# DOES FAMILY STRUCTURE MATTER? A COMPARISON OF THE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF LEARNERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Magister Artium in Child and Family Studies, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape**

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# ABSTRACT

Self Determination Theory (SDT) proposes that individuals are motivated to have goals and aspirations which are either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Intrinsic life goals are associated with greater psychological health and well-being. Research shows that family structure plays a role in the way children are raised and has implications for later adult adjustment. In South Africa 42.8% of children are raised in a single parent household. This study aimed to compare the goals and aspirations of learners from single and married parent households. The study used a quantitative methodology with a cross-sectional comparative research design. The sample consisted of 853 Grade 11 learners from schools in the Northern, Southern and Metro Central Education Districts in the Western Cape. The data was collected using a self-report questionnaire that consisted of two sections, demographic information and the Aspirations Index. The Aspirations Index assessed the life goals of the learners and categorised the goals and aspirations into intrinsic and extrinsic life goals. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences V20 (SPSS). The results suggest that there was a significant main effect of family structure on certain goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners in secondary schools. These goals and aspirations included wealth, image, personal growth, relationships and health. Furthermore, participants from single parent households placed more emphasis on intrinsic goals than participants from married parent households.

**KEYWORDS**

Goals

Aspirations

Extrinsic goals

Intrinsic goals

Family structure

Single parents

Married parents

Adolescence

Environment

Self-Determination Theory

**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the thesis entitled *Does family structure matter? A comparison of the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary school* is my own work and has not been submitted to other universities for degree or examination purposes before.

November 2012

Eugene Lee Davids                                                                 Date

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God,

who has made this journey called life possible,

to my family and friends for their interactions along this journey

to all I have come in contact with

as the small words and encounters have all shaped me

and played an influential role in who I am.

To life, the meaningful journey, we all are on.
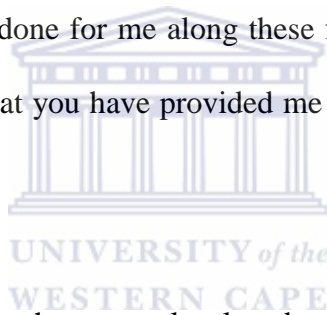
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I'm thankful to God, for the many gifts that I have been blessed with along this journey. This journey would not have been possible if it were not for the blessings and mercies that have been bestowed on me during this journey. It was a journey filled with challenges, difficulties, times of joy and laughter of which all would not have been possible if it were not for the love of God that was displayed in the actions and encounters. God's grace has sustained me along this journey and having made it possible to have reached one of my goal posts along this journey is a blessing in itself. All praise and honour to God, for life and the blessings.

The journey would not have been fulfilled if it were not for the many persons that have assisted me along this journey, which I am truly thankful for:
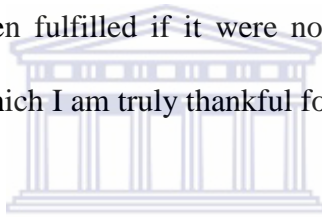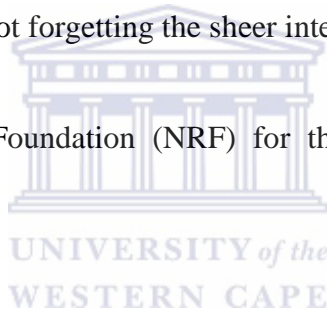
- What I considered impossible was told would be possible, when I was down, I was motivated. The belief that was placed in me is immeasurable. The platform for development as an aspiring researcher was amplified and extended thanks to my supervisor, Dr Roman. Dr Roman, I don't think that a simple acknowledgment would ever do, you have played an influential role during this journey. I'm truly thankful for all that you have done. I know I haven't been the best of students, and I know I have always flooded you with complaints and questions along this journey.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1    Background and rationale

The family is considered to be the foundation of socialising children into well-adjusted adults (Amoateng & Heaton 2007; Cheal, 2002; Muncie, Wetherell, Dallos & Cochrane, 1995). Of particular interest is the effect of family structure on human development (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Manning & Lamb, 2003). Family structure often refers to the marital status of a family (Manning & Lamb, 2003) or the type of family a child grows up in (Strohschein et al., 2009). This family structure or type of family can include married biological parents, step - or foster parents as well as single parents. Family structure provides an indication of the number of possible caregivers a child might have as well as the quality of a child's family life (Manning & Lamb, 2003). Often family structure is indicated by single and married parent households with the focus often being on single parent households.

Single parents seem to be socially isolated, work longer hours, and have lower emotional and parental support than married parent households (Jackson, Brooks-Gunn, Huang & Glassman, 2000; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). Single parents have to juggle the responsibilities of being a caregiver and provider to their children (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). The time that single parents spend with their children seems to be limited as they have lots of duties and responsibilities that they need to attend to as there is a lack of support and assistance with the responsibilities within the household. Children raised in single parent households have less parental observations and supervision than children who are reared in married family households (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Often single parent households have to battle with

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unemployment, poverty and a lack of resources (Roman, 2011). Weiss (1984) further mentions that single parents, who battle with poverty will remain within poverty, in comparison to married parent households who are able to diminish the poverty that they have experienced. The growth of single parent families is considered to be one of the most striking changes and most researched phenomena within the twentieth century (Usdansky, 2009).

Thirty-five percent of South African children are reared in a household with both parents present, while 40% are reared by their mothers and 2.8% by their fathers (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Roman (2011) suggests that very often there is a belief that coming from a home where both parents are present, a more 'stable environment' is provided as compared to single parent families, but that this may not necessarily be the case. The average South African child is reared within a single parent household usually headed by a mother (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Roman 2011; Ellis & Adams, 2009) and over half of all children under the age of eighteen will spend some time within a single parent household (Magnuson & Berger, 2009).

In comparison to single parent households, married parent households seem to have higher socioeconomic status (Rosenfeld, 2010). Married parent households are seen as being more 'attractive' as each member within the family brings his/her own resources that are used together and the division of labour exists within the household (Stoleru, Radu, Antal & Szigeti, 2011). Furthermore, children from married parent households tend to be more adjusted than children from other family structures (Goodman & Greaves, 2010; Musick & Meier, 2010; Waite & Lehrer, 2003; Waldfogel, Craigie & Brooks-Gunn, 2010).

Family structure plays an important role in children's attainment of their goals and aspirations for the future (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000). Goals and aspirations, based within Self-Determination Theory, categorise goals and aspirations into intrinsic and extrinsic life

goals. The intrinsic life goals consist of 'personal growth, relationships, community and health' (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2008) whereas extrinsic life goals are made up of 'wealth, fame, image and power' (Ryan et al., 2008). Malmberg, Ehrman and Lithén, (2005) state that parents play a co-planning role in the future goals of their children. Furthermore, children who are reared in single parent households have low economic, educational and employment attainment in comparison to children reared in married parent families (Mueller & Cooper, 1986; Richards & Schmiege, 1993). Additionally children from married parent households have higher levels of achievement than children from single parent households (Magnuson & Berger, 2009).

When taking the above into consideration, it created a need to know more about the goals and aspirations of learners from different family structures and to establish whether a significant difference existed between being reared in different family structural environments such as single and married parent households.  Thus the purpose of this study was to compare the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners who are raised in different family structures.

## 1.2     Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-theory that focuses on human motivation, wellness and development (Deci & Ryan, 2008). SDT is a person-centred motivational theory where various forms of motivation exist that fall on a continuum ranging from not self-determination to very self-determined (Levesque-Bristol & Stanek, 2009). SDT operates on the assumption that individuals are able to motivate themselves to their fullest potential and to work towards a cohesive sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2004). It is also one of the most commonly used theoretical frameworks in the study of motivation (Ntoumanis & Standage, 2009). Haivas, Hofman and Pepermans (2012) as well as Roman (2008) have alluded that an

individual can develop to his/her fullest potential when their needs are fulfilled or satisfied and further mention that an individual has an innate propensity to grow and develop to his/her fullest potential. SDT also makes a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic life goals and aspirations. According to SDT research, intrinsic life goals are positively related to being psychologically well. This study uses SDT for the basis of understanding the goal contents as well as the goals and aspirations created within a family structure context. The study also focused on the key concepts of goals and aspirations in line with SDT.

## 1.3    Problem statement

Goodman and Greaves (2010) state that children in married parent households generally tend to be more adjusted than children who live in other family structures. Garg et al.(2007) also indicate that children from single parent households have lower educational aspirations than those from married parent households. In South Africa 36% of children live in a home where both parents are present and 48% of children live in single parent households without a living father present (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Clearly, South African children are more likely to be living in a single parent household based on the statistics of family structure in South Africa. According to Self-Determination Theory, the home environment could provide either an enhancing or hindering environment for individuals to pursue their goals and aspirations (Bray, Gooskens, Moses, Kahn & Seekings, 2010; Chirkov, et al., 2003). The pursuit of goals and aspirations is a normal process of human development and for learners it is especially important as they strive towards further education or the job market. The type of goals and aspirations they choose could either be intrinsic or extrinsic, which could have well-being implications. Sheldon et al. (2004) suggest that not only does the goal content (whether intrinsic or extrinsic) play a role in psychological well-being but also the reasons why individuals pursue them. The research focus on goals of youth in South Africa is mainly in

terms of academic and career related goals (Cherian, 2001; Robbins et al., 2003). No known research has been done in South Africa regarding this area of research. Therefore to examine family structure in the identification of goals and aspirations of learners became important, as this area in research has not been tapped into before within the South African context. This study therefore compared the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools who were raised in single and married parent households.

## 1.4 Research questions

- What are the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners?

- What are the effects of family structure on the goals and aspirations of learners?

- Are the goals and aspirations of learners from single parent and married parent households different?

## 1.5 Aims and Objectives

### 1.5.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to determine and compare the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners from single and married parent families.

### 1.5.2 Objectives

The **objectives** of the study were:

- To establish the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners.

- To determine the prevalence of single and married parent households of learners at secondary school.

- To establish the effects of family structure on goals and aspirations of learners.

- To compare the goals and aspirations of learners from single and married parent households

- To establish if there is a significant difference between the goals and aspirations of learners living in single and married parent households.

- To determine if learners from single parent households have more extrinsic life goals than learners from married parent households.

## 1.6 Hypothesis

The hypothesis for the study was:

- There will be a significant difference between the goals and aspirations of the learners living in households headed by single and married parents.
- Learners from single parent households would have more extrinsic life goals in comparison to learners from married parent households who would have intrinsic life goals.

## 1.7 Significance of the study

The results, which were gathered from this research study, will help a number of individuals; (i) parents and guardians, (ii) schools as well as (iii) community organisations. (i) Parents and guardians will be aware of the role family structure could play in their children's views of goals and aspirations for the future and how they, as parents can become involved in assisting in enabling well-being. (ii) Schools will be able to establish the current goals and aspirations of the South African youth and establish ways in which subjects such as Life Orientation can be adapted to assist in decision making, well balanced life styles and psychological well-

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being as well as goals and aspirations for the future. (iii) Community organisations will have an understanding of the current situation of South African youth's views of the future and see how they can assist in motivating and harnessing the youth's views of the future to create a nation that is future orientated and promotes the health and psychological well-being of the nation. This research study has been the first study within Sub-Saharan Africa to investigate the goal content of learners and compare it to family structure. Family research within South Africa and Africa is very limited and this research has further added to the knowledge base of family research within South Africa. This research will also add to current international debates within this area of research.

## 1.8    Definition of terms

### Goals / Aspirations

Ingrid, Majda and Dubravka (2009) define goals as those internal representations and symbols of individuals' desired outcomes for the future. Within Self Determination Theory, the goal content of individuals is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

### Extrinsic Goals

Extrinsic goals are goals that include wealth and financial success, popularity and appearance (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006).

### Intrinsic Goals

Intrinsic goals are goals that are hypothesised to promote psychological health and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These include goals such as personal growth, community involvement

and contribution, valuing of relationships and affiliation as well as health (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

**Single parent household**

Single parent households, within the context of the study, refer to households where there is only one parent / caregiver present who sees to the operation of the household. These can include parents / caregivers who have been married and are now divorced or widowed or individuals who have never been married.

**Married parent household**

Within the study married parent households refer to households in which there are two parents or caregivers present living together who can be either married or unmarried but they jointly see to the running of the household and live together with the child / children.
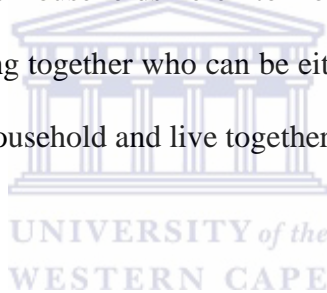
**Family structure**

Family structure often refers to the marital status of a family (Manning & Lamb, 2003) or the type of family a child grows up in (Strohschein, Roos & Brownell, 2009). This can include married biological parents, step- or foster parents as well as single parents. (Within this study the focus will only be on single and married parents).

**Adolescence**

Adolescence is a period of change between childhood and adulthood (Louw, Louw & Ferns, 2007).

**Environment**

Environment refers to the context in which an individual finds him / herself. Within Self-Determination Theory, the environment is believed to assist in attaining psychological health and well-being when an environment supports the three basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and related needs (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim & Kaplan, 2003).

**Self Determination Theory**

This is a macro-theory that looks at human motivation, wellness and development (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The theory puts forward that individuals are able to motivate themselves to their fullest potential and to work towards a cohesive sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2004).

### 1.9    Layout of thesis

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

The first chapter in the thesis will provide an introduction to the study as well as important terms that will be used throughout the thesis. It gives insight into the background and rationale for the research study and briefly introduces Self-Determination Theory which is the theoretical framework for the research conducted. The overall aims of the study as well as objectives are looked at within this chapter. Furthermore, the value that the study has is also discussed within the significance of the study section. This chapter also further provides an overview of the chapters to follow.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The second chapter of the thesis provides an in-depth analysis of Self-Determination Theory, which formed the theoretical basis for the research. An overview of research trends within literature focused on family structure as well as goals and aspirations is looked at within this chapter. Research conducted on single and married parent households, motivation as well as goals and aspirations are covered; this assists in strengthening the theoretical and knowledge basis for the chapters to come. This chapter additionally sheds light on the integration of the theory with previous research.

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

The third chapter of the thesis covers the methodology that was executed within the research study. The chapter provides insight into the research methodology and design as well as the sampling techniques that were implemented. The Aspirations Index is introduced as well as the procedures that followed in the pilot study and the main study. The chapter furthermore allows for insight into the data collection process as well as the analysis of the data and the ethical considerations that were employed.

**Chapter 4: Results**

The fourth chapter of the thesis provides insight into the results that were obtained during the data collection and analysis steps within the research study. The data gathered are expressed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics. There are tables outlining results obtained by the total sample, participants from single and married parent households with regards to the life goals and aspirations. More information on the total sample is shared, to allow for more insight into the sample of the study.

**Chapter 5: Discussion and recommendation**

The platform for discussing the results that were obtained during the data analysis process is covered within this chapter. It allows for the integration of findings with literature. The recommendations for future research are looked at and the limitations of the study are outlined.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1    Introduction

The research developments within goals and aspirations as well as family structure will be investigated within this chapter. An introduction to the motivational theory of Self Determination, in which the study is framed, will also be looked at. This chapter provides the theoretical framework that the study was framed within. It provides the basis of Self Determination Theory as well as an overview of literature on goals and aspirations, motivation and family structure. The chapter also provides insight into some of the research that has been conducted both internationally and within South Africa.

## 2.2    Theoretical Framework

Self Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-theory that looks at human motivation, wellness and development (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Levesque-Bristol and Stanek (2009) add by stating SDT is a person-centred motivational theory that sees various forms of motivation that fall on a continuum of self-determination. The theory indicates that individuals are able to motivate themselves to their fullest potential and to work towards a cohesive sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2004). SDT is also one of the most commonly used theoretical frameworks in the study of motivation (Ntoumanis & Standage, 2009). According to Roman (2008) and Haivas, Hofman and Pepermans (2012) an individual can develop to his/her fullest potential when their needs are fulfilled or satisfied, and further alludes that an individual has an innate propensity to grow and develop to his/her fullest potential. Within SDT there are a set of needs that need to be satisfied to achieve optimal functioning and psychological health (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This motivational theory operates under the assumption that the

psychological needs are innate and universal (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Milyavskaya et al., 2009; Jaakkola, Liukkonen, Laakso & Ommundsen, 2008). These needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness are said to envisage psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991; Grouzet et al., 2005; Ingrid et al., 2009). These needs are present from birth and when these are satisfied it assists the individual to move towards reaching his/her fullest potential and the prospects of psychological well-being and health emerge. The satisfaction of one or two of these needs is not sufficient for psychological health and well-being, as all three needs should be satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The psychological need of competence refers to an individual's feelings of being able and effective in his/her execution of tasks (Ingrid et al., 2009). Autonomy is about being able to make choices or being engaged in activities where one has preference and it provides a sense of meaning. There is also a sense of responsibility for the execution of behaviour (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Ingrid et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 2008). The need for relatedness refers to the individual's sense of belonging and connectedness with others and their social environment (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2008). Relatedness further has to do with environments in which individuals are able to display and express their abilities, potential and competence (Bartholomew et al., 2011). The three basic psychological needs are seen as being the motivational sustenance that drives an individual's goal setting and attainment processes (Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995).

