followed by a synthesis of the findings.

5.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The synthesis in Section 4.5 identified eleven findings. These are:

Finding One

The learners expressed high aspirations to further their studies after they completed Grade 12. Their aspirations were driven mostly by the belief that university education would enable them to change their socio-economic conditions and improve their lives and that of their families. Thus, they had more external motivational factors than internal ones as reasons why they wanted to continue with post-school education.

Finding Two

Learners were able to identify their study choices which covered a wide range of disciplines with a strong interest for the fields of Social Work, Human Resources and Economics.

Finding Three

Learners' overwhelming response to pursue higher education studies after Grade 12 contradicted the literature's view that learner from low socio-economic backgrounds would be less likely to proceed to university studies.

Finding Four

University admission requirements are regarded as a benchmark and motivating factor for improving their academic performance at school. Knowing the university requirements was identified as an important enabling factor.

Finding Five

More than half of the learners expressed a lack the knowledge and awareness of the admission requirements. It was identified as a potential barrier to the learners' accessing higher education studies.

Finding Six

The educators indicated that the learners were exposed to information about the university through the provision of exhibitions, open days and in the Life Orientation curriculum, but, as the learners' responses indicated this was not the case, and this issue was regarded a potential barrier.

Finding Seven

Four factors were identified as enabling factors that positively could influence the learners' decision to continue with higher education studies. These were:

- support and encouragement received from family members, friends and teachers;
- improving academic performance at school and knowing what the university admission requirements are;
- having knowledge about university study and being more exposed to the university environment; and
- socio-economic factors which served as external motivating factors for the learners wanting to pursue university studies, so that they could escape from their circumstances and provide a better life for their families.

Finding Eight

Four factors were identified as barriers which negatively could impact the learners' decision to go to university. These factors were:

- poor academic performance and university admission requirements;
- socio-economic conditions;
- integration into the university environment; and
- socio-cultural factors.

Finding Nine

New factors were identified under the integration of students into the university environment theme and the socio-cultural factors theme. These are:

- the fact that learners regarded knowledge about university study and being more exposed to the university environment as having a positive impact on their decision to pursue further studies;
- the dress code at university as having a negative impact; and
- non-acceptance by the community if one attends university also as having a negative impact on their decision to further their studies.

Finding Ten

Suggestions were made on how to overcome the barriers to the learners' transition to post-school studies. These were - the provision of:

- extra support classes in the subject areas where learners were performing poorly; liaison between the school and NGOs to offer tutoring and additional support, and pairing weaker learners with stronger ones;
- sufficient information, on an on-going basis through career guidance, on the university admission requirements of courses that learners are interested in, collaboration with universities, and through monitoring the learners' academic progress, so that early intervention could take place when academic support is needed;
- adequate information on the availability of financial assistance provided by the Department of Education, and bursaries and scholarships provided by companies and other institutions;
- Role models in the form of previous learners who could assist learners with their integration challenges, the school to liaise with universities in order to arrange pre-orientation programmes, and introducing a buddy system and mentoring to learners during the course of their Grade 12 year;
- academic literacy courses as part of the learners' language learning areas from Grade 10 onwards in order to prepare the learners on how to read and write for academic purposes, and that the learners should be encouraged to practise their verbal communication skills with their buddies and mentors in order to overcome the English language barrier; and
- Lastly, it was suggested that the school should play an important role in educating the parents and the community so that they could see the value of their children attending university, and be involved in school activities in order to overcome the socio-cultural barrier of the community not accepting learners who go to university.

Finding eleven

This finding relates to the suggestions that were made on how to strengthen the enabling factors. Suggestions made were – that:

- the families, friends and educators should continue to provide support to the learners, and that the community should be encouraged to support the learners,
- the suggestions under the barriers of poor academic performance be implemented because the extra support classes would improve the learners' academic performance and, thereby, strengthen the learners' chances of university admission;
- the suggestions under the knowledge and information barrier be implemented because it will help the learners to be knowledgeable about the university admission requirements and the university environment; and
- learners who need to find employment soon after they have completed Grade 12, be directed to apply to universities of technology because their courses have practical components; and that learners be guided to degree programmes that provide one with more employment opportunities, such as Nursing and Education.

5.5 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS PER SUB-QUESTION

The above findings are now interpreted in relation to the sub-questions to determine if the study attained its objectives.

5.5.1 Sub-question 1: How do learners view post-school education and its role in realising their career aspirations?

Findings one, two and three provide answers to this sub-question. These findings showed that learners expressed positive views about university and its ability to enable them to change their lives. This view was expressed by learners in two ways. Firstly, they expressed high aspirations for pursuing university studies; and, secondly, they held the university in high regard, based on a strong belief that going to university would provide them with prospects of better employment, skills and resources, thus, affording them the opportunity to improve their socio-economic conditions. As discussed in the theoretical framework, high aspirations for higher education

studies is a pre-condition for learners wanting to pursue and access university studies, which most of the learners in this study displayed.

5.5.2 Sub-question 2: What are the enabling or inhibiting factors that influence the decision-making process of high school learners in transitioning to post-school education?

Enabling factors

Findings number four and seven answer this sub-question. The learners reported on four factors as having a positive impact on their decision to pursue university studies. Firstly, support and encouragement from family members, peers and teachers was identified by most of the learners as a key factor that influences their decision of pursuing studies at university. This view from the learners confirms the literature covered in Section 2.5.1 and the theoretical framework. The analyses of the responses, however, did show that family members' support was more influential than teachers and peers. Learners regarded their families as an important influencer, with the analysis revealing that learners felt like that because of their poor financial backgrounds and wanting to lift their families out of poverty and improve their lives.

Improving academic performance at school and knowing what the university admission requirements were was another important factor that often surfaced in the learners' responses. For the learners, academic performance and knowing the university admission requirements were benchmarks for applying and being accepted by the university. The literature discussed in Section 2.5.1 highlighted the importance of academic performance, while the theoretical framework explained that good academic performance is an indicator of high school learners' aspirations for university studies.

Furthermore, learners regarded knowledge of university study and being more exposed to the university environment as having a positive impact on their decision to pursue further studies. This is a factor that was not revealed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and, therefore, could be regarded as new knowledge. For the learners, exposure to the university environment would give them a better understanding of what to expect and what the university environment would be like. This type of exposure can be regarded as vital, and the inference was drawn that many learners identified this as important and helping them form realistic expectations of university.

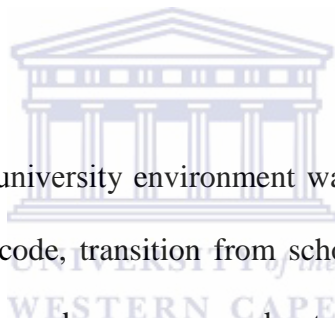
The last factor, socio-economic factors, served as an external motivating factor for learners to pursue further studies. The prospects of entering university and gaining a university education meant the opportunity to eventually gain access to a good job with a good salary which would increase their family's household income and improve their living conditions. The responses from the learners showed that they regarded their poor financial circumstances as a motivating factor. The literature, however, pointed out that learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to pursue university studies.