Niemiec and Ryan (2009) have also alluded to the large volumes of research that have outlined that teachers who show support towards students' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness aided their students' autonomous execution of academic performance, well-being and learning. The satisfaction of these basic psychological

needs and the implications on well-being have been studied in diverse disciplines that include psychotherapy, sport, parenting, education, health and wellness, and occupation satisfaction (Bartholomew et al., 2011).

When investigating adolescents' experience of a balance between the three basic psychological needs across various domains of home, school, encounters with friends and within part-time employment Milyavskaya et al. (2009) found after conducting three studies that this balanced experience resulted in an increased experience of well-being and improved school adjustment.

Even though a number of research studies have aligned themselves with the results that the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs is associated with health and well-being, there have however been research studies that have deviated from this (Bartholomew et al., 2011). The negative relationship between the satisfaction of needs and a number of maladaptive results has been looked at and has supported the hypothesised theory indirectly, that the environment needs to be supportive to experience need satisfaction. Since these studies established this indirectly, Bartholomew et al (2011) believe that these findings were not accurate as the relationship between need satisfaction and ill-being was not directly investigated. However, Bartholomew et al (2011) mention that the low scoring on psychological well-being may not necessarily indicate need frustration but rather need dissatisfaction to a certain extent. This theory of human motivation also operates on the premise that in order for needs to be satisfied the environment too needs to be supportive and offer 'nutriments' to experience satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Haivas, Hofman & Pepermans, 2012). When looking at SDT, the social environment or context assists in the satifiaction of the basic psychological needs and this assists in an individual's motivation and behaviour (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). The major types of motivation that have

been identified based on the outcomes of the social environment are those of autonomous motivation and controlled motivation.

The question has been asked by early motivational researchers, why an individual engages in certain types of behaviour and activity? The answer to this question was to consider the extent to which the activity or behaviour was intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Neyrinck, Vansteenkiste, Lens, Duriez & Hutsebaut, 2006). Hagger and Malmberg (2011) have mentioned that the actions and behaviours that humans become involved in and execute are seen as being intentional, goal-orientated and self-regulatory. However within the light of motivational theory an individual's behaviour is fundamentally driven by its goal directed convictions (Ford, 1992).

With SDT being a motivational theory, there are various forms of motivation that are linked to different behavioural and psychological effects (Levesque-Bristol & Stanek, 2009). The various forms of motivation range from least self-determined to the most self-determined (Levesque-Bristol & Stanek, 2009). The two major types of motivation as mentioned earlier are that of autonomous and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation refers to motivation that is created through an individual's engagement in behaviour or activities that he / she finds extreme pleasure and enjoyment in, conversely controlled motivation deals with the involvement in an activity or behaviour solely 'to receive a reward or to avoid punishment or feelings of guilt' (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). The different forms of motivation include amotivation, extrinsic motivation (that looks at external regulation, introjections, identification and integration) and intrinsic motivation. Based within the framework of SDT, motivation operates on a continuum (see Figure 2.1.). When looking at autonomous motivation three subtypes exist that are dependent on the extent of internalisation of the executed behaviour or action. These three subtypes of autonomous

motivation include (i) intrinsic motivation, (ii) integrated regulation and (iii) identified regulation (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). Controlled motivation is divided into two subtypes which also differ on the basis of the internalisation of the behaviour or action; these subtypes are (i) introjected regulation and (ii) external regulation (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012).

Levesque-Bristol and Stanek (2009) identify the various subtypes of motivation as follows:

- Intrinsic motivation: A self-determined form of motivation where an individual is engaged in an activity or behaviour for the sheer enjoyment, satisfaction and entertainment.

- Integrated regulation: A self-determined form of motivation where the activity is integrated within other areas of an individual's life.

- Identified regulation: A self-determined form of motivation where the individual values the activities he or she is involved in.

- Introjected regulation: A non-self-determined form of extrinsic motivation where the individual is engaged in an activity or behaviour to avoid feelings of guilt.

- External regulation: A non-self-determined form of extrinsic motivation where an individual is involved in a certain activity or behaviour to avoid a negative outcome or to obtain a positive outcome.

When one considers an activity to be inherently pleasurable, appealing, gratifying or interesting, this is when an activity is intrinsically motivated. Added to this is that the involvement in the activity should be for sheer enjoyment with the absence of external enforcers for involvement in the activity (Neyrinck et al., 2006). Extrinsic motivation would

be the engagement in an activity for reasons other than pure involvement in the activity but rather for the obtainment of a desired outcome (Neyrinck et al., 2006). An example of intrinsic motivation would be when individuals partake in activities and they experience fun, excitement, joy and enjoyment when engaging in activities (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). On the contrary extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of activities or behaviours for an outcome or result other than the sheer enjoyment of the activity (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

An enquiry into Romanian volunteers found that the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs acted as an intermediary between the volunteer's experience of the work environment and the establishment of a sense of autonomous motivation (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012).



**Figure 2.1.:** Diagrammatic representation of the continuum of motivation (taken from Levesque-Bristol & Stanek, 2009).

## 2.3    Literature Review

### 2.3.1    Prevalence and trends of single versus married parent households

Family structure refers to the type of family an individual is reared in as well as the marital arrangement or status of the family (Manning & Lamb, 2003; Strohschein et al., 2009). Five elements were considered when looking at how family structure influences child well-being; these elements are: parent resources, parent relationship quality, quality of parenting, the mental health of parents and the involvement of the father (Waldfogel et al., 2010). Parenting plays an important role in the achievement and aspirations to certain goals, as parental involvement in its varied forms assists somewhat in the goal attainment of children (Friedel, Cortina, Turner & Midgley, 2007).

#### 2.3.1.1 Single Parent Household

There is an increase in the number of divorces occurring and in the number of non-marital childbearing, which increases the likelihood for a child to be raised within a single mother household (Meadows, Brooks-Gunn & McLanahan, 2008; Kendig & Bianchi, 2008; Louis & Zhao, 2002). With the increase in the number of single parent households it creates a concern for the long term implications on the psychological well-being of children (Louis & Zhao, 2002).

Very often the experiences of childhood and child care play a great role in the development of a child across a range of domains within life. However, added to this, the importance of family characteristics which include the socioeconomic status, family structure as well as the quality of parenting are seen as being strong indicators of a child's outcomes with regards to development (Hungerford & Cox, 2006).

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Single parent households can be achieved in a number of ways and these range from parents separating or divorcing and tending to the child on his or her own. There has also been an increase in becoming a mother before marrying the father of the child (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008). With these two pathways leading to single parenthood the phenomenon of cohabiting has become increasingly popular and makes it difficult in the distinction between one and two parent families or households (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008).

Mueller and Cooper (1986) suggest that children who are reared in single parent households have low economic, educational and employment attainment in comparison to children reared in married parent families. Being reared in a single mother family was associated with a decrease in achievement (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Furthermore, children from single parent households spend less time with their parents and have less parental observation and supervision than children who are reared in married family households (Kendig & Bianchi, 2008; Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Kendig and Bianchi's (2008) findings in their undertaking of family structure and maternal time spent with children, found that single mothers spent less time with their children. On the contrary, they found that these single mothers were spending as much as 90% of their time with children similar to married mothers. Single parents also need to juggle the responsibilities of caregiver and provider (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Single mothers who experience financial difficulties face a number of issues ranging from poor educational attainment, minimal social support and psychological distress (Jackson et al., 2000). These issues have various effects on their children (Jackson et al., 2000). When focusing on single parent families, which are often headed by females, money seemed to be one of the greatest concerns (Richards & Schmiege, 1993). Children in single parent households also seemed to have significantly lower financial and educational achievement (Richards & Schmiege, 1993) as well as ranked the lowest when considering psychological well-being (Louis & Zhao, 2002) than children in married parent households.

When examining the dropout rates of students and investigating a range of factors that assist in the development of students towards their goal achievements of completing education, two factors were found to be significant: coming from a single parent household; and having the mother's motivation as being influential in striving to be better, while the father was absent (Scheel, Madabhushi & Backhaus, 2009). Even when looking at the health trajectories of children from single parent households there has been evidence that children from married parent households also have positive and higher relations of health (Schmeer, 2012).

When an individual grows up in a household with only one parent it is often related to a number of poor child development outcomes (Musick & Meier, 2010). Children who are reared in single parent families are generally associated with the involvement in substance use and abuse trends as well as their risky behaviour (Carlson, 2006; Musick & Meier, 2010). Added to this it is found that children who come from these single parent households generally seem to start their families at a very young age and it seems to be unmarried families (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). This also would continue the cycle of single unmarried family households.

### 2.3.1.2    Married Parent Households

Marriage and marital security has been associated with health and well-being (Meadows, Brooks-Gunn & McLanahan, 2008). In examining the importance of childhood development and family experiences, Hungerford and Cox (2006) have found that psychosocial factors, quality of social support and spousal support are important factors in the influence of child development. With this being said it can be seen that the support of a spouse within marriage will have important implications on the development of a child. Blackman, Clayton, Glenn, Malone-Colon and Roberts (2005) found that marriage creates some form of 'permanence' among family members and this positively affects the relationships within the family.

Married parent households were also seen as being the strongest indicator of paternal involvement within the family (Blackman et al., 2005). The safest form of household for children to be living in is an intact married parent household with a mother and father present (Wilcox & Dew, 2008). Goodman and Greaves (2010) mentions that children in married parent households generally fare better when looking at schooling and in social and emotional development in comparison to children raised in other family structures. Waldfogel et al. (2010) similarly mention that children in married parent households tend to do better than children in single parent households with regards to educational achievement, risk of teenage pregnancy and the world of work. Musick and Meier (2010) looked at whether being reared by both parents was better than one, taking parental conflict and children's well-being into consideration. The results showed that children in married parent households generally are better than those in single parent households; however, this was not the same for every child reared in a married parent household, as parental conflict impacts on child well-being (Musick & Meier, 2010). Married parents also seemed to have higher levels of supportiveness with their children than did unmarried households (Howard & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Additionally Roman (2008; 2011) suggests that there is no significant difference between married and single households in terms of how parenting is perceived. Thus the literature provides conflicting results of research conducted in the area of family structure. What is clear is that family structure has implications for children.

The effects of marriage on the well-being of children are frequently found within research outputs; there have been summaries that the well-being of children who live with both parents generally tends to fare way better than children who do not (Amato, 2005). One of the most important relationships that exist within an individual's life is the relationship between a child and his / her parent(s) (Morton & Markey, 2009). A larger support network and supportive experience is evident in a married relationship. Foucault and Schneider (2009)

have alluded to married mothers as having experienced greater satisfaction in their role as a parent. However added to this there is evidence that married mothers who receive greater support are also more responsive, warmer, nurturing and provide the platform for more stimulation among their children (Foucault & Schneider, 2009). With the embodiment of these qualities among married mothers, the children from these married households tend to aspire toward personal well-being and development.

Even though there has been lots of research that suggests married parent households tend to have a positive relationship on child well-being, it is often taken for granted that there might be conflict that exists among married parents and this might have a negative effect on child well-being (Musick & Meier, 2010). Musick and Meier (2010) further state that generally children from married parent households do well in comparison to children who do not live in married parent households. However the benefits and joys of being reared in married parent households are not enjoyed by all. One of the elements that influence some children reared in married parent households, include parental conflict and arguing as children who are exposed to parents who argue within their parental environment will fare worse than children who find themselves within a married parent household with the absence of arguing and parental conflict within the home (Hanson, 1999).

Morton and Markey (2009) state that an individual's goals and the behaviours and actions that are associated with the successful achievement of these goals are greatly influenced by their immediate social environments. Based within SDT there is an assumption that the social environments or contexts provide a platform for two types of motivation through the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012).

**2.3.2   Impact of the family structure on adolescents' goals and aspirations**

SDT states that when the three basic psychological needs receive support from the environment in which the individual finds him/herself the well-being of the individual is enhanced (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch & Thǿgersen-Ntoumani, 2011; Chirkov et al., 2003). Chirkov et al. (2003) also mention that, on the contrary, when an environment 'blocks' or hinders the satisfaction of the three psychological needs then well-being is diminished, as these psychological needs are necessary for health and well-being to be maintained. Within SDT the social environment or context impacts on the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs and this further impacts and influences self-determined motivation and behaviour (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). Little (2007) further adds that the well-being of an individual is dependent on the agreement between the personal and contextual factors within an individual's life where the aim is to pursue endeavours that are of utmost importance.
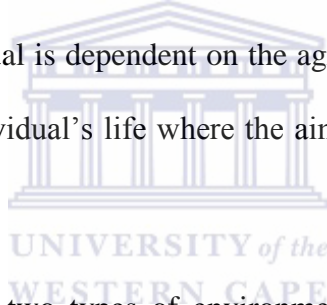
SDT makes distinction between two types of environments that exist, namely that of an autonomy supportive environment and a controlling supportive environment (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). An environment that is considered to be autonomy supportive would be where persons of authority (or parents within the framework of this study) allow an individual's perspective or view to count as being valid, and assist in the development and in the creation of an environment that is deemed secure and provides positive feedback (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). On the contrary a controlling supportive environment would be an environment that forces an individual to behave, think and experience phenomena in a certain way (Haivas, Hofmans & Pepermans, 2012). In light of environment that can be both enhancing and hindering, Friedel, Cortina, Turner and Midgley (2007) mention that children who find themselves with a parent or parents that are very supportive and encouraging would

aspire toward goal accomplishments that would further assist in their well-being. Hungerford and Cox (2006) have also mentioned that in the socialisation of children, there are three major environments that play a great role; these include (i) families, (ii) environments outside of the home and (iii) peer groups.

Family structure, namely that of being a single or married parent household, could provide either an enhancing or hindering environment for the satisfaction or frustration of these needs. Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried (1998) conducted a longitudinal study and found that the parental home environment played an important role in the prediction of academic intrinsic motivation. Gutman (2006) examined the effects of the goals of learners and their parents in a cross sectional study among African Americans from low socio-economic backgrounds. This study found that parents who advocated for the mastery of goals and aspirations among their children, seemed to have higher academic grades than their counterparts whose parents did not promote goal achievement and pursuit (Gutman, 2006). Added to the findings by Gutman (2006), Friedel, Cortina, Turner and Midgley (2007) conducted a study that looked at children's perceived emphasis of parents and teachers on their goal achievement and accomplishments within a school setting. The results from this study suggest that the perceived emphasis placed by parents and teachers had an effect on the child's personal goals (Friedel, Cortina, Turner & Midgley, 2007). Ispa (2002) looked at Russian child care workers and their goals and views of children at the time that the cross sectional study was underway and the differences experienced 10 years back. The child care workers highlighted that parents tend to spend less time with their children now than 10 years in the past (Ispa, 2002).

Starting in childhood, there are always environmental circumstances that influence various approaches to goals and achievements, including academic achievement (Yu & Patterson,

2010). Yu and Patterson (2010) allude to the family structure as being an environment that plays a role in the development of children, as this complex environment includes ethnic differences, socioeconomic statuses, parent differences and cultural variations.

The goals that parents have for their children comprise of the different typologies of values and quality of life that the different parents and family structures embody (Suizzo, 2007). These values and environmental circumstances all influence and direct the parenting, socialisation and rearing processes on a daily basis.

### 2.3.3 Understanding the concepts of goals and aspirations

When individuals speak about living a happy and purposeful life which has meaning, very often they refer to their goals in life and their aspirations for the future (Ingrid et al., 2009). There is also belief that discussions and thoughts about the future and goals assist in giving one's life some sort of structure and meaning (Ingrid et al., 2009). Goal setting is believed to be important with regards to satisfaction with life as well as well-being (Frisch, 1998). As mentioned earlier, the core of human motivation is the belief in behaviour that is governed by goal orientation and belief. Oyserman and Fryberg (2006) have also alluded to goal content being governed by cultural, tradition and social norms and customs. Hagger and Malmbrg (2011) has alluded that if a number of successful goals pursuits have been achieved by an individual, this constant history of successful achievements of goals promotes motivation and drives for future goals setting and enhances the individual's sense of well-being. Life goals that individuals strive towards are seen as affording an understanding of who you are as an individual as well as your place within a section of society or community, which adds value and meaning to life (Budhwar, Reeves & Farrell, 2000).

In light of goal and aspiration content and pursuit, adolescence is an important phase as it is at this stage that identity formulation is at work, and the process of goal location and

achievement is of paramount importance (Erickson, 1963). When embarking on the quest of goal setting and realisation it creates a sense of self-directedness and autonomy within the individual. The sense of self-directedness allows the individual to place him/herself within the dominion of goal directed behaviour and self-sufficient activity towards the pursuit of life goals and aspirations.

According to SDT, the long term goals that individuals have direct the activities that individuals are involved in and become involved in (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Goals can be defined as being the 'internal representations of desired outcomes' (Ingrid et al., 2009). In the process of goal setting and attainment, an individual is faced with using their time, resources, energy and drive, and this process allows for an individual to journey along the emotional experience toward goal directed behaviour (Emmons, 1991).

### 2.3.4 Tools or methodological frameworks used to measure goals and aspirations

Parenting takes place within the familial environment that includes a number of important factors. The factors within the family environment include socioeconomic status and employment, family traditions and structure, family structure as well as the roles that are ascribed to different members of the family. With the complex features of the family environment it seems to guide a number of goals and future orientated processes. Bryant, Zvonkovic and Reynolds (2006) have found that vocational goals and aspirations in relation to the complexity of familial environment foster child and adolescent vocational development.

College student goals and aspirations were examined and compared with their parents' expectation of their goals. The finding suggested that parents placed lots of emphasis on goals within the realm of religion and morality where the students placed goal and aspiration importance on health, wealth, social relations and autonomy (Morton & Markey, 2009). The

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findings of this study are very different to the view of how parenting and the familial environment plays a supportive and guiding role in goals and aspirations of students.

The content of individual goals as well as their goal pursuits has been of importance to many motivational theorists. Massey, Gebhardt and Garnefski (2008) have reviewed a number of research outputs that have given light to goal and aspiration content and pursuit. Their review covers goal content with particular focus on adolescence which will be incorporated into this conceptual framework on goals and aspirations.

In the exploration of goal content of 114 American adolescents Ali, McWhirter and Chronister (2005) focused on the vocational goals and aspirations. The study collected data by means of a questionnaire. The results for this study indicated that vocational goal content and pursuit in relation to strong support from mothers were associated with high levels of vocational goal achievements and self-worth (Ali et al., 2005). The support of friends and siblings was also related to high levels of self-efficacy and self-worth (Ali et al., 2005). Added to these findings was the higher the level of self-efficacy that was attained it was correlated with higher levels of vocational goal pursuit and expectancy (Ali et al., 2005).

Barry and Wentzel (2006) investigated adolescents' goals and aspirations in light of pro-social behaviour and encounters with the social environment. The results for this study which were collected over a two year longitudinal study by means of a questionnaire, revealed that an adolescent's friend's pro-social behaviour was linked to pro-social goal pursuits (Barry & Wentzel, 2006). The results also showed that when an individual engaged in goals and aspirations that were deemed pro-social it was correlated to pro-social behaviour (Barry & Wentzel, 2006).

The goals and aspirations that parents often have for their children are generally high and adolescents on the other hand seem to have lower goals set for them. These are some of the

findings that Behnke, Piercy, and Diversi (2004) found by means of interviews with adolescents and their parents. This study also indicated that adolescents often have blurred or unidentified perceptions of how they are going to attain their goals that they have set for themselves. Behnke et al. (2004) have also found that the themes that emanated from the study with regards to what is needed to assist these adolescents in attaining their goals included a need for education, information and knowledge to assist in generating goal directed behaviour. Creed, Conlon and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) also studied adolescents' and their parents' occupational goals. The results showed that there was a difference between adolescents' occupational goals and their parents' (Creed et al., 2007). The adolescents' goals were lower than their parents' goal expectancy. The study also showed that the greater the adolescent reading abilities the greater the occupational goals (Creed et al., 2007). Malmberg et al. (2005) also conducted a study looking at the relationship between Finland-Swedish adolescents and their parents. The results from this cross-sectional study indicated that there was no relationship between adolescents' and their parents' goals (Malmberg et al., 2005). The findings also suggested that the girls who formed part of this study had reported that goals were less likely to occur and were not deemed important (Malmberg et al., 2005). There were no any age differences reported from the findings.

The results of the studies by Behnke et al. (2004) and Creed et al. (2007) are somewhat different with regards to the goal content and aspirations of parents and their adolescents that were found in Budhwar et al. (2000) research. Budhwar et al. (2000) conducted individual interviews with participants and found that there was a relationship between the life goals of parents and their children. Male children who were encouraged towards independence by their mothers had high scores for goals such as self-expression, fame, leadership and independence. Female children who were also encouraged towards independence by their mothers also scored high on goals of leadership and independence.

The goal pursuits seem to differ largely based on environmental setting, as a study conducted among Australian incarcerated youth showed that their goals and aspirations were all short-term in nature (Carroll, 1995). The goals of this group of incarcerated youth revolved around the attainment of resources, enjoyment and fun as well as participation in sports (Carroll, 1995). The goals also seem to be spontaneous rather than planned. Another study Carroll, Durkin, Hattie and Houghton (1997) did a comparison between the goals and aspirations of delinquent and law-abiding youth. The results from this study showed that goal content and pursuits differed on the basis of delinquency status; goals aimed at education and interpersonal development were related to non-delinquent youth (Carroll et al., 1997). Conversely, delinquency was related to more attention placed on goals related to social image. Carroll, Hattie, Durkin and Houghton (2001) conducted another study that included delinquent, at risk and not at risk youth, where there was an investigation into the goals of these youth. The results from this study showed that not at risk youth placed more importance on the goals and aspirations towards education, delinquent and at risk youth placed a greater importance on delinquent related goals (Carroll et al., 2001). During the investigation of these goals pursuits, there has also been focus on the family structure, whether living with two parents or not, but there were no significant differences between the two groups on the basis of family structure (Carroll et al., 2001).

The goals of adolescents were also investigated in a four year longitudinal study conducted by Chang, Chen, Greenberger, Dooley and Heckhausen (2006). The study looked at the pursuit of medium and long-term goals by means of a questionnaire. The goals of education and occupation were ranked among the highest by the participants. The goals ranked in order of importance among the participants were autonomy and education, occupations, family and self-actualised goals and aspirations (Chang et al., 2006).

Occupational and vocational goals of learners in grade 2 to 8 were also examined by Cook, Church, Ajanaku, Shadish, Kim and Cohen (1996). The study indicated that there were differences on the basis of the perfect occupational and expected goals with regards to ethnicity and grade difference (Cook et al., 1996). Other factors that played an important role in the occupational and vocational goals of these learners were that of living with biological parents, the number of perceived role models and the perceptions of hindrances towards successful achievement (Cook et al., 1996). Educational aspirations and alcohol consumption were investigated among adolescents. The results for this longitudinal study showed that there was no relationship between adolescents' alcohol use and their educational aspirations (Crum, Storr & Anthony, 2005). Grant and Dweck (2001) looked at Korean and American fifth graders and compared their academic goals. The results showed that Korean students placed a greater interest on performance goals while the American students placed more focus on learning orientations (Grant & Dweck, 2001).

When comparing the goals and aspirations of young African American boys and girls, Honora (2002) found that girls placed more focus on family goals, employment and education. The goals by the boys were focused towards goals related to sports and leisure. Within the study it also showed that participants that were seen as being high achievers were more involved in discussions around goals and supporting their family (Honora, 2002).

Adolescents and their parents were involved in an interview and completed a questionnaire that looked at goals and aspirations. The results from this study showed that there was greater emphasis placed on goals related to self-acceptance, community and relatedness and this was associated with greater psychological and social well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). Where there was evidence of greater ratings on wealth it was related to poor psychological and social well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1993).

Educational and occupational goals were studied among American and Palestinian adolescents. Khallad (2000) found that the educational goals and aspirations of both the American and Palestinian adolescents were similar in nature; however the occupational goals for the Palestinian adolescents were higher than that of their American counterparts. The results also showed that socioeconomic status was positively related to educational goals and this was more so for the female participants (Khallad, 2000). However socioeconomic status was not related to occupational goals.

In an examination of Polish adolescents' goals and aspirations for the future by means of a longitudinal study it was found that goals related to profession, family and materials were most evident among the participants (Liberska, 2002). As this was a longitudinal study, there was a shift in goal importance as the focus of the goals was now directed towards permanent employment, health and wealth (Liberska, 2002).

German adolescents reported more intrinsic goals than extrinsic goals, but there was however greater importance placed on goals related to wealth (Schmuck, 2001). The study included German adolescents and their parents, and the parents did not place a great importance on wealth related goals (Schmuck, 2001). The attainment of intrinsic goals was associated with a greater sense of well-being and the reverse was found for the attainment of extrinsic goals (Schmuck, 2001).

Schoon (2001) studied 7649 British adolescents and their parents with regards to occupational aspirations. The results from this study indicated that gender, parents' importance towards education, and parental education was related to occupational aspirations (Schoon, 2001). The findings also suggested that there was a relationship between the realisation of aspirations and their earlier goals and aspirations (Schoon, 2001).

A study looking at different dimensions of goals and aspirations of Druze, Jewish and Arabian adolescents, found that Druze and Jews scored lower than Arab adolescents in goal dimension (Seginer & Halabi, 1991). Goals related to the self and collectivism was more significant for Druze adolescents than for Jewish adolescents in the study (Seginer & Halabi, 1991).

When one considers the research that has been conducted abroad on goals and aspirations as well as aspects of goal content of individuals on an international platform it also becomes important to focus on research that has been conducted within Africa and South Africa more specifically.

Cherian (2001) investigated the relationship between parental aspirations and academic achievement of Xhosa children; the results showed that there was a relationship between the aspirations of the parents and the academic achievement of the children. Similarly, a study was conducted which qualitatively explored the academic achievement and career aspirations of Zulu students who had completed their secondary schooling and it appeared that these learners found family to be a form of support in their development as well as the aspiration to do well academically (Robbins, Wallis & Dunston, 2003). Furthermore, these learners' commitment and views of academic success and aspirations were not linked to their future goals. This indicated a lack of social support networks that assisted in future goal development and promotion (Robbins et al., 2003).

Hofer and Chasiotis (2003) conducted a study with Gwembe Tonga Zambian boys looking at goals and aspirations as well as satisfaction with life. The results for the study showed that the greater importance that was placed on life goals by the participants was related to greater life satisfaction.

Research looking at the goals and aspirations has been done on both an international platform and also within Africa and South Africa. More specifically, however it also becomes important to consider the implications of goals and aspirations in relation to family structure. Family structure is often considered to be an important factor in the socialisation of individuals and therefore to consider how family structure has played a role in the identification of goals and aspirations in research is important.

### 2.3.5   The use of SDT to measure goals and aspirations among adolescents

According to SDT, an individual's goal content and processes involved in creating goals often represent the status of the basic psychological needs of individuals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When the basic psychological needs of individuals are satisfied they would have goals and aspirations which are intrinsic. Intrinsic goals are thought to be associated with behaviour and actions that can be explained as being 'self-determined' (McHoskey, 1999). Behaviour and actions that are experienced as being 'controlled externally' would be the encounter of extrinsic goals (McHoskey, 1999). The intrinsic life goals include personal growth, community contributions, physical fitness and meaningful relationships (Ingrid et al., 2009; McHoskey, 1999; Williams, Cox, Hedberg & Deci, 2000). On the contrary, frustration of the basic psychological needs encourages the development of extrinsic life goals, which include wealth, fame and image (Ryan et al., 2008). Intrinsic life goals are largely linked to the three basic psychological needs that promote health and well-being (Vansteenkiste, Matos, Lens & Soenens, 2007; Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009). Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) confirm that intrinsic goals promote psychological well-being of individuals, as these individuals satisfy their basic psychological needs whilst working towards achieving their goals and aspirations. The psychological need of relatedness can be seen in the intrinsic goals of community involvement and meaningful relationships (Williams et al., 2000) and the need for autonomy

can be seen in personal growth and physical fitness (Williams et al., 2000). The intrinsic goals of personal growth and physical fitness can also assist in satisfying the need of competence as it would be the encouragement of individuals to pursue challenging activities in the process of goal attainment (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). Extrinsic life goals limit the chances of becoming involved in basic need satisfying behaviour which ultimately leads to less subjective well-being (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). It is also associated with negative associations of self-actualisation, vitality and positive affect (Williams et al., 2000) according to a study conducted. McHoskey (1999) has alluded to the Self-Determination Theory's perspective that more importance placed on extrinsic goals rather than intrinsic goals would result in 'undermined personality integration and well-being'.

Moller and Deci (2010) found that the manner in which an individual experiences some sort of control can also be linked to content and nature of an individual's goals, as extrinsic goals which include wealth, fame and image can be linked to a more controlled experience whilst intrinsic goals allow for more autonomous behaviour.

A study conducted by Poulsen, Ziviani and Cuskelly (2006) explored boys' perceptions of self-image, peer and parent relationships, satisfaction with life and appearance. The results of the study showed that the participants who had a rating of moderate to severe physical coordination challenges in physical activity had a lesser sense of self, a lower outlook on their appearance as well as their abilities. The results from those participants who fell within the moderate to severe range also had lower life satisfaction and weaker peer and parent relationships. The opposite was found for the participants who scored between medium and high levels of physical coordination in physical activity; these participants had a heightened sense of self, higher life satisfaction, good relationships and communication between friends and parents as well as positively attribution to their appearance.

The perceived accomplishment of intrinsic goals is associated with greater well-being; this however is not the same for the perceived attainment of extrinsic life goals, as it is not related to positive or negative well-being (Ryan et al., 1999). Sheldon, Gunz, Nichols and Ferguson (2010) also looked at intrinsic and extrinsic goals of individuals and found that persons who valued extrinsic goals more, were less happy; however these persons assumed that these extrinsic goals would be their pathway to happiness. In a second study, individuals had to choose between selecting intrinsic or extrinsic goals that needed to be achieved within a four week period. The results showed that persons who selected extrinsic goals had not achieved well-being gains; however those who selected intrinsic goals were left feeling happier (Sheldon et al., 2010). Sheldon et al. (2010) further mention that the emotional advantages of extrinsic goals are often overestimated. Sheldon, Ryan, Deci and Kasser (2004) also state that not only does the goal content (whether intrinsic or extrinsic) play a role in psychological well-being but also the reasons why individuals pursue them.

Individuals seem to rate their goals and aspirations with regards to importance the same, starting with the intrinsic goals of relatedness and personal growth as being the most important, followed by the extrinsic goals (Ryan et al., 1999). This study was conducted using college students from Russia and the United States (Ryan et al., 1999). A similar study was conducted using participants from Germany and the United States and the same results were obtained (Schmuck, Kasser & Ryan, 2000). In another study the importance of goal rating was also looked at and found to be the same for individuals from 15 different cultural groups across the world (Grouzet et al., 2005).

In comparing single and married parent households, Garg, Melanson and Levin (2007) found that adolescents from single parent households reported lower educational aspirations in comparison to the adolescents who were from married parent households. Additionally, the

influence of peers on adolescents seemed to be greater for adolescents from the single parent households as opposed to those from married parent households. The findings suggest that parental background, behaviours and involvement all play a role in facilitating an environment that promotes educational aspirations. Similarly, a study by Lee, Kushner & Cho (2007) also shows that children from married parent households tend to perform exceptionally well in academic attainment and achievement compared to children from single parent households. Thus, while research suggests that there may be differences between single and married households, this may not necessarily be the same in a South African context.

## 2.4    Conclusion

This chapter has assisted in shedding light on research within the sphere of goals and aspirations as well as family structure. There has also been an introduction to the motivational theory of Self Determination Theory and the interplay between the content of goals and aspirations and the implications on psychological well-being. The next chapter presents the methodological process undertaken to conduct the study.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1.  Introduction

Within this chapter an outline of the methodological process that was employed during the study will be explored. Methodology is the processes involved in acquiring the necessary knowledge that is needed to answer the research questions of a particular study. It also provides a framework or design for the way in which a researcher will collect and analyse data through a reliable and valid process. This study took on a quantitative methodological approach as it intended to objectively examine the relationship between variables. Within the context of the study, the variables which were examined for possible relationships were that of family structure and the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners. This chapter will shed light on the research process taken from the selection of participants, the pilot study, changes made to the instrument and the main data collection as well as analysis of the data. The objectives for the study were as follows:

## 3.2  Objectives of the study

The **objectives** of the study were:

- To establish the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners.