Inhibiting factors

Findings five, six and eight outline the inhibiting factors. The learners reported on four factors as inhibiting factors which, negatively, could impact their decisions to pursue post-school studies. Firstly, academic performance and university admission requirements were regarded as major stumbling blocks by one educator and some of the learners. Learners were of the view that universities have high academic requirements and that they would not be able to meet them with their poor academic results. It was interesting that a teacher also highlighted learners' poor

academic performance which could result in the learners not being accepted for post-school studies. The learners' concerns were valid as academic performance in Grade 12 is the foremost criteria that universities use to admit students into the various degree programmes.

Learners' poor socio-economic backgrounds was regarded as a hindrance to further study because many of the learners had to consider working instead because they have to support their families financially and increase their household income. The responses from the learners, however, showed that seeking employment was considered as an option only as a result of not gaining access to university studies and not having the finances to pay the fees charged by universities.



The learners' integration into the university environment was also identified as a barrier. Here not fitting in academically, dress code, transition from school to university, and English as a second or additional language emerged as concerns about university, and forming a negative perception for learners of the university environment. The dress code factor was not discussed in the literature reviewed and is considered as new knowledge. Each of these factors relates to learners feeling that they were not suited for university study and did not belong at university. These views expressed by learners are concerning, as they can lead to learners deciding not to apply to university or if they do and eventually enroll, they may drop out because they lack a sense of belonging.

Lastly, the socio-cultural factor that was identified as a potential inhibiting factor related to the learners' concern that attending university would change them to such an extent that they would

no longer be accepted by their community. This factor was also not discussed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and is regarded as new knowledge - which is the contribution this study makes to the body of knowledge. These factors, that the learners reported on, apart from the new factors, were in line with the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

5.5.3 Sub-question 3: How could the barriers that discourage learners from transitioning to post-school education be addressed and the enabling factors promoted?

Findings number ten and eleven provided answers to this sub-question. These findings made suggestions on how the inhibiting factors could be overcome, and how the enabling factors could be enhanced. The importance of these findings can be found in the fact that it requires the cooperation of all the different role players in the learning process. It asked for the involvement of the learners' parents, friends and educators, the community in which the learners live, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, the higher education institutions, NGOs and other companies and institutions. These findings demonstrate that the learning process is socially constructed, and that the learners' successful transition from high school to post-school studies will only be possible when all the role players get involved, supporting, encouraging, guiding and motivating the learners (McGhie, 2012). These findings echo the theoretical framework's stance – that the decision to continue with post-school studies is a complex and dynamic process which involves both students' characteristics, and external factors, while the interplay among these factors influence and shape learners' behaviour (Chapman, 1981). The findings in this study have revealed that it could influence the learners' decision in a positive or a negative way to continue with higher education after the successful completion of Grade 12.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

5.6.1 For the parents and the community

5.6.1.1 Providing further support to learners

As learners in this study highlighted the important role that their parents play in influencing their decision to pursue university studies, it is recommended that the parents continue to support and be more involved in their children's school activities and their academic progress. Through encouragement and motivation, parents are able to inspire learners to work hard, so that they could increase their chances of going to university.

In addition, the learners revealed the important role that the community plays in their lives. Without the support of the community, learners experienced tension, and it is recommended, therefore, that the community becomes more involved with the learners, their parents and school activities, so that they could understand and appreciate the value of education. If this could happen, the community would support and encourage the learners, and there may not be any tension or unease on the part of the learners to continue to university.

5.6.1.2 Attending Community Career Expo's

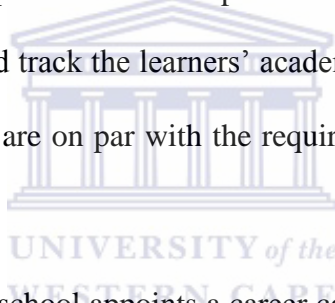
It is recommended that parents and community members be invited to career exhibitions that take place within their communities. If parents and community members attend these events, it would allow them to become more informed about the value of higher education and the opportunities which universities offer to learners. Being knowledgeable about what university studies are about and the prospects it could bring with regard to the overall improvement of the

community, parents and community members would further support and encourage learners at high school to work hard and excel in their studies.

5.6.2 For the school and educators

5.6.2.1 Establish an academic support structure at the school

One educator and many of the learners commented on concerns about poor academic performance and how this could negatively impact on the Grade 12 learners' motivation and intention to apply to university. It is recommended, therefore, that the school and teachers consider putting an academic support structure in place for all learners in the school. Such a support structure could monitor and track the learners' academic performance, with the intention of evaluating whether the learners are on par with the requirements needed to access university studies.



It is further recommended that the school appoints a career counsellor who could be in charge of the academic support structure, open a portfolio for each learner, and records their academic progress. With such a support system in place, the counsellor, together with the educators, would be able to identify learners who are not on track, so that early interventions, such as extra academic support classes and individual tutoring, could be arranged for them.

5.6.2.2 Hosting Career Exhibitions

As reported in the study, high schools in the community organise career exhibitions. It is recommended that the schools continue with this practice and that the exhibitions are organised to take place throughout the year at different schools in the community. Getting higher education institutions to visit township communities will bridge the gap that exists between universities and

communities. The benefit in doing this is twofold. The learners will receive the necessary information about the admission requirements, the university environment and knowing what to expect once they are at university, while the communities will become knowledgeable about what universities do and, hopefully, begin to appreciate the value of a higher education qualification. If this could happen, the communities will support families and their children, and the tension, that was mentioned earlier, would be relieved.

5.6.2.3 Building a career resource corner

With learners repeatedly highlighting the need to be aware of university requirements, and lacking this information, it is recommended that the school establish a Career Resource Corner. Such a corner could be situated in the school library or in one of the classrooms. Important information that learners need to know about higher education studies should be provided, they should have easy access to the information at all times, and encouraged to visit the corner on a regular basis. The Life Orientation educators could take responsibility for this corner (in cooperation with the counsellor) since the curriculum includes study and career information that should be made available to learners. The information should be updated on a regular basis and the content supplemented. Using these strategies, more learners would become knowledgeable about university studies, what their options are, and what type of funding opportunities are available.

5.6.2.4 Addressing university English skills

To ensure that prospective university students are better prepared and confident about communicating in academic English at university, it is recommended that Academic Literacy for University should be introduced as part of the school's language curriculum from Grade 10 to

Grade 12. This will ensure that learners who are English second or additional language speakers are better equipped to communicate and write in English, which would aid in their integration into university studies and, thereby, reduce prospective student anxieties around English as the medium of instruction at university level.