- To determine the prevalence of single and married parent households of learners at secondary school.

- To establish the effects of family structure on goals and aspirations of learners.

- To compare the goals and aspirations of learners from single and married parent households.

- To establish if there is a significant difference between the goals and aspirations of learners living in single and married parent households.

- To determine if learners from single parent households have more extrinsic life goals than learners from married parent households.

## 3.3    Research methodology and design

This research study used a quantitative research methodology. Quantitative research allows the researcher to test objective theories through studying the relationships between variables (Creswell, 2009). These variables are measured by means of an instrument and numeric data is synthesised and analysed through statistical methods (Creswell, 2009). Research design refers to the outline or strategies put in place by a researcher with the attempt to satisfy the research problem at hand (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). A non-experimental research strategy was made use of as this assists in demonstrating a relationship between variables, which within the framework of this study were family structure and goal content, rather than trying to explain the relationship (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012).

A cross sectional comparative research design was employed. This allowed the researcher to get a glimpse of the phenomena being studied at one particular point in time and allowing for a comparison. Therefore with the cross-sectional design that was used, the data was collected at one particular time and it can only show results for that particular time and cannot illustrate possible changes that might be occurring (Mertler & Charles, 2005). The comparative design also allowed the researcher to explore any differences between the two groups (within this

study it compared single and married parent households) with regards to the phenomenon that was studied (which is goal content within this study) (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

## 3.4     Sample

This study formed part of a larger research project headed by the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape. The sample for the bigger project consisted of 5138 Grade 11 learners from various secondary schools within the Western Cape. The use of stratification and random sampling was implemented to identify schools within the eight districts of Western Cape Education Department. Stratified sampling is described as a process where the sample is divided into subgroups and then randomly selected from these subgroups (Opie, 2004). The subgroups that were used as part of the stratified sampling technique were that of race, as race within the Western Cape is still a large indicator of the socio-economic status of schools. The schools were stratified into subgroups on the basis of the majority racial group within the school. By doing this the schools were classified in accordance with race and then selected schools randomly within these various subgroups that were also largely representative of the socio-economic status. Then the schools, which formed the subgroups on the basis of racial categorie,s were randomly selected to form part of the sample for the study.

This study focused on the Northern, Metro Central and Southern Districts within the Western Cape Education Department. The Northern, Metro Central and Southern Districts were chosen as they were geographically convenient for the researcher. The identified sample for this study consisted of 2022 Grade 11 learners from 5 randomly selected schools within each of the educational districts. The Yamane formula was applied to compute the sample size (Yamane, 1967). The Yamane formula states:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$

n = sample

N = population

$e^2$ = probability error

However the final sample for this study consisted of 853 participants from 4 schools within the Northern, Metro Central and Southern District respectively. The number of participants at the various schools differed from one another.

## 3.5 Research instrument

The participants in the study completed self-reported questionnaires to collect the required data. The questionnaires consisted of two sections; one section looked at (i) demographical details (such as age, gender, race, home language as well as whether the participants come from a single or married parent household) as well as (ii) the Aspirations Index (see Appendix I) developed by Kasser and Ryan (1996), which assesses participants' aspirations or life goals which are categorised as being either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature.

### 3.5.1   Aspirations Index

The Aspirations Index is an assessment measure that looks at individuals' life goals; these life goals are labelled as intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations (Chantara, Kaewkuekool & Koul, 2011). The intrinsic aspirations consist of 'meaningful relationships, personal growth and community contributions' while extrinsic aspirations are made up of 'wealth, fame and image'(Chantara et al., 2011). The goal of physical health sometimes can be classified into neither an intrinsic nor extrinsic goal. The reason for this is that the attainment of physical health could be for the promotion of physical appearance which is linked to image that is associated with extrinsic goals, or it could be for the general health and well-being of the individual that could be linked with personal growth, which is related to intrinsic goals. The Aspirations Index consisted of 7 goal and aspiration categories with 5 specific goals for each category. The Aspirations Index allowed the participants to rate their goals and aspirations based on (i) the importance of each aspiration and (ii) the participants' belief about attaining the aspiration (Chantara et al., 2011). The participants rated their responses to the items using a Likert scale with 1 = Not important and 4 = Very important (for the importance of each aspiration) and 1 = Not likely at all and 4 = Very likely (for the belief in attaining the aspiration).

The items were asked in the following manner:

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*Life goal: To share my life with someone I love.*

i.      *How important is this to you?*

ii.     *How likely is it that this will happen in your future?*

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## 3.6    Pilot study and results

A pilot study is often referred to as being a scaled down version of a full scale study that assists in establishing the 'feasibility' of a study but it also assists in testing reliability and validity of the measure being used and identifying possible practical problems in the research process (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

A research proposal was submitted to the University of the Western Cape's Higher Degrees Committee for ethical clearance. Once ethical clearance was received, the Western Cape Education Department was contacted to seek permission to conduct research within the identified schools. When the Western Cape Education Department had granted permission for the research to be conducted within the various schools, the respective principals were contacted to set up appointments. When convenient dates and times had been set for the meetings, the research team met with the various principals and the teachers to inform them of the study. Information sheets (see Appendix II) regarding the study were left for the parents of the Grade 11 learners along with informed consent forms (see Appendix III) that were completed by the parents. Once the informed consent forms were collected by the teachers, convenient dates and times were set when the research could be conducted at the particular schools.

Fifteen percent of the identified sample was used in the pilot study to test the reliability of the instrument. As part of the pilot study, the questionnaires were administered to a second group that were similar to the sample to allow for a test-retest method. The test-retest method assisted in measuring the internal consistency of the questionnaire. It also assisted in establishing challenges and limitations that might arise in the final data collection. The participants were informed of the study and were given an opportunity to ask the research team any questions or concerns that they had. The learners were given assent forms (see

Appendix IV) that needed to be signed before the questionnaires were administered, as an indication of their voluntary participation in the study. The administration of the questionnaire took place within a group setting with the numbers ranging from 20 to 30 learners at a time, within a class room setting that took place within the limits of the school time table.

The pilot study served to measure the reliability of the instrument; it explored language options within the questionnaire and gave insight into the data collection process. The questionnaires took approximately 30 minutes to self-administer.

### 3.6.1 Results of pilot study

The data for the pilot study was coded, cleaned and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences V20, the Cronbach alpha scores for the Aspirations Index that were obtained during the pilot study can be found in Table 3.2. The Cronbach alpha is the most widely used measure of reliability and assists in giving a measure of the internal consistency of the index (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The Cronbach alpha scores for the pilot study ranged from .73 to .86 and acceptable alpha scores according to various reports indicate a range from .70 to .95; therefore the alpha scores of the pilot study indicated that the instrument was reliable and could be used within the main study (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

**Table 3.1:  Cronbach Alpha Scores: Aspirations Index (Pilot Study)**

|  | Extrinsic Goals: Cronbach Alpha | Intrinsic Goals: Cronbach Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| **Importance** | .83 | .73 |
| **Likely** | .84 | .80 |
| **Attained** | .85 | .86 |

### 3.6.2   Changes to the instrument

The third item 'how much have you already obtained this goal?' was removed as the instrument was too lengthy and it became clear that this question was not needed as these were learners still within adolescence and the importance of them having attained certain life goals was not the focus of this study but rather on the future attainment and importance of the life goals. The Likert Scale used within the Aspirations Index was changed from a 3 point scale (which was a. Not at all, b. Moderately and c. Achieved) to a 4 point scale which now read as for the goal importance: a. Not important, b. Somewhat important, c. Important and d. Very important and the scale for goal likelihood read as follows: a. Not likely at all, b. Somewhat likely, c. Likely and d. Very likely.

### 3.6.3   Application of the instrument

The instrument was self-administered to Grade 11 learners within the Northern, Metro Central and Southern Districts of the Western Cape Education Department.

## 3.7    Data collection for the main study

Once the data had been collected, cleaned and analysed for the pilot study and the necessary changes were made to the instrument then the data collection for the main study commenced. The data collection procedure for the main study followed the same procedure as that of the pilot study.

When ethical clearance was obtained from the University's Higher Degrees Committee, application was made to the Western Cape Education Department to access schools from the main study. Principals from the various schools that were selected were contacted, and a convenient date and time was set to meet with the principal and teachers. The principals and teachers from the various schools, that were selected, were informed about the research and provided them with information sheets and consent forms before the collection of the data took place. However, during the pilot study and the main study parents were apathetic in their responses to the invitation to partake in the study, therefore child consent became a challenge as there was a lack of response with regards to the research study. However after consultation with the Dean of Law at the University of the Western Cape, who is a skilled practitioner in Children's Rights, and the University's Ethical Committee a solution to the challenge was established. As the research study was not seen nor considered as being a threat, a revised ethical statement was presented to the Ethics Committee, which allowed the adolescents to consent or withdraw from the study. Within the main study the parental consent of the learners was waivered and the learners could now either consent to participation or withdraw from the study and their response was considered valid. Their parents were however provided by means of information letters informing them that their son / daughter partook in a research study that looked at the goals and aspirations in relation to their family structure (see Appendix V). This revised ethical statement was accepted and then implemented in the data

collection process for the main study. The data for the main study, in light of the revised ethical statement, was collected during convenient dates and times as selected by the various schools which limited disruptions of the daily running of the school. The questionnaires took between 20 to 30 minutes to administer and participants were able to consult with the researcher if there was something that was not clear. The participants also had the right to withdraw from the study at anytime they felt like without any explanation needed.

## 3.8    Data analysis

The raw data for the main study was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences V20. Thereafter the data was cleaned and checked. After the data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences V20, summaries of the quantitative data were generated using simple descriptive statistics; this includes the frequencies, the means and modes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The analysis also generated inferential statistics that aims to address hypothesis and examine the relationships between variables.

To assist with the analysis of the data there were some categories that were formed. When looking at Family Structure, all the responses that selected the *Married* option formed the *Married Parent Household* Category while the *Single Parent Household* Category was formed by collapsing all the other responses, namely: *living together but not married, single and do not live together because they have never been married, single because he/she is widowed* and *single because he/she is divorced*. The categories for each of the life goals, namely that of *wealth, fame, image, personal growth, relationships, community* and *health* were formed using the mean scores of the importance responses and likelihood responses of the various life goals. The category of *Extrinsic Life Goal* was created by using the mean scores for the categories of wealth, fame and image. The category of *Intrinsic Life Goal* was created using the categories of personal growth, relationships and community. The category

of health was not used in the formation of the *Extrinsic and Intrinsic Life Goals* as the goal of health can be seen as being both extrinsic and intrinsic in nature.

An initial Repeated Measures Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, it was then followed by a Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) as part of the analysis of the data. A MANOVA was used as it allows for more than one dependant variable to be measured. By using an ANOVA more than one ANOVA would be needed, and when conducting more than one ANOVA it makes the chances of creating an error even greater (Field, 2009). However, by conducting the initial Repeated Measures ANOVA it allowed to test the differences between the means within the sample.

The use of a MANOVA also allowed for the inclusion of relationships that exist among dependant variables and it allows for the detection groups or variables to differ on a number of dimensions (Field, 2009). The use of the MANOVA also allowed for discovering whether different groups (Single Parent Households and Married Parent Households) can be defined by more than one dependant variable (Intrinsic and Extrinsic Life Goals) (Field, 2009).

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was first administered to establish if there were any significant differences that existed. To verify that there were significant differences that existed among the dependant variables a MANOVA was conducted to establish the significance of the variables.

### 3.9    Validity and reliability

The reliability of a measure refers to participants obtaining the same score on a measure if it is repeated (Evans & Rooney, 2011). The pilot study assisted in measuring the reliability of the instrument being used as a test-retest method which was implemented before the main study was conducted. The Cronbach Alpha is considered as being the most apt measure of

reliability (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, when considering the Cronbach Alpha scores for the various categories of the Aspirations Index in the Pilot Study it ranged from .73 to .86 and in the Main Study it ranged from .89 to .96 (which is looked at in Table 3.1. for the Pilot Study and Table 4.2. for the Main Study). The validity of a measure is to establish whether the instrument measures what it is intended to measure; in this study it was whether the Aspirations Index measured learners' goals and aspirations. Literature suggests the validity of the instrument across 21 countries (Spini, 2003). The Aspirations Index was also used in a study that included individuals from 15 cultures around the world and found the measure to have internal reliability and 'measurement equivalence' suggesting that the goal contents that are assessed within the Aspirations Index are notable cross-culturally (Grouzet et al., 2005). Grouzet et al. (2005) state that the results of the goals assessed within the Aspirations Index were similar for individuals from both poor and wealthy populations and that the intrinsic and extrinsic goal contents were strongly consistent.
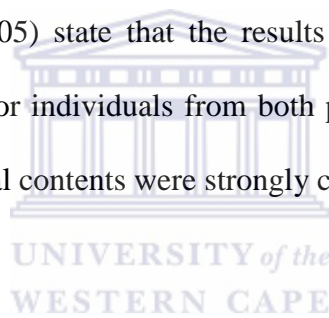
## 3.10    Ethical statement

When conducting research the ethical standards are of utmost importance. The foundation on which all actions are taken within research is based on the ethical considerations of the researcher. These foundations are, (i) beneficence, (ii) competence, (iii) non-maleficence, (iv) integrity and (v) the respect for Human Rights and dignity (Swartz, de la Rey, Duncan & Townsend, 2008).

Beneficence refers to the moral responsibility of the researcher to act in a manner that benefits the participants (Allan, 2008). In so doing, the research was aimed at considering family structure in the identification of goals and aspirations for learners, as this area in research has not been considered within the South African context. However looking at family structure becomes important in the South African context as we find that just over

48% of children in South Africa are reared in a single parent household. When looking at competence, it refers to the scope of practice of the researcher and what he/she is capable of researching. One of the major ethical considerations of assessment practitioners would be to cause no harm, which is known as non-maleficence (Swartz et al, 2008). Swartz et al (2008) also state that the 'commitment to truth' is what would be considered as integrity. The last ethical foundation that needs to be considered is the respect for Human Rights and human dignity. This is extremely important in the South African context as we need to accommodate and consider all individuals regardless of their race, creed, gender, beliefs, disability and language, as the research should not be used to discriminate, as it is against the law of our country (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

By giving insight into the ethical foundations that are considered within research, it becomes important to highlight the steps that were taken in alignment with these ethical foundations within the research. The research proposal for the study was submitted to the University of the Western Cape's Higher Degrees and Ethical Committee for ethical clearance. The study received ethical clearance and the Western Cape Education Department was approached to conduct research within the various schools that partook in the study. Permission from the Western Cape Education Department was granted. Thereafter, the various schools were contacted and dates and times were set to meet with the principals and teachers to discuss the details of the study.

In the execution of the pilot study, consent forms (see Appendix III) and information letters (see Appendix II) were provided to the learners at the various schools. The information letter outlined the aims and objectives of the study as well as the process of collecting the data for the study. If parents consented for the participation of their children in the study, the consent form would be returned to the school. Thereafter a convenient date and time was set for data

collection that did not interfere with the daily running of the school time table. The data collection process of the pilot study seemed to have its challenges as parents were very apathetic in their responses to the invitation for the participation in the study. This then created a challenge around child consent as there was lack in responses for participation in the study.

After considering the challenges that were at hand, professional advice was sought. In so doing consultation with the Dean of Law at the University of the Western Cape was sought, who is a skilled practitioner in Children's Rights, as well as the University's Ethical Committee. A solution to the challenges that were faced then arose, since the research study was not deemed as being a threat, a revised ethical statement was presented to the University's Ethics Committee. The revised ethical statement allowed the adolescent to consent or withdraw from the research study. The revised ethical statement was accepted and implemented in the main study's data collection process which then allowed the parental consent of learners to be waived within the main study. Additionally, learners could now either consent to their participation or withdraw from the study. The learners' responses were also considered to be valid. Furthermore the parents of the learners were informed that their son / daughter partook in the research study and it outlined the aims and objectives as well as the nature of the data collection process by means of an information letter (see Appendix V) and allowed the parents to contact the researcher and research supervisor (full contact details were provided) should they have had any questions or concerns regarding their child's participation in the research study.

**3.11     Conclusion**

This chapter explored the research methodology employed within the study. It further highlighted the process and procedure followed in detail from the submission of the research proposal for ethical clearance to the main study data collection and analysis, keeping in mind the overall aims and objective of the research study. The study results will be explored in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS

## 4.1    Introduction

The results of the analysis of the study are presented in this chapter. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) V20 was used in the analysis of the data that was gathered within the study. The results will be presented by means of (i) descriptive statistics, then (ii) showing the variables between the two groups (single parent household and married parent household). Due to the amount of information contained within some tables, Appendix VI will have some of the tables that contain large amounts of information, which are referred to within this chapter. The codes that were used when coding the data for the various variables into SPSS during the analysis are presented in Table 4.1 (see Appendix VI).
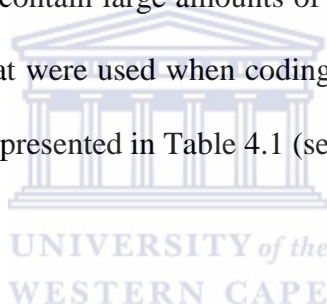
## 4.2    Analysis Overview

The hypotheses for this study were:

- There will be a significant difference between the goals and aspirations of the learners living in households headed by single and married parents.

- Learners from single parent households would have more extrinsic life goals in comparison to learners from married parent households who would have intrinsic life goals.

## 4.3    Internal Consistency of Instrument

The study made use of the Aspirations Index developed by Kasser and Ryan (1996) that assesses the life goals and aspirations of participants and categorises the life goals as being either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. The Cronbach alpha scores of the instrument variables were assessed as it is a measure of reliability and helps with establishing the internal consistency of the instrument (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

Table 4.2 (see Appendix VI) indicates the Cronbach alpha scores for the variables within the Aspirations Index. All the Cronbach alpha scores are above .75 and are considered acceptable (Anastasi, 1982). They assist in establishing the reliability of the variables and instrument used.

## 4.4    Description of the sample

Table 4.3outlines the demographical information that was gathered for the study sample that consisted of 853 participants from secondary schools within the Western Cape.

**Table 4.3:   Demographical Details of Sample according to Family Structure**

|  |  | *Total Sample* | *Single* | *Married* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 364 (42.7%) | 126 (40.5%) | 237 (44.1%) |
|  | Female | 486 (57.0%) | 182 (58.5%) | 301 (55.9%) |
| **Age** | Mean Age | 16.96 | 16.98 | 16.94 |
|  |  | (SD= 1.04) | (SD= 1.24) | (SD= .91) |
| **Racial** | Coloured | 390 (45.7%) | 115 (37.0%) | 273 (50.7%) |
| **Category** | Black | 225 (26.4%) | 111 (35.7%) | 112 (20.8%) |
|  | White | 171 (20.0%) | 68 (21.9%) | 103 (19.1%) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Indian / Asian | 56 (6.6%) | 13 (4.2%) | 43 (8.0%) |
| **Home Language** | English | 517 (60.6%) | 152 (48.9%) | 364 (67.7%) |
| | Afrikaans | 119 (14.0%) | 53 (17.0%) | 65 (12.1%) |
| | isiXhosa | 197 (23.1%) | 103 (33.1%) | 92 (17.1%) |
| | Other | 20 (2.3%) | 3 (1.0%) | 17 (3.2%) |
| **School District** | Central | 332 (38.9%) | 91 (29.3%) | 240 (44.6%) |
| | Southern | 257 (30.1%) | 125 (40.2%) | 132 (24.5%) |
| | Northern | 264 (30.9%) | 95 (30.5%) | 166 (30.9%) |
| **Living Arrangements** | Both Parents | 490 (57.4%) | 8 (2.6%) | 482 (89.6%) |
| | Mother Only | 249 (29.2%) | 227 (73.0%) | 21 (3.9%) |
| | Father Only | 43 (5.0%) | 38 (12.2%) | 4 (0.7%) |
| | Caregiver / Guardian | 70 (8.2%) | 38 (12.2%) | 30 (5.6%) |
| **Marital Status of Parent** | Married | 511 (59.9%) | - | 511 (95%) |
| | Live together but not married | 27 (3.2%) | - | 27 (5.0%) |
| | Single and do not live together because they never married | 105 (12.3%) | 105 (33.8%) | - |
| | Single because he/she widowed | 71 (8.3%) | 71 (22.8%) | - |
| | Single because he/she divorced | 135 (15.8%) | 135 (43.4%) | - |
| **Family structure** | | - | 311 (36.6%) | 538 (63.4%) |

Table 4.3 indicates that more female participants [486 (57.0%)] than male participants [364 (42.7%)] partook in the study. The mean age for the total sample was 16.96. The participants identified themselves as Coloured [390 (45.7%)], followed by Black African [225 (26.4%)], White [171 (20.0%)] and Indian / Asian [56 (6.6%)]. English [517 (60.6%)] was the most common spoken language among the participants and it was followed by isiXhosa [197 (23.1%)] and Afrikaans [119 (14.0%)]. Majority of the participants came from the Central Educational District [332 (38.9%)] within the Western Cape Education Department regions and the least number of participants came from the Southern District [257 (30.1%)]; however there was only a 0.8% difference between the number of participants from the Southern and Northern [264 (30.9%)] Education Districts. There were more participants from a single parent family structure in the Southern District [125 (40.2%)] than there were in the Central [91 (29.3%)] and Northern Districts [95 (30.2%)]. The number of participants from married parent households was the highest among participants from the Central Education District [240 (44.6%)]. A large proportion of the participants lived in two-parent households [490 (57.4%)]; in single parent households most participants lived with only their mothers [227 (73.0%)]. The study was made up of 511 (59.9%) participants who came from married parent households while the rest came from households where parents lived together but were not married [27 (3.2%)], parent was single and do not live together as they were not married [105 (12.3%)], single because parents widowed [71 (8.3%)] or due to divorce [135 (15.8%)].

## 4.5    Goals and aspirations

This section will look at the different life goals that make up the extrinsic and intrinsic goals and it will represent the mean scores and standard deviation for the total sample, single parent households and married parent households. The mean scores for the life goals will be represented in tables:

### 4.5.1 Extrinsic life goals

The overall mean scores and standard deviation score are presented for the extrinsic goal category at the end of the chapter (see Table 4.25) however, first a breakdown of the different items that form the various life goals is presented. When focusing on extrinsic life goals the goals are that of wealth, fame and image and will be represented in Tables 4.4 – 4.12 and will look at the importance of the different goals in relation to the participant's life as well as the likelihood of attaining these goals.

#### 4.5.1.1 Wealth

**Table 4.4: Wealth Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Wealth:* *Importance* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To be a very wealthy person | 853 | 2.94 | .91 | 311 | 3.06 | .91 | 538 | 2.88 | .91 |
| To have many expensive possessions | 853 | 2.25 | 1.05 | 311 | 2.31 | 1.10 | 538 | 2.20 | 1.02 |
| To be financially successful | 853 | 3.41 | .74 | 311 | 3.50 | .68 | 538 | 3.36 | .76 |
| To be rich | 853 | 2.56 | 1.05 | 311 | 2.69 | 1.05 | 538 | 2.48 | 1.05 |
| To have enough money to buy everything I want | 853 | 2.97 | .97 | 311 | 3.03 | .95 | 538 | 2.93 | .99 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

Table 4.4 shows that the total sample indicated that *to be financially successful* [*M*= 3.41, *SD*= .74] was very important when looking at the life goal of wealth among the participants in the study. Participants from single parent households [*M*= 3.50, *SD*= .68] as well as married parent households [*M*= 3.36, *SD*= .76] also indicated that the aspiration *to be financially successful* was deemed the most important. The total sample [*M*= 2.25, *SD*= 1.07] indicated that the aspiration *to have many expensive possessions* was the least important among the aspirations of wealth. The same was found among participants from single parent [*M*= 2.31, *SD*= 1.09] and married parent households [*M*= 2.20, *SD*= 1.02].

**Table 4.5: Wealth Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Wealth: Likelihood* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To be a very wealthy person | 853 | 2.91 | .77 | 311 | 2.98 | .79 | 538 | 2.88 | .76 |
| To have many expensive possessions | 853 | 2.63 | .86 | 311 | 2.66 | .89 | 538 | 2.60 | .85 |
| To be financially successful | 853 | 3.21 | .72 | 311 | 3.30 | .71 | 538 | 3.15 | .72 |
| To be rich | 853 | 2.70 | .89 | 311 | 2.82 | .88 | 538 | 2.63 | .89 |
| To have enough money to buy everything I want | 853 | 2.89 | .89 | 311 | 3.01 | .86 | 538 | 2.81 | .90 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

The likelihood of attaining wealth is indicated in Table 4.5. The majority of participants [*M*= 3.21, *SD*= .72] indicated *to be financially successful* would in all likelihood be attained. This was similar for single [*M*= 3.30, *SD*= .71] and married parent households [*M*= 3.15, *SD*= .72] with participants from single parent households indicating higher mean scores than participants in married parent households. The aspiration which was considered to be the least likely to be attained was *to have many expensive possessions* [*M*= 2.63, *SD*= .86]. This

was similar for participants from single [*M*= 2.66, *SD*= .89] and married parent households [*M*= 2.60, *SD*= .85].

**Table 4.6:    Wealth Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Wealth | 851 | 3.35 | .38 | 310 | 3.39 | .35 | 537 | 3.33 | .39 |
| Wealth: Importance | 851 | 3.45 | .38 | 310 | 3.49 | .35 | 537 | 3.44 | .39 |
| Wealth: Likelihood | 852 | 3.25 | .47 | 311 | 3.30 | .45 | 537 | 3.22 | .48 |

Table 4.6 indicates that wealth importance was rated higher [*M*= 3.45, *SD*= .38] than wealth likelihood [*M*= 3.25, *SD*= .47] for the total sample, and similarly participants from single [*M*= 3.49, *SD*= .35] and married parent households [*M*= 3.44, *SD*= .39].

### 4.5.1.2  Fame

**Table 4.7:  Fame Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Fame:* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| *Importance* | | | | | | | | | |
| To have my name known by many people | 853 | 2.57 | 1.02 | 311 | 2.68 | 1.01 | 538 | 2.50 | 1.02 |
| To be admired by many people | 853 | 2.86 | .95 | 311 | 2.87 | .98 | 538 | 2.85 | .93 |
| To be famous | 853 | 1.97 | 1.12 | 311 | 2.11 | 1.17 | 538 | 1.89 | 1.08 |
| To have my name appear frequently in the media | 853 | 1.94 | 1.06 | 311 | 2.04 | 1.07 | 538 | 1.88 | 1.05 |
| To be admired by lots of different people | 853 | 2.58 | .98 | 311 | 2.66 | .99 | 538 | 2.52 | .98 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

Table 4.7 looks at the importance of the extrinsic goal of fame. The aspiration *to be admired by many people* was deemed as the most important aspiration within the context of fame among the majority of participants [*M*= 2.86, *SD*= .95], with similar results for participants from single [*M*= 2.87, *SD*= .98] and married parent households [*M*= 2.85, *SD*= .93]. The aspiration *to have my name appear frequently in the media* was suggested as being the least important aspiration within the extrinsic goal of fame among participants [*M*= 1.94, *SD*= 1.06], as well as participants from single [*M*= 2.04, *SD*= 1.07] and married parent households [*M*= 1.88, *SD*= 1.05].

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**Table 4.8:    Fame Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Fame:* *Likelihood* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To have my name known by many people | 853 | 2.69 | .86 | 311 | 2.79 | .88 | 538 | 2.63 | .84 |
| To be admired by many people | 853 | 2.85 | .84 | 311 | 2.88 | .85 | 538 | 2.83 | .83 |
| To be famous | 853 | 2.11 | 1.06 | 311 | 2.28 | 1.11 | 538 | 2.01 | 1.02 |
| To have my name appear frequently in the media | 853 | 2.06 | 1.01 | 311 | 2.17 | 1.04 | 538 | 1.98 | .98 |
| To be admired by lots of different people | 853 | 2.61 | .88 | 311 | 2.74 | .84 | 538 | 2.53 | .90 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

The aspiration *to be admired by many people* was indicated as being the most likely to attain among the majority of participants in the study [*M*= 2.85, *SD*= .84] (see Table 4.8). The likelihood of this aspiration occurring was also rated the highest among participants from single parent households [*M*= 2.88, *SD*= .85] as well as those from married parent households [*M*= 2.83, *SD*= .83]. The aspiration within the context of the extrinsic life goal of fame that was rated as being the least likely to be attained was that of *to have my name appear frequently in the media*, [*M*= 2.06, *SD*= 1.01], similarly for participants from single parent households [*M*= 2.17, *SD*= 1.04] as well as those from married parent households [*M*= 1.98, *SD*=.98].

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**Table 4.9:    Fame Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Fame | 852 | 3.17 | .49 | 311 | 3.16 | .49 | 537 | 3.17 | .48 |
| Fame: Importance | 852 | 3.21 | .52 | 311 | 3.19 | .54 | 537 | 2.21 | .52 |
| Fame: Likelihood | 852 | 3.12 | .54 | 311 | 3.12 | .53 | 537 | 3.13 | .54 |

Table 4.9 shows that overall the goal of fame importance was rated higher [*M*= 3.21, *SD*= .52] than fame likelihood [*M*= 3.12, *SD*= .54] for the majority of participants. This result was similar for participants from single parent households. However participants from married parent households rated fame likelihood higher [*M*= 3.13, *SD*= .54] than fame importance [*M*= 2.21, *SD*= .52].
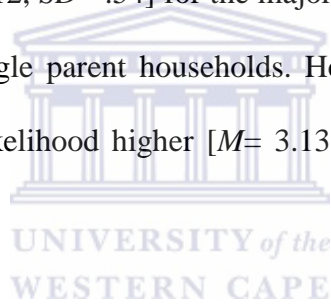
#### 4.5.1.3 Image

**Table 4.10:** **Image Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Image:* *Importance* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To successfully hide the signs of aging | 853 | 2.01 | 1.03 | 311 | 2.11 | 1.05 | 538 | 1.94 | 1.01 |
| To have people comment often how attractive I look | 853 | 2.09 | 1.10 | 311 | 2.14 | 1.06 | 538 | 2.05 | .96 |
| To keep up with fashion in hair and clothing | 853 | 2.37 | 1.07 | 311 | 2.43 | 1.08 | 538 | 2.33 | 1.06 |
| To achieve the 'look' I've been after | 853 | 2.60 | 1.04 | 311 | 2.67 | 1.06 | 538 | 2.56 | 1.03 |
| To have an image others find appealing | 853 | 2.61 | .97 | 311 | 2.67 | .98 | 538 | 2.57 | .97 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

Table 4.10 shows that the majority of participants rated *to have an image that others find appealing* as being important [*M*= 2.61, *SD*= .97] when rating their life goals based on image. Participants from single parent households rated *to achieve the 'look' I've been after* [*M*=2.67, *SD*= 1.06] and *to have an image that others find appealing* [*M*= 2.67, *SD*= .98] as being the most important. The participants from married parent households also rated the aspiration *to have an image that others find appealing* [*M*=2.57, *SD*= .97] as being important.

The majority indicated that the aspiration *to successfully hide the signs of aging* [*M*=2.01, *SD*= 1.03] as being the least important and the same was indicated by participants from single [*M*= 2.11, *SD*= 1.05] and married parent households [*M*= 1.94, *SD*= 1.01].

**Table 4.11: Image Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Image:* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| *Likelihood* | | | | | | | | | |
| To successfully hide the signs of aging | 853 | 2.23 | .98 | 311 | 2.33 | 1.00 | 538 | 2.18 | .97 |
| To have people comment often how attractive I look | 853 | 2.47 | .91 | 311 | 2.57 | .94 | 538 | 2.41 | .88 |
| To keep up with fashion in hair and clothing | 853 | 2.68 | .96 | 311 | 2.75 | .99 | 538 | 2.64 | .94 |
| To achieve the 'look' I've been after | 853 | 2.67 | .95 | 311 | 2.77 | .96 | 538 | 2.62 | .94 |
| To have an image others find appealing | 853 | 2.61 | .85 | 311 | 2.71 | .84 | 538 | 2.55 | .85 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

When considering the responses given by the participants on the likelihood of attaining the life goal of image (Table 4.11), the majority indicated the aspiration of *to keep up with fashion in hair and clothing* [*M*= 2.68, *SD*= .96] as being the one with the most likelihood of

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attainment. This was similar for participants from married households [*M*= 2.64, *SD*= .94]. However, the participants from single parent households indicated that the aspiration of *to achieve the 'look' I've been after* [*M*= 2.77, *SD*= .96] as being the most attainable. The majority rated the aspiration of *to successfully hide the signs of aging* [*M*= 2.23, *SD*= .98] as being the least likely to attain, this aspiration was also rated as having the least likelihood of attainment for participants from single [*M*= 2.33, *SD*= 1.00] and married parent households [*M*= 2.18, *SD*= .97].