5.6.3 For the Department of Basic Education (DoE)

Given the recommendations made in 5.6.2 above, it is recommended that the Department of Basic Education provides more funds and resources to all schools in low income communities in order for the schools to put an academic support structure in place, to establish a career resource corner, to appoint career guidance counsellors, and to expand the Life Orientation curriculum. If this could happen, schools would be able to provide academic support to learners who are struggling academically, as well as provide much needed information and knowledge to all learners, parents and the communities about university admission criteria, courses/programmes and general university requirements.

5.6.4 For the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

Given the immense need for learners to access post-school education, it is recommended that the Department of Higher Education and Basic Education work together. The two departments seem to work in silos, even though they have the same objective of improving and educating the South African population. The Department of Higher Education's Career Advice Services need to become more involved in providing schools with the necessary career-related resources and capacity to guide learners' university choices and applications. The department also needs to make more funds and resources available to schools in low income communities, as well as

adopting a more pro-active role in preparing learners for university study so that, once learners are admitted, they are better equipped to cope with the demands of university life

5.6.5 For higher education institutions

5.6.5.1 Student recruitment and communication strategy

It is recommended that the university's student recruitment departments should consider running open days at township high schools or community centres to ensure that more learners are able to access study-related information. By engaging learners in their community, universities give family and community members the opportunity to engage with more information about universities and the opportunities they offer. Having university representatives in communities not only brings universities closer to the people, but also provides the potential to break down the perception that universities exist outside of poor communities as unreachable and untouchable elite institutions. Bridging this divide will enhance learners' knowledge about universities and their requirements, as well as addressing the social-cultural concerns raised by learners.

In addition, it is recommended that universities develop their faculty brochures and admission requirements in isiXhosa, as well. As the study has shown, English is a second or additional language for many learners in township schools and, as such, is a language barrier. Having brochures in isiXhosa would aid in the learners' understanding of the information, and reduce the learners' perception that they do not belong at university.

5.6.5.2 Pre-university orientation

It is recommended that universities introduce pre-university orientation days for prospective applicants at least twice a year. Pre-university orientation can take the form of campus, library and residential tours; attendance of lectures and tutorials; extramural activities offered by the university; and engaging with different faculties and university staff. This will ensure that learners are more knowledgeable about university studies and are exposed to the university culture which could assist learners in identifying and assimilating into the university environment.

5.6.5.3 Peer mentoring and buddy system

It would be valuable for university to consider peer mentoring and buddy systems where university students are paired with Grade 12 learners. Through this mentorship, Grade 12 learners will gain insight into their peers' experiences of university, and how they experience their transition to university. They could also discuss different topics relating to dress code, academic expectations, communicating in English, and the social environment on campus. Through engaging with their peers in this way, learners could gain a better understanding of the university environment and it could assist them to overcome their concerns. It could also aid learners to build social networks which would be of benefit once they transition to university. More importantly, engaging with peers who come from similar background can motivate learners and provide learners with valuable insight into navigating challenges, such as financial and socio-cultural factors.

5.6.6 For Non-governmental organisations

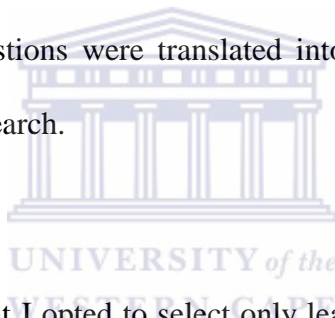
Non-government organisations have a very important role to play in assisting schools with the provision of academic support to Grade 12 learners. It is recommended, thus, that these organisations become more involved in the schools and establish working relationships with them. In this way, they could become a resource which the schools could use to assist with the provision of individual tutoring and mentoring; career guidance information; and assisting learners with the completion of the necessary application documents that are required by universities.

5.6.7 For companies and other institutions

Given that not all learners will progress to university, it is recommended that consideration be given to other opportunities that would enable learners to access meaningful skills training and employment. Learnerships and apprenticeships, which are often offered by private corporates, are ways of ensuring that learners enter useful pathways that would give them the platform to earn an income to support their families. The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are important in this regard, as they play a key role in getting different sectors of business to offer learnership and apprenticeship opportunities, as well as bursaries and loans to prospective students. They should become more involved in schools in low income communities to provide the services and financial support that they can offer learners and their families.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

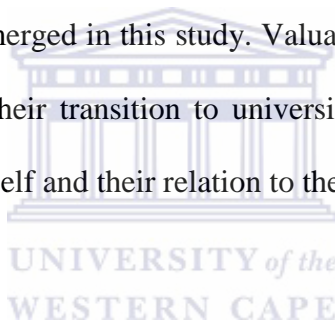
This study set out to investigate and identify factors that could facilitate the successful transition of Grade 12 learners to post-school education. It can be said that this objective has been successfully achieved. However, one important limitation of this study was the issue of English in the interview discussions. Even though the school selected was an English medium school, most of the learners spoke isiXhosa and were much more comfortable speaking and expressing themselves in this language because the school was in a predominately isiXhosa-speaking community. They often asked their friends what certain English words meant, so that they could articulate their thoughts better to me in the focus group discussions. It was not a problem in the questionnaire because all the questions were translated into IsiXhosa. This is something that needs to be addressed in future research.



Another limitation was the fact that I opted to select only learners who had an average between 40% and 60%. Selecting learners who had an average of 39% and below could have provided more insights into what the reasons were for their performance in order to identify their challenges, as well as provide suggestions and recommendations on how these could have been resolved or prevented. Despite the limitations, the study provides much needed insights into what the factors were that, potentially, could influence the learners' decision-making processes at High School X.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the low participation rate of black learners in higher education, as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, and the gap that exists between high school and higher education, more research needs to be conducted on high school learners' pre-university factors and how these impact on their academic performance. The findings showed that most of the learners in this study had a lack of information and did not know what the universities' admission requirements were. It is recommended, therefore, that research be conducted to evaluate and determine the relevance of the career section in the Life Orientation curriculum and if it adequately provides learners with career and study-related information. Lastly, another area of interest for future research relates to the socio-cultural factors that emerged in this study. Valuable insight can be drawn from first-year or second-year students on their transition to university and how becoming a university student has affected their sense of self and their relation to their home community.



5.9 FINAL REFLECTION

Through this research process, I have developed a better understanding of the challenges high school learners encounter. I gained invaluable insight into the immense pressure these adolescents face in having to carry the huge responsibility of freeing their families from poverty by continuing and educating themselves. Discovering these issues was intense and emotional, as I cannot imagine the immense disappointment learners must feel when they are not able to study further or contribute significantly towards their family income to lift them out of poverty. Thus, the research process was very challenging. It stretched my understanding and taught me to become more critical and appreciative of the issues related to supporting learners' transition from high school to university studies.

But the research journey was also inspiring and exciting, as I enjoyed engaging in the literature and spending time with the learners in the focus group interviews. It has really affirmed for me that there is a great need for supporting and assisting learners in making their study choices, but, more importantly, is actually preparing Grade 12 learners for this transition to university, so that they are able to succeed once they enter university.

It is my hope that my research will provide much needed information that can assist all the role players identified to better understand and provide for the needs of learners who come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Enabling and inhibiting factors for the learners who participated in this study were identified, and suggestions and recommendations were made. If these suggestions and recommendations could be implemented and the learners receive the necessary support, guidance and assistance, more learners would qualify to be admitted to university degrees and diplomas and, as a result, the participation rates of black youth in higher education will increase, more learners will rise above their circumstances, and have a better and prosperous future!

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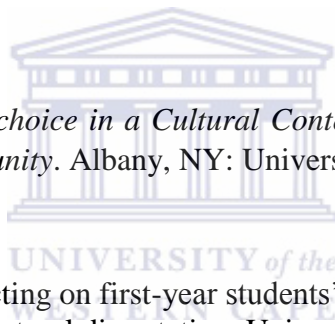
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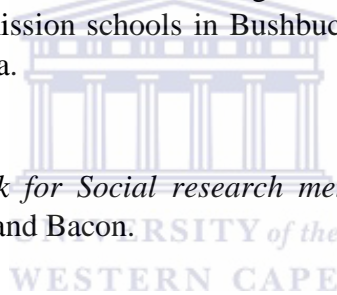
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UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

7 February 2014

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:
Ms J Jansen (Institute for Social Development)

Research Project: Factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-secondary education: The case of Zisukhanyo High School in Phillipi

Registration no: 13/10/13

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Josias'.

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

ADDENDUM 1 b) Permission Letter from Principal

Date: 17 October 2014

Dear Janine

This serves to confirm acceptance of your request to conduct research amongst our Grade 12 learners. As a school, we feel that the findings of your research will assist us in preparing our learners for post-secondary school phase.

Kind regards

Yours in quality education


B. FATYELA
PRINCIPAL



Addendum 2a) Information sheet for Teachers



Information sheet for Teachers

University of the Western Cape

Dear participant

My name is Janine Jansen, student number 2453041. I am a registered Masters' student at UWC.

The title of my thesis is: An investigation into factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education: The Case of High X in Philippi

Please take time to read through this information sheet carefully in order for you to be knowledgeable about what is required of you as a research participant in this study.

As a participant who gave consent of your participation in this study, you will be required to:

1. Complete a questionnaire (20 minutes) in which you will be asked different questions with the aim of reflecting on your own experiences and views as an educator in so far as factors which support learners' transition from high school to post-school education are concerned.

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and your responses will be treated as confidential. It will assist me to achieve the objective of the study which is to identify the factors that inhibit learners from low socio-economic backgrounds to accessing higher education and find solutions or ways in which they could be overcome and/ or prevented in order for more learners to access higher education successfully.

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact me on 0837511314 or via e-mail at janinec.jansen@gmail.com.

You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Venicia McGhie at vfmcghie@uwc.ac.za or the Coordinator of the ISD post-graduate students, Dr Karriem at akarriem@uwc.ac.za

Addendum 2 b) Information sheet for learners

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



FACULTY OF ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Dear participant

My name is **Janine Charlene Jansen** (student number 2453041). I am a registered UWC masters' student in the above department.

The title of my thesis is: **An investigation into factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education: The Case of High X in Philippi**

Please take time to read through this information sheet carefully in order for you to be familiar about what is required of you as a research participant in this study.

As a participant who gave consent of your participation in this study, you will be required to:

1. Complete a demographic data sheet, which will request basic background information from you. This will take approximately 10 minutes.
2. Complete a self-reflective questionnaire. This will take approximately 30 minutes.
3. Participate in a focused group interview sessions (20 minutes) in which you will reflect in groups on what are factors influence and hinder your choices on pursuing further studies beyond secondary school.

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and your responses will be treated as confidential. It will assist me to achieve the objective of the study which is to identify what the possible factors are that would enable and support secondary school learners to access post-secondary school education. Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact me at 083 751 1314 or via e-mail at janinec.jansen@gmail.com

You may also contact my supervisor Dr V. McGhie at vfmcghie@uwc.ac.za, or the Postgraduate co-ordinator for the Institute of Social Development studies, Dr R Karriem at rkarriem@uwc.ac.za.

Thank you for participating in my study.

Janine Charlene Jansen (student number 2453041)

20 September 2013

Addendum 3 a) Consent form for Teachers



Consent Form for Teachers

University of the Western Cape

Title: An investigation into factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education: The Case of High X in Philippi

Researcher: Ms Janine Jansen (student number 2453041)

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. (If I wish to withdraw I may contact the lead researcher at any time)
3. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result from the research.
4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research.
5. I agree for to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date

Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher:

Janine Jansen (2453041)
Institute for Social Development
Studies, Faculty of Arts,
University of the Western Cape,
Robert Sobukwe Road,
Bellville
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Email: Janinec.jansen@gmail.com

Supervisor:

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HOD:

Dr Abdulrazak Karriem
Institute for Social Development,
School of Government, Faculty of
Economic and Management
Sciences, Robert Sobukwe Road,
Bellville
Contact no: (021) 959-3853
Email: akarriem@uwc.ac.za

Addendum 3b) Consent form for learners



Consent Form for questionnaire for learners

University of the Western Cape

Title: An investigation into factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education: The Case of High X in Philippi

Researcher: Ms Janine Jansen (student number 2453041)

Please initial box

6. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. (If I wish to withdraw I may contact the lead researcher at any time)
8. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result for the research.
9. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research.
10. I agree for to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative) Date Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher) Date Signature

Lead Researcher Date Signature
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

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Researcher:

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Bellville. Contact no: (021) 959-
3853. Email: akarriem@uwc.ac.za

Addendum 4: Biographical data sheet



Consent Form for Demographic Information Sheet for learners

University of the Western Cape

Title: An investigation into factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education: The Case of High X in Philippi

Researcher: Ms Janine Jansen (student number 2453041)

Please initial box

11. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
12. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. (If I wish to withdraw I may contact the lead researcher at any time)
13. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result for the research.
14. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research.
15. I agree for to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Date

Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research

Researcher:

Janine Jansen (2453041)
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Addendum 5: Stage 1 Initiation (general reading and noting of responses)

Qualitative data sets: open coding process

Data set no 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 1: Do learners at Grade 12 have access to career guidance counsellors at school?

- Yes: **3 responses**

Question 2: What type of career support is offered to Grade 12 learners at the school?