**Table 4.12:    Image Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Image | 851 | 3.24 | .54 | 311 | 3.29 | .50 | 536 | 3.20 | .55 |
| Image: Importance | 851 | 3.35 | .56 | 311 | 3.38 | .54 | 536 | 3.32 | .58 |
| Image: Likelihood | 851 | 3.13 | .57 | 311 | 3.19 | .52 | 537 | 3.09 | .59 |

Table 4.12 shows that overall the life goal of image importance was rated higher [*M*= 3.35, *SD*= .56] than image likelihood [*M*= 3.13, *SD*= .57] for the majority, and similarly for participants from single and married parent households.

### 4.5.2   Intrinsic life goals

The overall mean scores and standard deviation scores are shown for the intrinsic life goal category in Table 4.25. A breakdown of the different items that form the different life goals is presented in the section that follows. The life goals of personal growth, relationships, community and health will be presented in Tables 4.13 – 4.24. These tables will give an

indication as to the importance of the different aspirations and likelihood of attaining the different aspirations for the life goals that it is aligned with.

### 4.5.2.1    Personal Growth

**Table 4.13:    Personal Growth Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Personal Growth: Importance* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To grow and learn new things | 853 | 3.71 | .52 | 311 | 3.75 | .49 | 538 | 3.68 | .54 |
| At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete | 853 | 3.64 | .62 | 311 | 3.66 | .59 | 538 | 3.63 | .63 |
| To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life | 853 | 3.70 | .57 | 311 | 3.70 | .56 | 538 | 3.70 | .58 |
| To know and accept who I really am | 852 | 3.77 | .49 | 310 | 3.80 | .44 | 538 | 3.75 | .52 |
| To gain insight into why I do the things I do | 853 | 3.23 | .74 | 311 | 3.24 | .74 | 538 | 3.22 | .74 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

The participants had to rate the importance of the intrinsic life goal of personal growth (Table 4.13). The majority indicated that the aspiration *to know and accept who I really am* [*M*= 3.77, *SD*= .49] as being the most important. This was similar for participants from single parent households [*M*= 3.80, *SD*= .44] and for participants from married parent households [*M*= 3.75, *SD*= .52]. When looking at the aspirations that were rated as being the least important, the majority indicated the aspiration *to gain insight into why I do the things I do* [*M*= 3.23, *SD*= .74] as being rated as least important. This was similar for participants from single [*M*= 3.24, *SD*= .74] and married parent households [*M*= 3.22, *SD*= .74].

**Table 4.14:    Personal Growth Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Personal Growth: Likelihood* | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD |
| To grow and learn new things | 853 | 3.52 | .62 | 311 | 3.55 | .58 | 538 | 3.50 | .64 |
| At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete | 853 | 3.32 | .70 | 311 | 3.37 | .70 | 538 | 3.29 | .71 |
| To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life | 853 | 3.44 | .73 | 311 | 3.47 | .69 | 538 | 3.42 | .76 |
| To know and accept who I really am | 853 | 3.57 | .67 | 311 | 3.62 | .61 | 538 | 3.53 | .70 |
| To gain insight into why I do the things I do | 853 | 3.01 | .80 | 311 | 3.05 | .81 | 538 | 2.99 | .79 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

Table 4.14 shows the responses that were given by the participants based on the likelihood of attaining certain aspirations that were aligned with the life goal of personal growth. The majority indicated that the aspiration of *to know and accept who I really am* [*M*= 3.57, *SD*= .67] as being the most likely to be attained. Similar results were found for participants from single [*M*= 3.62, *SD*= .61] and married parent households [*M*= 3.53, *SD*= .70]. The majority

of participants indicated that the aspiration which was least likely to be attained was *to gain insight into why I do the things I do* [*M*= 3.01, *SD*= .80]. This was similar for participants from single [*M*= 3.05, *SD*= .81] and married parent households [*M*= 2.99, *SD*= .79].

**Table 4.15:   Personal Growth Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Personal Growth | 852 | 2.62 | .60 | 311 | 2.70 | .59 | 537 | 2.57 | .60 |
| Personal Growth: Importance | 852 | 2.61 | .66 | 311 | 2.68 | .66 | 537 | 2.56 | .65 |
| Personal Growth: Likelihood | 852 | 2.63 | .61 | 311 | 2.72 | .59 | 537 | 2.57 | .61 |

Table 4.15 shows the responses given by the participants for the life goal of personal growth. The results suggest that personal growth importance was rated lower [*M*= 2.61, *SD*= .66] than personal growth likelihood [*M*= 2.63, *SD*= .61] for the majority. This was similar for participants from single and married parent households.

### 4.5.2.2 Relationships

**Table 4.16: Relationship Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Relationships: Importance* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To have good friends that I can count on | 853 | 3.67 | .62 | 311 | 3.65 | .66 | 538 | 3.69 | .60 |
| To share my life with someone I love | 853 | 3.64 | .68 | 311 | 3.58 | .77 | 538 | 3.67 | .62 |
| To have committed, intermit relationships | 853 | 3.10 | .94 | 311 | 3.03 | .93 | 538 | 3.14 | .94 |
| To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love | 853 | 3.62 | .66 | 311 | 3.60 | .69 | 538 | 3.64 | .65 |
| To have deep enduring relationships | 853 | 3.10 | .89 | 311 | 3.07 | .91 | 538 | 3.12 | .88 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

Table 4.16 shows the results that were obtained from the responses that were given by the participants for the intrinsic life goal of relationships. The majority indicated that the aspiration *to have good friends that I can count on* [*M*= 3.67, *SD*= .62] as being the most important aspiration. This was similar for participants from single parent households [*M*= 3.65, *SD*= .66] and married parent households [*M*= 3.69, *SD*= .60]. The aspirations that were

rated as being the least important among the majority were *to have committed, intermit relationships* [*M*= 3.10, *SD*= .94] and *to have deep enduring relationships* [*M*= 3.10, *SD*= .89]. Participants from single parent households rated the aspiration *to have committed, intermit relationships* [*M*= 3.03, *SD*= .93] as being the least important and participants from married parent households indicated the aspiration *to have deep enduring relationships* [*M*= 3.12, *SD*= .88] as being the least important.

**Table 4.17:     Relationship Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Relationships: Likelihood* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To have good friends that I can count on | 853 | 3.34 | .78 | 311 | 3.33 | .78 | 538 | 3.35 | .77 |
| To share my life with someone I love | 853 | 3.43 | .76 | 311 | 3.39 | .80 | 538 | 3.46 | .73 |
| To have committed, intermit relationships | 853 | 3.07 | .86 | 311 | 3.03 | .89 | 538 | 3.10 | .85 |
| To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love | 853 | 3.46 | .73 | 311 | 3.42 | .74 | 538 | 3.48 | .73 |
| To have deep enduring relationships | 853 | 2.97 | .83 | 311 | 2.97 | .83 | 538 | 2.97 | .83 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

Table 4.17 indicates the likelihood of aspirations occurring that form part of the life goal of relationships. The majority indicated the aspiration *to feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love* [*M*= 3.46, *SD*= .73] as being the aspiration with the greatest likelihood of attainment. This was similar for participant from both single [*M*= 3.42, *SD*= .74] and married parent households [*M*= 3.48, *SD*= .73]. The aspiration that was indicated as having the least likelihood of attainment was *to have deep enduring relationships*, this was indicated by the majority [*M*=2.97, *SD*= .83], the participants from single parent households [*M*= 2.97, *SD*= .83] and married parent households [*M*= 2.97, *SD*= 83].

**Table 4.18:   Relationship Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Relationships | 852 | 2.43 | .64 | 311 | 2.51 | .64 | 537 | 2.39 | .63 |
| Relationships: Importance | 852 | 2.33 | .72 | 311 | 2.40 | .75 | 537 | 2.29 | .70 |
| Relationships: Likelihood | 852 | 2.53 | .64 | 311 | 2.63 | .63 | 537 | 2.48 | .63 |

Table 4.18 shows that overall the goal of relationships as the likelihood of attainment was rated higher [*M*= 2.53, *SD*= .64] than relationship importance [*M*= 2.33, *SD*= .72] for the majority, with similar results for participants from single and married parent households.

### 4.5.2.3    Community

**Table 4.19:    Community Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Community: Importance* | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD |
| To work for the betterment of society | 853 | 3.13 | .84 | 311 | 3.20 | .82 | 538 | 3.08 | .85 |
| To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return | 853 | 3.35 | .74 | 311 | 3.38 | .74 | 538 | 3.32 | .75 |
| To work to make the world a better place | 853 | 3.36 | .76 | 311 | 3.43 | .71 | 538 | 3.31 | .78 |
| To help others improve their lives | 853 | 3.38 | .74 | 311 | 3.39 | .73 | 538 | 3.38 | .74 |
| To help people in need | 853 | 3.51 | .67 | 311 | 3.51 | .68 | 538 | 3.50 | .67 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

Table 4.19 presents the results for the intrinsic goal of community. The aspiration that was deemed as being the most important was *to help people in need*, indicated by the majority [*M*= 3.51, *SD*= .67]. This was similar for participants from single parent [*M*= 3.51, *SD*= .68] and married parent households [*M*= 3.50, *SD*= .67]. The aspiration that was rated as being the least important for the majority was *to work for the betterment of society* [*M*= 3.13, *SD*= .84].

This was similar for participants from both single [*M*= 3.20, *SD*= .82] and married parent households [*M*= 3.08, *SD*= .85].

**Table 4.20: Community Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Community:* *Likelihood* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To work for the betterment of society | 853 | 2.86 | .83 | 311 | 2.94 | .86 | 538 | 2.80 | .81 |
| To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return | 853 | 3.28 | .73 | 311 | 3.32 | .73 | 538 | 3.25 | .73 |
| To work to make the world a better place | 853 | 3.08 | .85 | 311 | 3.20 | .80 | 538 | 3.01 | .87 |
| To help others improve their lives | 853 | 3.13 | .80 | 311 | 3.17 | .78 | 538 | 3.10 | .81 |
| To help people in need | 853 | 3.31 | .75 | 311 | 3.34 | .73 | 538 | 3.29 | .77 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

The results for the likelihood of attaining the life goal of community are presented in Table 4.20. The majority rated the aspiration of *to help people in need* [*M*= 3.31, *SD*= .76] as being likely to attain. Similar results were found for participants from single parent households [*M*= 3.34, *SD*= .73] and married parent households [*M*= 3.29, *SD*= .77]. The aspiration with the least likelihood of attainment rated by the majority was the aspiration *to work for the*

*betterment of society* [*M*= 2.86, *SD*= .83]. This was similar for participants from the single

parent households [*M*= 2.94, *SD*= .86] and married parent households [*M*= 2.80, *SD*= .81].

**Table 4.21:   Community Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Community | 852 | 3.44 | .41 | 311 | 3.47 | .38 | 537 | 3.42 | .42 |
| Community: Importance | 852 | 3.58 | .41 | 311 | 3.58 | .39 | 537 | 3.57 | .42 |
| Community: Likelihood | 852 | 3.30 | .50 | 311 | 3.34 | .46 | 537 | 3.27 | .52 |

Table 4.21 shows that overall the goal of community importance was rated higher [*M*= 3.58,

*SD*= .41] than community likelihood [*M*= 3.30, *SD*= .50] for the majority with similar results

for participants from single and married parent households.

### 4.5.2.4    Health

**Table 4.22:    Health Importance**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health: Importance* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To be physically healthy | 853 | 3.65 | .61 | 311 | 3.68 | .58 | 538 | 3.63 | .62 |
| To feel good about my level of physical fitness | 853 | 3.42 | .70 | 311 | 3.44 | .73 | 538 | 3.41 | .69 |
| To keep myself healthy and well | 853 | 3.69 | .55 | 311 | 3.72 | .55 | 538 | 3.67 | .55 |
| To be relatively free from sickness | 853 | 3.45 | .73 | 311 | 3.46 | .72 | 538 | 3.45 | .74 |
| To have a physically healthy lifestyle | 853 | 3.57 | .62 | 311 | 3.55 | .66 | 538 | 3.57 | .61 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not important to 4= Very important.

Table 4.22 indicates the responses that were provided by the participants for the importance of the life goal of health. The majority rated the aspiration *to keep myself healthy and well* [*M*= 3.69, SD= .55] as being the most important aspiration. Similar results were found for participants from both single [*M*= 3.72, *SD*= .55] and married parent households [*M*= 3.67, *SD*= .55]. The aspiration that was seen as being the least important by the majority, was *to feel good about my level of physical fitness* [*M*= 3.42, *SD*= .70], with similar results for

participants from single [*M*= 3.44, *SD*= .73] and married parent households [*M*= 3.41, *SD*= .69].

**Table 4.23: Health Likelihood**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health: Likelihood* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| To be physically healthy | 853 | 3.43 | .67 | 311 | 3.44 | .65 | 538 | 3.43 | .68 |
| To feel good about my level of physical fitness | 853 | 3.18 | .80 | 311 | 3.23 | .82 | 538 | 3.16 | .79 |
| To keep myself healthy and well | 853 | 3.49 | .68 | 311 | 3.58 | .61 | 538 | 3.43 | .71 |
| To be relatively free from sickness | 853 | 3.04 | .86 | 311 | 3.14 | .83 | 538 | 2.99 | .87 |
| To have a physically healthy lifestyle | 853 | 3.32 | .76 | 311 | 3.35 | .74 | 538 | 3.31 | .76 |

Responses were on a Likert Scale with 1= Not likely at all to 4= Very likely.

Table 4.23 gives an indication for the likelihood of attainment of the life goal of health. The majority indicated that the aspiration of *to keep myself healthy and well* [*M*= 3.49, *SD*= .68] as being the most likely to attain. This was similar for participants from single parent households [*M*= 3.58, *SD*= .61]. The participants from married parent households indicated that the aspirations of *to keep myself healthy and well* [*M*= 3.43, *SD*= .71] and *to be*

*physically healthy* [*M*= 3.43, *SD*= .68] as having the greatest likelihood of attainment. The aspiration with the least likelihood of attainment indicated by the majority was the aspiration *to be relatively free from sickness* [*M*= 3.04, *SD*= .86]. This was similar for participants from both single [*M*= 3.14, *SD*= .83] and married parent households [*M*= 2.99, *SD*= .87].

**Table 4.24:    Health Life Goal**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* | *N* | *Mean* | *SD* |
| Health | 852 | 2.95 | .58 | 311 | 3.02 | .55 | 537 | 2.91 | .60 |
| Health: Importance | 852 | 2.96 | .67 | 311 | 3.02 | .62 | 537 | 2.92 | .71 |
| Health: Likelihood | 852 | 2.95 | .59 | 311 | 3.03 | .56 | 537 | 2.90 | .60 |
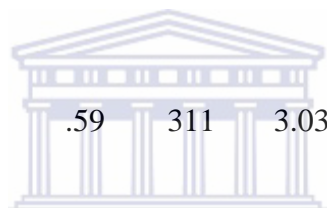
Table 4.24 looks at the life goal of health and the responses given by the participants, indicates that health importance was rated higher than health likelihood for the total sample and participants from married parent households. However, participants from single parent households rated wealth likelihood as higher than wealth importance.

## 4.6 Extrinsic and intrinsic life goal contents:

**4.6.1 Hypothesis 1:** Learners from single parent households would have more extrinsic life goals in comparison to learners from married parent households who would have intrinsic life goals.