- Type of career support: 3 responses

2 responses:

- School take learners to attend career exhibitions and open days at universities:

1 response:

- Educator supports learners with career choices :

1 response:

- Educators encourage learners to use the internet for career information

2 responses

- Taking learners to attend career exhibitions which are organized in the local community and schools

Question 3: Do learners attend University/ University of Technology open days?

- Yes: **2 responses**
- No: **1 response**



Question 4: In what ways do the school support Grade 12 learners post school choices?

1 response

- There is a chapter for career in the Life Orientation whereby the teacher explains to the learners

1 response

- Educators in Life Orientation take them to these institutions and guide them through:

Question 5: Are there any activities within the school that supports learner's career / study choices?

1 response:

- Yes they do career choices – Life Orientation class.

Question 6: What would you say are the factors that hinder learners from progressing onto higher education studies?

1 response:

- Marks are below the expected ones that hinder them from obtaining bursaries.
- Don't meet the requirements (university)
- Pregnancy rate high (drop out)

Question 7: What would you say are the most appropriate support strategies to encourage learner's transition to higher education studies?

1 response:

- It is for them to attend open day – University.
- Invite different people from different sectors – graduates, business people, engineers, doctors, CA and others.
- Organize career exhibitions.
- Take the learners to excursions (educational) Eskom, PetroSA, Wine Estates, etc.

Data set No 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

Question 1: Are you planning on studying further after school?

27 responses

- Yes – I am planning on studying next year.

3 responses

- Left blank

Question 2: Do you know the name is of the course/field/subject you would like to study?

28 responses

- 24 responses : Yes
Courses: Law (1), Economics (3), Teaching (1), Public Management (1), Public Relations (1), Human Resource (3), Advertising/Marketing (1), Social Worker (5), Medical laboratory sciences (1), Electrical Engineering (1), Travel and Tourism (1), Chemistry (1), Business Management (1), Safety in Society (1: FET Course), Nursing (1) and Mechatronics (1).
- 6 responses: No
 - I don't know the name of the course (1)
 - I want to be Social Worker but not sure what I must study to be a social worker (2)
 - I don't know what I can achieve (1)
 - I don't know what to study, I am confused what course I must choose (1)

- I don't know nothing about what I want to study. Also I don't know where I will get the money (1)

Question 3: What or who would you say influenced your decisions to study further after you have completed Grade 12?

26 responses:

- Family (23 responses)
- Teacher (9 responses)
- My friends (2 responses)
- Being able to earn a salary (19 responses)
- Getting a degree/diploma (16 responses)
- University admission requirements (2 responses)
- Getting a bursary (5 responses)
- Lack of Financial support (2 responses)

Question 4: Explain how these factors/people have influenced your decision to study further?

- **Family:**
 - The family supports within the home, encourages to do well in school studies so that matric marks can be good to gain access to university.
 - In the home parents speak of the importance of education and how through education a better life can be achieved.
 - Parents are also saying that better money can be earned with university education.
 - **(Indirectly) the socio-economic conditions within the home (and surrounds) plays a motivation factor, encouraging learners to obtain university education to support family and improve their lives.**
- **Teachers:**
 - Teacher encourages us to work hard to change the situations at home.
 - Teacher motivates us, telling us education is the most powerful tool in life.
 - Teacher always tells us that we must work hard and get to university and continue studies.
 - Teacher tells us about how to achieve and the ways that I can achieve.
- **My friends:**
 - Friends encourage me by asking questions about what my plans are after school.
 - My friends encourage me to study further for better opportunities.
 - They ask about what I want to study at university and they tell me about university.
- **Getting a degree/diploma:**
 - Gives access to better job opportunities (permanent job with good salary)
 - Will lead to career (vocational interest)

- **Being able to earn a salary:**
 - With a degree or diploma it is viewed that better employment can be obtained with better salary which will support the family and living a better life will be achieved.
 - I will be taken out of the difficult situation that I am faced with.

- **University admission:**
 - Without meeting the university requirements I will not gain access, so I am motivated to work hard so that I meet university requirements.

- **Getting a bursary:**
 - With a bursary I will be able to study without the hassle or worry of paying my fees.
 - Parents would also not worry.

- **Lack of Financial support:**
 - Where I live there is lack of financial support so I want to study further so that there will be financial support at home.
 - Also I want to work and earn a great salary so that my family will not live in poverty

Question 5: Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?

6 responses:

- Money – not being able to afford to study (4 responses)
- I am concerned that I don't meet the minimum requirements of the institution (3 responses)
- I do not know what I want to study (1 response)
- I need to work to help financially to support my family (3 responses)
- I am concerned that I may fail my grade 12 exam (1 response)
- I am concerned that I may not fit into university (1 response)

Question 6: Please explain how these factors or people (may) influence your decision not to continue with further studies once you have finished school?

- Money – not being able to afford to study:
 - The fact is money matters. Without money I can't go study.
 - Family can't afford university fees
 - Don't have the money to pay for application fees and won't have money to register

- I am concerned that I don't meet the minimum requirements of the institution
 - Not performing well academically.
 - Minimum requirements of university too high, school marks not good.

- I do not know what I want to study

- Not sure what to study – confused.
- Don't know enough of what university offers and if it has what I am interested in.
- I need to work to help financially to support my family
 - I need to support family and other siblings at home
 - There is no money to study so working is the other option
- I am concerned that I may fail my grade 12 exam
 - Results thus far don't look well and have a feeling that I may fail grade 12
- I am concerned that I may not fit into university
 - University is different

Question 7: What will you do if you do not continue to study?

20 responses:

- 1) Work:
 - **13 responses** indicating that learner would go and find a job to earn an income to support their family and standard of living.
 - **4 responses** indicated that they would work to save for studying the following year (2016) as they do not have the money to study now.
 - **1 response** indicated that learner would work to save money to start their own business
- 2) Improve academic marks:
 - **2 responses** indicating that they would go and write the supplementary exams to improve their marks and re-apply to university for following year (2016)
 - **3 responses** indicating they would enter a programme or college to improve their academic marks and re-apply for admission into university the next year (2016).
- 3) Other:
 - **2 responses** indicating that they would either join the police services (2) or become a soldier (1).
 - **1 response** indicating learner will become criminal (like brothers) to earn an income.
 - **2 responses** indicating learners would do nothing. Feeling of discouragement.