**Table 4.25: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goal Content**

| Items | Total Sample | | | Single | | | Married | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD |
| Extrinsic Life Goals | 850 | 3.25 | .36 | 310 | 3.28 | .33 | 536 | 3.23 | .37 |
| Intrinsic Life Goals | 852 | 2.83 | .45 | 311 | 2.89 | .43 | 537 | 2.79 | .45 |
| Wealth | 851 | 3.35 | .38 | 310 | 3.39 | .35 | 537 | 3.33 | .39 |
| Fame | 852 | 3.17 | .49 | 311 | 3.16 | .49 | 537 | 3.17 | .48 |
| Image | 851 | 3.24 | .54 | 311 | 3.29 | .50 | 536 | 3.20 | .55 |
| Personal Growth | 852 | 2.62 | .60 | 311 | 2.70 | .59 | 537 | 2.57 | .60 |
| Relationships | 852 | 2.43 | .64 | 311 | 2.51 | .64 | 537 | 2.39 | .63 |
| Community | 852 | 3.44 | .41 | 311 | 3.47 | .38 | 537 | 3.42 | .42 |
| Health | 852 | 2.95 | .58 | 311 | 3.02 | .55 | 537 | 2.91 | .60 |

Table 4.25 presents the goal content of extrinsic goals (namely, wealth, fame and image) and intrinsic goals (personal growth, relationships and community). Health was not used in

forming the extrinsic nor intrinsic category, as it can be seen as having both intrinsic and extrinsic goal properties. The majority rated extrinsic goals [*M*= 3.25, *SD*= .36] higher than intrinsic goals [*M*= 2.83, *SD*= .45]. This is similar for participants from single parent households (extrinsic goals [*M*= 3.28, *SD*= .33] and intrinsic goals [*M*= 2.89, *SD*= .43]) and married parent households (extrinsic goals [*M*= 3.23, *SD*= .37] and intrinsic goals [*M*= 2.79, *SD*=.45]). Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted. The results indicate that participants from single parent households [*M*= 3.28, *SD*=.33] have more extrinsic life goals than participants from married parent households [*M*= 3.23, *SD*= .37]. Furthermore, the results also indicate that participants from single parent households [*M*= 2.89, *SD*= .43] also have more intrinsic life goals than participants from married parent households [*M*= 2.79, *SD*= .45]. The results in Table 4.25 also indicate that participants from single parent households place more importance on the extrinsic life goals of wealth and image than do participants from married parent households. Participants from married parent households scored higher in the extrinsic life goal of fame than the participants from single parent households. The results also indicate that the participants from single parent households also scored higher on all the intrinsic life goals of personal growth, relationships and community as well as the life goal of health than the participants from married parent households.

**4.7    Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA):**

**4.7.1  Hypothesis 2:** There is a significant difference between the goals and aspirations of the learners living in households headed by single and married parents.

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was conducted to establish whether main effects on the goals and aspirations existed within groups.

**Table 4.26:    Repeated Measures ANOVA**

| Variable | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F-value | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goals and Aspirations | 803.34 | 3.62 | 221.85 | 917.24 | .00* |

*p>0.05

The results from the Repeated Measures ANOVA as indicated in **Table 4.26** suggests that a significant difference does exist within the group for the different goals and aspirations, $F(3.62, 3074.35) = 917.24$, $p> .05$.

A MANOVA was conducted to establish the main effects of family structure on individual goals and aspirations. The scores of goals and aspirations as a function of family structure will be discussed. For each life goal the mean scores and the results of the ANOVA (for participants in single and married parent households) are presented. Only significant effects are discussed.

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**Table 4.27:**     **The main effects of family structure on goals and aspirations**

| Variable | Single Parent Households | | Married Parent Households | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *F*-value |
| Wealth | 3.39 | .35 | 3.33 | .39 | 5.84** |
| Image | 3.29 | .50 | 3.21 | .55 | 4.52** |
| Personal Growth | 2.70 | .58 | 2.57 | .60 | 9.85** |
| Relationships | 2.51 | .64 | 2.39 | .63 | 7.37** |
| Health | 3.02 | .54 | 2.91 | .60 | 6.64** |
| Intrinsic Goals | 2.89 | .43 | 2.79 | .45 | 9.83** |

**p<0.01

The results of the multivariate analysis in Table 4.27 indicate that there was a significant difference between single and married parent households in terms of the goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners in secondary schools (Hotelling's $T^2$ = 2.89 (7,838), p <0.01). The univariate analyses indicate that grade 11 learners raised in single parent households scored higher on wealth, image, personal growth, relationships and health. Overall, the participants scored higher for intrinsic goals and aspirations in single parent households than those in married parent households. The results support Hypothesis 2 that a significant difference exists between the life goals and aspirations of participants from single and married parent households. There were no other significant findings.

## 4.8     Conclusion

The information presented within this chapter provides insight into the results based on the data collected. The mean scores and standard deviation scores were looked at for the various life goals. To test the significant differences based on family structure and life goals, an initial Repeated Measures ANOVA was conducted to establish within group significance, which was then followed by the MANOVA to test for the significant differences that existed

again. The results presented in the tables within this chapter provide a platform for the discussion that follows in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1 Introduction

This study compared goals and aspirations of learners from various family structures. This chapter provides a platform for discussing the results. The findings that are discussed are aligned with the aims and objectives of the study, as outlined in the thesis, as well as the conceptual framework as discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter provides more insight into the effect of family structure on the goals and aspirations of learners who partook in the study. The conclusion of this chapter focuses on the limitations of the study and recommendations are provided.

## 5.2 Self Determination Theory

In line with the theoretical framework that was used within the study and outlined in chapter 2 of the thesis, Self Determination Theory (SDT) is often considered as being a macro-theory that focuses on human motivation as well as wellness and development (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The theory posits that individuals are able to motivate themselves towards their fullest potential and that they have the ability to work towards a cohesive sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2004). Furthermore Roman (2008) adds that an individual can develop to his/her fullest potential when his/her needs are fulfilled or satisfied. Moreover within SDT there is a set of needs that need to be satisfied to achieve optimal functioning and psychological health (Deci & Ryan, 2008). These needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self Determination Theory also operates on the assumption that the context or environment in which an individual finds him / herself can either enhance or hinder the

aspirations towards certain life goals. The context or environment from which this study has operated within the framework of Self Determination Theory was that of family structure (single or married parent households). During the process of aspiring to certain goals and aspirations, context is deemed important as it provides an individual with some form of framework that guides behaviours and actions to aspire towards certain goals (Malmberg, Ehrman & Lithén, 2005). Some research that focuses on goals and aspirations among Western countries has often forgotten the importance of context in the aspirations towards certain life goals (Ingrid et al., 2009). Ingrid et al. (2009) have investigated the importance of the environment or context in goal framing and aspirations. The results that have been yielded from this study are unable to compare its findings to international research and debates based on Self Determination Theory and goals, as their focus has been largely on comparing the aspirations of certain goals to well-being. However the aim of this study was not to compare the goals and aspirations in relation to well-being but rather to the context of family structure in relation to single and married parent households.
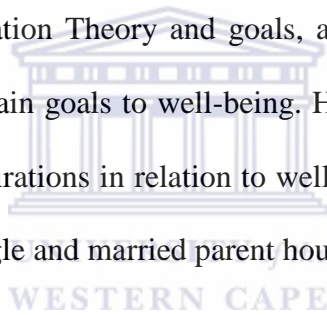
## 5.3    Goals and aspirations of adolescents

SDT assumes that the long term goals that individuals have tend to direct the activities as well as the behaviours that individuals are involved in and become involved in (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Additionally, goals are seen as being 'internal representations of desired outcomes' (Ingrid et al., 2009). SDT operates on the assumption that an individual's goal content and aspirations often represent the status of the basic psychological needs of individuals (Deci & Ryan, 2000) as well as the context or environment in which they find themselves (Ingrid et al., 2009). *To determine the goals and aspirations of secondary school learners* as framed within Self Determination Theory was one of the objectives of the study. Within Self Determination Theory, the goal content of an individual is either categorised as being

intrinsic or extrinsic in nature; however it is important to consider the effects that contextual environments have in the identification of goals and aspirations (Ingrid et al., 2009). The results as obtained within the study suggest that the total sample aspired to more extrinsic life goals than intrinsic life goals. On the basis of family structure participants from both single and married parent households had higher scores on extrinsic life goals. The findings that are suggested based on the results, that the participants rated extrinsic goals higher than intrinsic goals, are consistent with previous literature that suggests that individuals in less affluent contexts / countries tend to aspire towards extrinsic life goals more than intrinsic (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995). Participants from single parent households also had higher ratings for intrinsic goals than participants from married parent households. Currently no literature exists that examines the relationship between family structure and life goals within the context of Self Determination Theory.

Western research suggests that when the basic psychological needs of individuals are satisfied they would have goals and aspirations which are intrinsic in nature. The intrinsic life goals include personal growth, community contributions and meaningful relationships (Williams, Cox, Hedberg & Deci, 2000). However the frustration of the basic psychological needs encourages the development of extrinsic life goals, which include wealth, fame and image (Ryan et al., 2008). Intrinsic life goals are largely linked to the three basic psychological needs that promote health and well-being (Vansteenkiste, Matos, Lens & Soenens, 2007; Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009). Furthermore, Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) confirm that intrinsic goals promote psychological well-being of individuals, and this is because these individuals satisfy their basic psychological needs whilst working towards achieving their goals and aspirations. According to SDT, extrinsic life goals tend to limit the chances of becoming involved in behaviour that satisfies the basic needs which ultimately results in less subjective well-being (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). Often extrinsic life goals are

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associated with negative associations of self-actualisation, vitality and positive effect (Williams et al., 2000). Literature that looks at Self Determination Theory in relation to goals and aspirations and well-being has been conducted within Western countries. These findings are not consistent and not able to be generalised to individuals from various cultural contexts and environments as the generalisation of these findings is yet to be tested (Ingrid et al., 2009). Therefore the results that are discussed within this chapter will be focused largely around the impact and influence of context in the identification of goals and aspirations.

### 5.3.1   Extrinsic goals

The theoretical assumptions of SDT, as well as what research within this area suggests, are that aspiring to extrinsic goals is often associated with a lesser sense of health and well-being (Williams et al., 2000) but it is also important to remain cognisant that these findings based on extrinsic life goals and well-being have been found for individuals in Western countries and that results tend to differ based on different contexts. These extrinsic goals include wealth, fame and image. Kasser and Ryan (1996) have also alluded to the association with extrinsic life goals related to depression, anxiety and negative affect. However it becomes interesting to note that South African youth who partook in the study rated extrinsic life goals as being more important than intrinsic goals, and the extrinsic life goals received a higher rating among participants from both single and married parent households. The extrinsic life goal of wealth received higher ratings from participants from single parent households; however the rating for participants from married parent households was also high. These findings are similar to research that was conducted among participants from 15 different cultural groups, and it was found that participants who came from less affluent countries tend to aspire more towards the life goal of wealth than participants from more affluent countries (Grouzet et al., 2005). The ratings for the goal of fame were similar for participants from both

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single and married parent households and participants from single parent households had higher ratings for the extrinsic life goal of image. Research conducted by Grouzet et al. (2005) found a similar finding which suggests that there has been a great emphasis on 'conformity' which was linked to fame and image as it dealt with the approval of others and how individuals are perceived.

However Ryan et al. (1999) have mentioned that when one considers the goals and aspirations that individuals have, it is often said the economic and cultural beliefs that one finds oneself in assist in shaping the values and life goals to some extent (Ryan et al., 1999). Taking South Africa's current economic situation into consideration as well as the diversity of cultures that South Africans are exposed to, it becomes clear that this could have played a role in the greater emphasis on aspirations toward extrinsic life goals among South African youth. Ingrid et al. (2009) have also alluded to the fact that, as much as research has indicated that aspiring to extrinsic life goals is associated with a diminished sense of well-being, this is not always the case. What seems to be important however is why the individual aspires to certain life goals (Ingrid et al., 2009; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). Furthermore, research that has been conducted within Croatia and less rich countries has also suggested that the aspirations and pursuit of extrinsic goals are not always unfavourable to an individual's well-being, and can often assist in the promotion and advancement of well-being (Ingrid et al., 2009). Vansteenkiste, Duriez, Simons and Soenens (2006) have also mentioned that the relationship between the content of the life goal and well-being can also be associated with what goal content the environment deems as important and encourages. Additionally, it is true to form for adolescents to aspire to extrinsic life goals at this stage within their development. Sheldon and Kasser (2008) have added that so often there is an over emphasis on extrinsic goals among individuals and we find ourselves in a world that thrives on extrinsic goals. Therefore it becomes difficult to understand that the pursuit of extrinsic goals

could be detrimental to one's well-being, but with a focus on context it becomes easier to understand the goals and aspirations of individuals.

**5.3.1.1      Wealth**

When considering that we live in a world that flourishes on extrinsic goals, and at the same time considering the assumptions of SDT and the results that have been obtained within research, that suggests that extrinsic life goals are associated with a diminished sense of health and well-being. It becomes interesting to note that the results as obtained within the study suggest that on the basis of wealth importance, the aspiration *to be financially successful* was rated as being the most important among the total sample of participants. This is interesting when looking at the economic climate of South Africa and the levels of unemployment. When taking into consideration the assumptions of SDT in relation to extrinsic life goals, one then asks why are South African youth listing the aspiration *to be financially successful* as being the most important within the wealth category. With this being asked, it becomes clear that the economic situation that a majority of South African youth find themselves in sparks the hunger to aspire to financial success and security. Vansteenkiste et al (2006) have also mentioned that the environment in which one finds oneself plays a role in the goals and aspirations, as it is the aspiration that receives support from the environment and that aids well-being. Therefore within the context of South Africa and the framework of SDT it can be suggested that based on the environment that participants find themselves in (which is South Africa) and the conditions in which they live (current economic situation) they aspire more towards the extrinsic life goal of wealth. As some South African youth find themselves living in very poor conditions, and in order to alleviate themselves from this situation, by aspiring *to be financially successful* they will be able to change their current living and life style conditions. Aspiring towards the life goal of wealth to assist with

financial security would aid in the well-being for youth within the South African context. Additionally, Ingrid et al (2009) have stated that within developing countries (very much like South Africa) extrinsic goals could assist in the promotion of well-being, but also that it is the reasons behind aspiring towards certain goals that are more important than the goal content.

The results obtained from the research on the basis of family structure, suggest that participants from both single and married parent households rated the wealth aspiration *to be financially successful* as being the most important and *to have many expensive possessions* as being the least important on the basis of wealth aspirations. The participants from both single and married parent households also rated the aspiration *to be financially successful* as being the most likely to attain and *to have many expensive possessions* as being the least likely to attain in the future. It is interesting to note that both family structures found the aspiration *to be financially successful* as important. As Self Determination Theory states that extrinsic goals are associated with a diminished sense of well-being, Luthar and Latendresse (2005) have also found that children who are exposed to affluence and wealth have implications for a number of psychosocial risks as well as create a threat for their psychological well-being. It does however then create some sort of curiosity to find out whether the aspirations towards wealth and financial success would have negative effects on persons who find themselves in developing countries, as so often the persons in developing countries are exposed to a number of factors such as poverty, lack of resources and income that it hampers the development of the individual. However most of the research conducted on the influence of extrinsic life goals and wealth in relation to well-being has been conducted with persons from developed countries such as Russia, Germany, Australia, France, Romania and the United States (Grouzet et al., 2005). However Ingrid et al. (2009) also argue whether the goal content is important rather than why a goal is pursued. As within the South African context young persons' aspirations *to be financially successful* is merely to enhance their current living and

economic conditions than it is for personal gain, as suggested by the lack of importance of the aspiration *to have many expensive possessions* among the participants in the study. Ingrid et al (2009) further state that if the aspirations towards wealth and material aspirations are for the pure enjoyment of basic financial security or one of the intrinsic goals, for example that of personal development, then the aspirations towards these extrinsic goals could not hamper the well-being of an individual. There is also evidence in research that suggests that in less affluent countries the extrinsic aspirations are not necessarily detrimental to an individual's well-being but rather that they assist in the promotion of well-being (Ingrid et al., 2009). Research that looked at goal content and well-being compared participants from North America and China, and the participants from China seemed to have greater prospects of well-being when there was an emphasis on extrinsic life goals and aspirations (Lekes, Gingras, Philippe, Koestner & Fang, 2009). Caporale et al. (2009) have also suggested that income and financial increases have been associated with the promotion of happiness in a European study. In a study conducted by Bearden and Wilder (2007), it was also found that wealth was an important predictor in the overall perception of well-being among individuals entering retirement age.

### 5.3.1.2    Fame and Image

When looking at the results that were obtained for the extrinsic life goal of fame, the total sample suggested that the fame aspiration that was deemed as being the most important was *to be admired by many people* and the fame aspiration with the least importance was *to have my name appear frequently in the media*. These findings were similar for the participants from both the single and married parent households. The aspiration *to be admired by many people* lets one wonder why the participants would deem this fame aspiration as being the most important one. The aspiration *to be admired by many people* also suggests some relation

to the life goal of image. When focusing on the life goal of image, the results that were obtained from the study suggest that the aspiration *to have an image that others find appealing* was rated as being the most important among the total sample, as well as for participants from single and married parent households when considering the aspirations linked to the extrinsic life goal of image. It is interesting to notice that the participants from single parent households rated the aspirations *to achieve the 'look' I've been after* and *to have an image that others find appealing* as being important while participants from married parent households only found the aspiration *to have an image that others find appealing* as being the most important aspiration. There is a constant buzz among South Africans around personal branding and how one is portrayed as an individual to others that you come into contact with; this can be seen in how the participants have rated their image aspirations on the basis of importance.