Question 8: Do you think it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12? Yes / No

Yes: 26 responses

Did not answer: 4

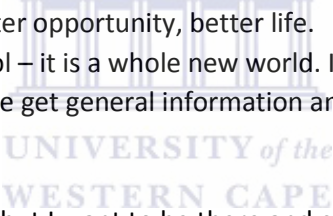
Reasons studying further is good:

- It is not easy to find a proper job when you do not have a degree.
- With a university education you will get a good job and permanent job

- With university education you will earn a good salary
- When you have a good qualification it is easy to find a good job that will benefit you for the rest of your life
- You can't do much with grade 12 in our times. Many grade 12's are unemployed and many are involved in the informal sector.
- By studying further you will help reduce the level of unemployment in South African. Also your money can help other people who need financial support e.g. tax.
- It will help you to achieve your goals and also to do what you have wanted to do
- You are more independent
- If you don't study further you become lazy, you become involved in other things such as crime and gangsterism.
- When you are educated everything is easy for you than those who are not educated in life
- Body and brain is still good because you have just passed matric if you don't study stay you let your brain rot if I may say.

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 1: What are your thoughts about university?

- 
- University means status – better opportunity, better life.
 - University is different to school – it is a whole new world. It offers me the opportunity to specialise because at school we get general information and this is not enough to get a proper job.
 - University changes one's life
 - I am nervous about university but I want to be there and change from being a high school
 - I think university is for people who can afford, not having better cloths would make me feel less.
 - I feel that I am not clever for university
 - My first thought about university is freedom and being in charge of my life, responsible, being my own.
 - University possess high goals, sometimes they seem impossible to achieve.
 - It seems when we talk about university it is as if we are thinking we are better or cleverer than other learners in my class.
 - University will give me the opportunity to meet different people. I am looking forward to meeting people from different countries and cultures.

1 discussant preferred college.

- I think college is better. I stand a better chance of being employed if I study at college because I will have practical skills.

Discussion point No 2: Would you say visiting a university campus has played a role in you deciding what you will be doing once you complete grade 12

- University visits were good, they made me want to be a university students and motivated me to work hard.
- It seems possible that I can be at university student one day – I am motivated.
- Visiting university was exciting and I wanted to be a part of that environment.

Discussion point No 3: Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career / study goals?

- Yes – having a university degree will open a lot of doors for me.
- Yes- I will be able to change my situation at home. We will be able to afford.
- Yes - education will make me a better person
- Yes – I want to do biomed and university will help me achieve that
- I want to do Journalism and university will help me – I want Civil Engineering.



Discussion point No 4: What are the things that would encourage you to pursue university studies?

- Better marks – marks are poor
- Passing well
- Meeting the university requirements
- Money – for registration and tuition
- Bursary to help me
- Career choices – making the right choices and knowing more about choices so that interest isn't lost which would result in dropout.
- Family – they offer support through advice and encouraging learner to perform better academically. Family members like sibling and uncles offer advice and provide learners with information about study opportunities and bursary.

Discussion point No 5: What about university makes you NOT want to study?

- The English language at university is scary, that I have to communicate in English, during lectures and speak English with new friends.
- Being responsible for myself and my own learning. At school teachers are there and they support us. At university it is different.
- I won't fit in. At university people dress up every day and I don't have nice cloths. I also don't have the computer / laptop that I will need at university.

- The culture being better or acting like I am better than anyone else.
- I feel that like I would be better than anyone in my community or they will see me as better than them. I see my friends that go to university speaking differently, dressing and acting differently. They are not the same. I will change.

Discussion point No 6: What would assist you to pursue university studies?

- Getting help with my academics to improve my marks.
- Getting a bursary that pays for my study fees
- Having more information on what courses university offers so that I know where to apply to and what the right requirements are.
- Help with the application so that I apply for the right courses
- More opportunities to visit university campuses

Discussion point No 7: What would prevent you from pursuing university studies?

- Not passing well
- Not meeting the university requirements
- Not getting accepted
- Not applying / applying late
- Not having money: Parents do not earn a lot of money and cannot afford university fees
- Living conditions and social environment: Because there is lack of finance in the homes, there is a need to rather seek employment to support financially at home



Addendum 6: Stage 2: data reduction and cross checking (classification of units of meaning into categories and themes)

CATEGORY 1: HOW DO LEARNERS VIEW POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ITS ABILITY TO REALISE THEIR CAREER ASPIRATIONS.

THEME 1: LEVEL OF ASPIRATION

Data set no 2 Learners questionnaire

Question 1: Are you planning on studying further after school?

27 responses

- Yes – I am planning on studying next year.

1 response

- Left blank



Question 2: Do you know the name is of the course/field/subject you would like to study?

28 responses

- 24 responses : Yes

Courses: Law (1), Economics (3), Teaching (1), Public Management (1), Public Relations (1), Human Resource (3), Advertising/Marketing (1), Social Worker (5), Medical laboratory sciences (1), Electrical Engineering (1), Travel and Tourism (1), Chemistry (1), Business Management (1), Safety in Society (1: FET Course), Nursing (1) and Mechatronics (1).

- 6 responses: No
 - I don't know the name of the course (1)
 - I want to be Social Worker but not sure what I must study to be a social worker (2)
 - I don't know what I can achieve (1)
 - I don't know what to study, I am confused what course I must choose (1)
 - I don't know nothing about what I want to study. Also I don't know where I will get the money (1)

Data set 2: Focus Group Questions

Discussion point No 3: Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career / study goals?

- Yes – having a university degree will open a lot of doors for me.

- Yes- I will be able to change my situation at home. We will be able to afford.
- Yes - education will make me a better person
- Yes – I want to do biomed and university will help me achieve that
- I want to do Journalism and university will help me – I want Civil Engineering.

THEME 2: LEARNERS VIEW (VALUE) OF UNIVERSITY

Data set 3: Focus group interviews

Discussion point No 1: What are your thoughts about university?

- University means status – better opportunity, better life.
- University is different to school – it is a whole new world. It offers me the opportunity to specialise because at school we get general information and this is not enough to get a proper job.
- University changes one's life
- I am nervous about university but I want to be there and change from being a high school learner
- I think university is for people who can afford, not having better cloths would make me feel less.
- I feel that I am not clever (enough) for university
- My first thought about university is freedom and being in charge of my life, responsible, being my own.
- University possess high goals, sometimes they seem impossible to achieve.
- It seems when we talk about university it is as if we are thinking we are better or cleverer than other learners in my class.
- University will give me the opportunity to meet different people. I am looking forward to meeting people from different countries and cultures.

1 discussant preferred college.

- I think college is better. I stand a better chance of being employed if I study at college because I will have practical skills.

THEME 3: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MOTIVATION

Data set 2: Learner self-reflective questionnaire

Question 8: Do you think it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12?

Yes: 24 positive responses

- It is not easy to find a proper job when you do not have a degree.

- With a university education you will get a good job and permanent job; when you have a good qualification it is easy to find a good job that will benefit you for the rest of your life.
- With university education you will earn a good salary.
- It will help you to achieve your goals and also to do what you have wanted to do.
- You are more independent.
- By studying further you will help reduce the level of unemployment in South Africa. Also, your money can help other people who need financial support e.g. tax.
- You can't do much with grade 12 in our times. Many grade 12s are unemployed and many are involved in the informal sector.
- If you don't study further you become lazy, you become involved in other things such as crime and gangsterism.
- When you are educated everything is easy for you than those who are not educated in life.
- Body and brain (are) still good because you have just passed matric if you don't study, you let your brain rot if I may say so.



CATEGORY 2: WHAT ARE THE ENABLING OR INHIBITING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS IN TRANSITIONING TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION?

ENABLING FACTORS

THEME 1: SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS AND TEACHERS.

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

Question 4: Explain how these factors/people have influenced your decision to study further?

- Family:
 - The family supports within the home, encourages to do well in school studies so that matric marks can be good to gain access to university.
 - In the home parents speak of the importance of education and how through education a better life can be achieved.
 - Parents are also saying that better money can be earned with university education.
- Teachers:
 - Teacher encourages us to work hard to change the situations at home.
 - Teacher motivates us, telling us education is the most powerful tool in life.

- Teacher always tells us that we must work hard and get to university and continue studies.
- Teacher tells us about how to achieve and the ways that I can achieve.
- My friends:
 - Friends encourage me by asking questions about what my plans are after school.
 - My friends encourage me to study further for better opportunities.
 - They ask about what I want to study at university and they tell me about university.

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 4: What are the things that would encourage you to pursue university studies?

- Family – they offer support through advice and encourage learner to perform better academically. Family members like elder siblings and uncles offer advice and provide learners with information about study opportunities and bursary.

THEME 2: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Data sets 3: Focus group interviews

Discussion point No 4: What are the things that would encourage you to pursue university studies?

- Better marks – marks are poor
- Passing well
- Meeting the university requirements
- Money – for registration and tuition
- Bursary to help me
- Career choices – making the right choices and knowing more about choices so that interest isn't lost which would result in dropout.

Discussion point No 6: What would assist you to pursue university studies?

- Getting help with my academics to improve my marks.
- Getting a bursary that pays for my study fees
- Having more information on what courses university offers so that I know where to apply to and what the right requirements are.

THEME 3: HAVING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND BEING MORE EXPOSED TO THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

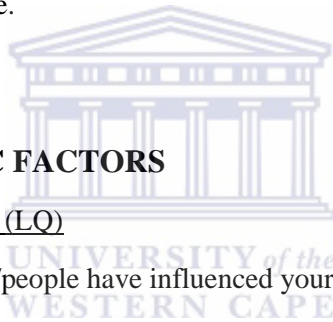
Question 4: Explain how these factors/people have influenced your decision to study further?

- University admission:
 - Without meeting the university requirements I will not gain access, so learners motivated to work hard so meet university requirements.

Data set no.3: Learner focus group interview

Discussion point No 6: What would assist you to pursue university studies?

- Having more information on what courses university offers so that I know where to apply to and what the right requirements are.



THEME 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

Question 4: Explain how these factors/people have influenced your decision to study further?

- Family:
 - Parents saying that better money can be earned with university education.
 - Elder siblings providing support and encouragement to study further
- Lack of Financial support:
 - Where I live there is lack of financial support so I want to study further so that there will be financial support at home.
 - Also I want to work and earn a great salary so that my family will not live in poverty
- Being able to earn a salary:
 - With a degree or diploma it is viewed that better employment can be obtained with better salary which will support the family and living a better life will be achieved.
 - I will be taken out of the difficult situation that I am faced with.

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 3: Do you think that university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career / study goals?

- Yes – with university education will be able to change situation at home. We will be able to afford.

INHIBITING FACTORS

THEME 1: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Data set no. 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 6: What would you say are the factors that hinder learners from progressing onto higher education studies?

1 response:

- Marks are below the expected ones that hinder them from obtaining bursaries.
- Don't meet the requirements (university)

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire (LO)

Question 5: Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?

4 responses:

- I am concerned that I may fail my grade 12 exam: not performing well academically (1)
- I am concerned that I don't meet the minimum requirements of the institution: Minimum requirements of university too high, school marks not good (3)

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 7: What would prevent you from pursuing university studies?

- Not passing well
- Not meeting the university requirements

THEME 2: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire

Question 5: Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?

- Money – not being able to afford to study (4 responses)
- I need to work to help financially to support my family (3 responses)

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group

Discussion point No 7: What would prevent you from pursuing university studies?

- Not having money: Parents do not earn a lot of money and cannot afford university fees
- Living conditions and social environment: Because there is lack of finance in the homes, there is a need to rather seek employment to support financially at home.

THEME 3: INTEGRATION INTO THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Data set no. 2: Learners Questionnaire (LQ)

Question 5: Who or what factors would influence your decision not to study further?

- I am concerned that I may not fit into university: University is different (1)

Data set No 3: Learners Focus Group (LFG)

Discussion point No 1: What are your thoughts about university?

- University means status – better opportunity, better life.
- University is different to school – it is a whole new world. It offers me the opportunity to specialise because at school we get general information and this is not enough to get a proper job.
- University changes one's life
- I am nervous about university but I want to be there and change from being a high school learner.
- I think university is for people who can afford, not having better cloths would make me feel less.
- I feel that I am not clever for university
- My first thought about university is freedom and being in charge of my life, responsible, being my own.
- University possess high goals, sometimes they seem impossible to achieve.
- It seems when we talk about university it is as if we are thinking we are better or cleverer than other learners in my class.
- University will give me the opportunity to meet different people. I am looking forward to meeting people from different countries and cultures.

Discussion point No 5: What about university makes you NOT want to study?

- The English language at university is scary, that I have to communicate in English, during lectures and speak English with new friends.
- I won't fit in. At university people dress up every day and I don't have nice cloths.
- The culture being better or acting like I am better than anyone else.
- I feel that like I would be better than anyone in my community or they will see me as better than them. I see my friends that go to university speaking differently, dressing and acting differently. They are not the same. I will change.

THEME 4: SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Data set no. 3: Learner focus group interviews

Discussion point No 5: What about university makes you NOT want to study?

- The culture being better or acting like I am better than anyone else.
- I feel that like I would be better than anyone in my community or they will see me as better than them. I see my friends that go to university speaking differently, dressing and acting differently. They are not the same. I will change.

CATEGORY 3: HOW COULD THE BARRIERS THAT DISCOURAGE LEARNERS FROM TRANSITIONING TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION BE ADDRESSED AND THE ENABLING FACTORS PROMOTED?

Data set no 1: Educators Questionnaire (EQ)

Question 1: Do learners at Grade 12 have access to career guidance counsellors at school?

- Yes: **3 responses**

Question 2: What type of career support is offered to Grade 12 learners at the school?

- Type of career support: 3 responses
- 3 responses:**
 - School take learners to attend career exhibitions and open days at universities:
- 2 response:**
 - Educator supports learners with career choices :
- 2 response:**
 - Educators encourage learners to use the internet for career information
- 2 responses**
 - Taking learners to attend career exhibitions which are organized in the local community and schools

Data set 2: Learner questionnaire

Question 7: What would you say are the most appropriate support strategies to encourage learner's transition to higher education studies?

1 response:

- It is for them to attend open day – University.
- Invite different people from different sectors – graduates, business people, engineers, doctors, CA and others.
- Organize career exhibitions.
- Take the learners to excursions (educational) Eskom, PetroSA, Wine Estates, etc

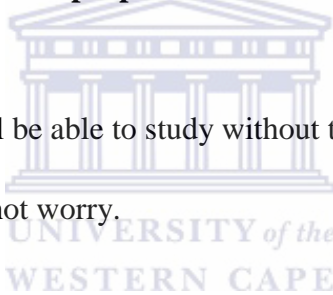
Data set 3: Focus group interview

Discussion point No 6: What would assist you to pursue university studies?

- Getting help with my academics to improve my marks.
- Getting a bursary that pays for my study fees
- Having more information on what courses university offers so that I know where to apply to and what the right requirements are.
- Help with the application so that I apply for the right courses
- More opportunities to visit university campuses

Question 4: Explain how these factors/people have influenced your decision to study further?

- **Getting a bursary:**
 - With a bursary I will be able to study without the hassle or worry of paying my fees.
 - Parents would also not worry.



Data set 3: Focus group interviews

Discussion point No 2: Would you say visiting a university campus has played a role in you deciding what you will be doing once you complete grade 12?

- University visits were good, they made me want to be a university students and motivated me to work hard.
- It seems possible that I can be at university student one day – I am motivated.
- Visiting university was exciting and I wanted to be a part of that environment.

Addendum 7: Stage 3: synthesis and reduction (groupings of categories and themes into sub-themes)

CATEGORY 1: HOW DO LEARNERS VIEW POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ITS ABILITY TO REALISE THEIR CAREER ASPIRATIONS.

THEME 1: LEVEL OF ASPIRATION

THEME 2: LEARNERS VIEW (VALUE) OF UNIVERSITY

THEME 3: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MOTIVATION

CATEGORY 2: What Are The Enabling Or Inhibiting Factors That Influence The Decision-Making Process Of High School Learners In Transitioning To Post-School Education?

ENABLING FACTORS

THEME 1: SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS AND TEACHERS.

Sub-theme 1.1: Family support

Sub-theme 1.2: Friends' (peers) support

Sub-theme 1.3: Teacher support

THEME 2: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

THEME 3: HAVING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND BEING MORE EXPOSED TO THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

THEME 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

INHIBITING FACTORS

THEME 1: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

THEME 2: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

THEME 3: INTEGRATION INTO THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Sub-theme 3.1: Not fitting in academically



Sub-theme 3.2: Dress code at university:

Sub-theme 3.3: Transition from high school to university

Sub-theme 3.4: English as a second or additional language

THEME 4: SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

CATEGORY 3: HOW COULD THE BARRIERS THAT DISCOURAGE LEARNERS FROM TRANSITIONING TO POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION BE ADDRESSED AND THE ENABLING FACTORS PROMOTED?

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS

Theme 1: Academic performance and university admission requirements

Theme 2: Socio-economic conditions

Theme 3: Integration into the university environment

Theme 4: Socio-cultural factors



PROMOTING ENABLING FACTORS

Theme 1: Support and encouragement from family members, friends and teachers

Theme 2: Academic performance and university admission requirements

Theme 3: Having knowledge about university study and being more exposed to the university environment

Theme 4: Socio-economic factors

Addendum 8: LEARNERS' SELF REFLECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you planning on studying further after school?

Yes

Please explain why you want to study further after school?

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No

Please explain why you do not want to study further after school

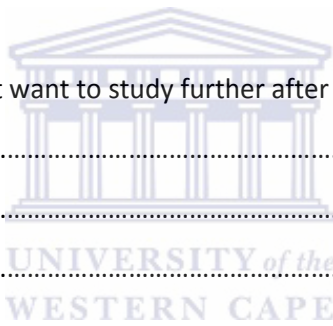
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2. Do you know what the name is of the course/field/subject area you would like to study?

Yes

Please write down the name the course/degree/diploma and the place you would like to study

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.....

No, I do not know what the name of my course/degree/diploma is and where I would like to study

Please explain why you do not know what you would like to study and which institution you would like to study at.

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3. Who or what would you say influenced your decision to study further after you have completed Grade 12?

| Factors influencing my decision on what I will do once I am finished with school | Please tick 3 at least three factors |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| My family | |
| My friends | |
| My teacher | |
| Being able to work and earn a salary | |
| Getting a degree/diploma | |
| My academic grades | |
| Getting a bursary | |
| University admission requirements | |
| Lack of financial support | |

4. Please explain how these factors/people have influenced your decision to study further

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5. Who or what factors influenced your decision not to study further?

| Factors | Select at least 3 |
|---|-------------------|
| Money – not able to afford to study | |
| I do not know what I want to study | |
| I am concerned that I do not meet the minimum requirements of the institution | |
| I am concerned that I may fail my grade 12 exam | |
| I need to work to help financially to support my family | |
| Studying won't benefit me | |
| I am concerned that I will not "fit" into university | |

6. Please explain how these factors or people influenced your decision not to continue with further studies once you have finished school

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7. What will you do if you do not continue to study? Please explain

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8. Do you think that it is good/wise to study further after Grade 12? Yes / No

Please explain your answer:

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Addendum 9: Teacher questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



**FACULTY OF ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Questionnaire for Educators

Questions pertaining to learners:

1) Do learners at Grade 12 have access to career guidance counselors at school? Yes / No

2) What type of career support is offered to Grade 12 learners at the school?

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3) Do learners attend university or university of technology open days?

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.....

4) In what way does the school support Grade 12 learners post school choices?

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5) Are there any activities within the school that support learner's career / study choices?

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6) What would you say are the factors that hinder learners from progression onto higher education studies?

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7) What would you say are the most appropriate support strategies to encourage learners/' transition to higher education studies?

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Addendum 10: Learner focus group interview questions

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



FACULTY OF ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Focus group questions for learners

- 1) What are your thoughts about university?
- 2) Would you say that visiting a university campus has played a role in you deciding what you will be doing once you complete grade 12? Yes/ No Please explain your answer.
- 3) Do you think university provides you with the opportunity to achieve your career / study goals? Yes / No Please explain
- 4) What are the things that would encourage you to pursue university studies?
- 5) What about university makes you **NOT** want to study?
- 6) What would assist you to pursue university studies?
- 7) What would prevent you from pursuing university studies?