*To have an image that others find appealing* and *to be admired by many people*, creates that link between fame and image. The results suggest that these young South Africans want to be portrayed to others in a manner in which they would be accepted by those around them as well as to then have these individuals mention how they find them *appealing;* in so doing this creates the aspiration towards fame that speaks about *to be admired by many people*. When these young people aspire to be portrayed as being ' acceptable' and 'appealing' it creates a sense of being 'admired' by those who they come in contact with. When looking at South Africa, a typical example where a demonstration of the extrinsic goals of fame and image was evident. And where it was somewhat similar to the aspirations that the participants in the study rated as being the most important among the fame and image aspirations (namely *to have an image that others find appealing* and *to be admired by many people*) is the events of the *Izikhothane* (an isiZulu word translated as 'those who lick'). South African news broadcasting shed light on the *Izikhotane*, which has become popular among township youth

in South Africa. The *Izikhotane* can be considered a subculture where young people in the township create a platform for fame among persons in the community through the consumption of expensive alcohol, clothing and accessory brands. The group of young people would gather in parks and open areas where they would get the attention of the community (which would create a sense of *fame* for these young persons among those in the community) and they would burn these expensive clothing items and branded merchandise to create an image that they assume young persons and others in the community find appealing. The Star, a South African newspaper, reported on 18 July 2012 that these young South Africans would wear expensive brands that would cost thousands of rands and when one of the young persons involved in this was asked the reasons for involvement, the response was that it was done for fame (The Star, 2012). The young South Africans create a certain image that other young persons find appealing by wearing such expensive clothing. And when these young persons wear this expensive clothing and brands it creates a certain image and it is done for the establishment of fame within the community. Charles, Hurst and Roussanov (2009) mention how individuals seem to disregard some of the important basic needs for expensive items (such as clothing) to create a certain image. The results suggest that these young people place more importance on having an appearance that others find appealing, and this creates a diminished sense of well-being as outlined with Self Determination Theory, as it is believed that when emphasis is placed on extrinsic goals (such as fame and image) there is a diminished sense of well-being.

### 5.3.2 Intrinsic goals

Intrinsic life goals within the framework of SDT are often thought of as being satisfying as they assist in the development of an individual (Duriez, 2011). Furthermore it is believed that when an individual aspires to intrinsic life goals it promotes health and well-being (Duriez,

2011). When aspiring to intrinsic life goals it is thought that it satisfies the three basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness that are deemed important for the enhancement of well-being. The concept of intrinsic life goals in relation to well-being has been considered to be dependent on the context in which an individual finds themselves, as the large body of research that supports the notion of intrinsic life goals in relation to well-being has been conducted among Western countries only (Ingrid et al., 2009). Niemiec et al. (2009) have mentioned that intrinsic goals can be seen as being synonymous of an individual's natural tendency towards development and consequently it then assists in the satisfaction and health and well-being. The intrinsic life goals include personal growth, relationship and community. The life goal of health is often ambiguous as it can be seen as being both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. The participants from single parent households tend to have rated the intrinsic goal of personal growth higher than participants from married parent households. This finding differs from previous research that has assumed that individuals from single parent households tend to have less focus on personal growth and development (Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Richards & Schmiege, 1993; Musick & Meier, 2010). The life goal of community was rated high by both participants from single and married parent households, which is not surprising as literature suggests that individuals from collectivist contexts / countries tend to have a great focus on the community and to be of service to members who form part of their community as well as to maintain a sense of 'harmony' among the persons who constitute the community. (Ingrid et al., 2009; Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002). The participants from single parent households have also rated the life goals of relationship and health higher than the participants from married parent households. The finding that participants from single parent households placed a greater emphasis on health is dissimilar to research that has focused on family structure and health in

the past, as single parent households were often associated with ill health while married parent households had a greater association with good health (Schmeer, 2012).

**5.3.2.1    Personal growth**

Literature suggests that the more an individual aspires to intrinsic goals the better the prospects for well-being. It then becomes interesting to note that for the life goal of personal growth, the results suggest that the aspiration that participants found to be the most important was *to know and accept who I really am* and the results suggested the same response for participants from single and married parent households. The aspiration that received the least important rating with regards to the aspiration for personal growth was *to gain insight into why I do the things I do*. It is interesting to note that the participants have rated the aspiration *to know and accept who I really am* as being one of the most important personal growth aspirations, as the participants find themselves at a developmental stage where they are on a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance. This aspiration paves the way for self-acceptance of young persons who find themselves at this stage in adolescence. Ceyhan and Ceyhan (2011) have mentioned that self-acceptance and the yearning to accept who you really are is essential in assisting with coping with the challenges that the individual is exposed to within the environment and in the developmental tasks. Self-acceptance is a goal that can be considered very appropriate at this developmental stage that the participants find themselves in; self-acceptance is also seen as being healthy and assisting in the growth of the individual as a person as they are now learning to come to terms with who they and what they might not be good at and how they can improve this for their development and ultimate well-being. The Self Determination Theory has also alluded to the psychological well-being prospects that are associated with the value and emphasis that are placed on intrinsic goals. And with much emphasis being placed on the development and growth as an individual the

self-worth of the individual is also enhanced. Self-acceptance is defined as coming to terms with who you are as an individual and this includes the positive and negative aspects; it also is considered as being an importance factor in mental health and well-being (Ceyhan & Ceyhan, 2011). It is only when one accepts who you really are, as the aspiration states, then are you able to enjoy happiness and embrace who you are, as there are no regrets of who you are. Choy and Moneta (2002) have also mentioned that self-acceptance also assists in life satisfaction. The participants have rated the aspiration *to gain insight into why I do the things I do* as being the least important among aspirations based on personal growth. It makes one ask the question why it is not important to know what and why you are doing a certain task. It then becomes clear that adolescents tend to become involved in certain activities for reasons that are sometimes not known to them and this could range from peer pressure or to fit in with the others as everyone else is doing a certain activity so they feel the need to also partake in it.
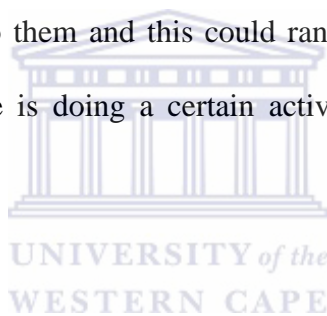
### 5.3.2.2 Relationships

When one turns to the results that were obtained from the participants for the life goal of relationships, the aspiration *to have good friends that I can count on* was rated as being the most important and this was found true for the participants from both single and married parent households. Friendships strive towards closeness and where friends play an influential role in their lives, these increase during adolescence (Ojanen, Grönroos & Salmivalli, 2005). It is said by Baker et al. (2012) that in order for an individual to remain satisfied within a relationship or friendship, it would require engagement on a number of levels. The quality of the relationship or friendship would be determined if it involves giving support, allows for self-disclosure and is accommodating (Baker et al., 2012). Friendships are considered as being an important aspect in the social developmental for adolescents (Ojanen, Sijtsema,

Hawley & Little, 2010). Therefore the aspirations of the participants to aspire *to have good friends that I can count on* suggest that the individual would be able to find fulfilment in a relationship or friendship, where there is an understanding between those involved. Baker et al (2012) points out that if a friendship is able to accommodate one another and allows for expression among those in the friendship it will yield a quality friendship. Larson et al (1996) also mention that adolescent friendships seem to be consumed by lots of time spent among friends. When these individuals find themselves engaged in friendships, it is a continuous process of change as the friendship becomes fluid. This then calls for change and maintenance within the relationship through the process of change; it leads to individual well-being as the continuous change increases relationship satisfaction as it is not stagnant (Baker et al., 2012). Friendships among adolescents seem to become extremely close and supportive over time (De Goede, Branje & Meeus, 2009). Warren-Findlow, Laditka, Laditka and Thompson (2012) have also mentioned that social relationships play an enhancing role in emotional health and well-being later in life, which is aligned with the assumptions of Self Determination Theory that postulates that intrinsic life goals and aspirations are associated with a greater sense of well-being. The results from the study indicate that the relationship aspirations deemed as being the least important were *to have committed, intermit relationships* and *to have deep enduring relationships* among the total sample of participants. However when looking at the different family structures, participants from single parent households rated the aspiration *to have committed, intermit relationships* as least important while participants from married parent households rated the aspiration *to have deep enduring relationships* as being the least important. It is interesting to notice that both the participants from single and married parent households have rated these relationship aspirations as least important. The participants from single parent households interestingly enough have rated *to have committed, intermit relationships* as least important. It lets one think about why

relationships that need commitment and intimacy would be deemed as least important for participants from single parent households. On the basis of these results it could be suggested that, participants from single parent households have had exposure to relationships where a lack of commitment and intimacy was evident, therefore they have found relationships that involved commitment and intimacy as least important. And participants from married parent households have found the aspiration *to have deep enduring relationships* as least important, when one has to take into account the idea of being raised in a married parent household there would be the assumption that these participants would aspire to relationships that are enduring. However the results suggest that this aspiration is deemed as being the least important relationship aspiration for the participants from married parent households; this could be accounted for by the participants' age and that there could most probably not be any interest at this developmental stage in long-term enduring relationships.

### 5.3.2.3    Community

The life goal of community had participants that formed part of the total sample, as well as the participants from both single and married parent households rating the aspiration *to help people in need* as being the most important aspiration within the context of community. This is very interesting particularly for the South African context as there are common beliefs in ubuntu, a sense of belonging, and that an individual exists because of another. Rankin (2000) so aptly puts it across to South Africans that children are moulded by what they hear and see in the various cultural contexts that they find themselves in. South Africa is one such context where the spirit of *ubuntu* rests within South Africans. Rankin (2000) speaks of *ubuntu* in South Africa:

> '*Ubuntu* is there in the culture to shape life – not perfectly in our unfinished world – but to help people who have suffered' (p 50).

The quotation by Rankin (2000) mentions that *ubuntu* is there to help shape the lives of fellow South Africans and it is about helping those who need it. This therefore creates the basis on which it could be suggested that the participants have an understanding of the concept of *ubuntu* and being a South African. Therefore the intrinsic life goal of community had no difference for participants from single and married parent households.

### 5.3.2.4 Health

The life goal of health can be both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. When considering health, and an individual aspires towards health to obtain a certain appearance then the goal would be extrinsic in nature. However when health is focused on the well-being and longevity of the individual it can be thought of as being intrinsic in nature. The total sample indicated that the life goal of *to keep myself healthy and well* is the most important life goal within the context of health. Similar results on the basis of importance were also found for participants from single and married parent households. The aspiration with the least importance was *to feel good about my level of physical fitness*. The aspiration *to keep myself healthy and well* is important as the well-being of the individual is of utmost importance. It is interesting to note that the participants have rated the aspiration *to feel good about my level of physical fitness* as being the least important when considering the life goals of health. However a number of reports have shown concern about young persons' involvement in physical inactivity as it is not aligned with the actual amounts of physical activity that is needed to promote health and well-being (Standage, Gillison, Ntoumanis & Treasure, 2012). The results therefore suggest that the lack of importance on the basis of physical fitness creates a major health concern, especially as we find that the South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (2002) mentions that one third of South African children report a lack of physical activity on a weekly basis.

The perceived accomplishment of intrinsic goals is associated with greater well-being; this is however not the same for the perceived attainment of extrinsic life goals, as it is not related to positive or negative well-being (Ryan et al., 1999). Sheldon, Gunz, Nichols and Ferguson (2010) looked at intrinsic and extrinsic goals and found that individuals who valued extrinsic goals more, seemed to be less happy. However these persons assumed that these extrinsic goals would be their pathway to happiness. Added to this Sheldon, Ryan, Deci and Kasser (2004) have mentioned that not only does the goal content of an individual (whether intrinsic or extrinsic in nature) play a role in psychological well-being but also the reasons why individuals pursue them.

Individuals seem to rate their goals and aspirations with regards to importance the same, starting with the intrinsic goals of community and personal growth as being the most important intrinsic life goals followed by the extrinsic goals (Ryan et al., 1999). This can be seen by the results suggested within the results that were obtained by the life goals of the total sample within the study. The research that was conducted for the study used college students from Russia and the United States (Ryan et al., 1999). A similar study was conducted using participants from Germany and the United States and the same results were obtained (Schmuck, Kasser & Ryan, 2000). In another study the importance of goal rating was also looked at and found it to be the same for individuals from 15 different cultural groups across the world (Grouzet et al., 2005).

## 5.4    Family structure

However SDT states that when the three basic psychological needs receive support from the environment in which the individual finds him/herself the well-being of the individual is enhanced (Chirkov et al., 2003). Furthermore, Chirkov et al. (2003) also state that when an environment 'blocks' or hinders the satisfaction of the three psychological needs then well-

being is diminished as these psychological needs are deemed necessary for health and well-being to be attained and to be maintained. Ingrid et al. (2009) have also maintained that the environment and context in which an individual finds him/herself has certain effects on the goals and aspirations for the future. The goals and aspirations that individuals aspire to are constructed on the basis of the context or environment in which an individual finds him/herself, as it is often reflections of desired outcomes and particular experiences or situations within one's life which are influenced by the context (Morton & Markey, 2009). The context in which this study has been framed to compare the goals and aspirations of participants was that of family structure. Family structure, namely that of being a single or married parent household, could however be seen as providing either an enhancing or hindering environment for aspiring to certain goals and aspirations.

When considering family structure it would refer to the type of family an individual is reared in as well as the marital arrangement or status of the family (Manning & Lamb, 2003; Strohschein et al., 2009).  However, when looking at family structure within the context of the study and the thesis, the study focuses only on single and married parent households.

The results as obtained within the study suggest that just over fifty percent of the participants came from married parent households, and of the remainder a large proportion came from households headed by mothers only and a small proportion came from single father headed households. The results that were obtained based on family structure of participants within the study, are somewhat similar to the results as presented by Holborn and Eddy (2011), that state within South Africa 35% of children live with their biological parents, about 40% find themselves living within a single mother household and 2.8% in a single father headed household.

The first objective of the study as outlined in the first chapter of the thesis was *to determine the prevalence of single and married parent households of learners at secondary school*. In addressing the first objective of the study, it would best serve to provide insight into the variables that later formed the two categories of single and married parent households as used within the study. The formation of the categories into single and married parent households has been discussed in Chapter 3 of the thesis. The categories that were used to form the different family structures within the study were: (i) participants who came from married parent households, (ii) those who came from households where parents lived together but were not married, (iii) single parent households where the parents did not live together, (iv) participants who came from households where their parents were single due to widowing as well as (v) participants who came from single parent households due to divorce. The category for married parent households was formed using the married variable and the category of single parent household was formed by collapsing the remaining variables. The results as presented within Chapter 4 of the thesis indicate that more of the participants came from married parent households, but when focusing on single parent households, most of the single parent households were headed by a mother and a small number was from single father headed households.

Therefore in addressing the first objective of the study, the results suggest that the prevalence of participants from single and married parent households would be that based on the results obtained within the study; a larger proportion of participants came from married parent households than from single parent households. The prevalence of family structure within the study is not representative of findings of previous research, looking at family structure within South Africa, as those results suggest that a larger number of South African children find themselves in single parent households than they do in married parent households with both biological parents present (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

Mueller and Cooper (1986) suggest that children who are reared in single parent households have low economic, educational and employment attainment in comparison to children who are reared in married parent households. Added to this, being reared in a single mother family was associated with a decrease in achievement levels (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Furthermore, children from single parent households spend less time with their parents and have less parental observation and supervision than children who are reared in married family households (Magnuson & Berger, 2009).

Often single parents have to juggle the responsibilities of caregiver and provider (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Single mothers who experience financial difficulties face a number of issues ranging from poor educational attainment, minimal social support and psychological distress (Jackson et al., 2000). These issues have various effects on children who are reared within these households (Jackson et al., 2000). When considering one of the main problems single parents households face, it was often found that finances seemed to be one of the greatest concerns (Richards & Schmiege, 1993). Children in single parent households also seem to have significantly lower financial and educational achievement (Richards & Schmiege, 1993) than children who came from married parent households.

Interestingly Blackman, Clayton, Glenn, Malone-Colon and Roberts (2005) found that marriage creates some form of 'permanence' among family members and that this positively affected the relationships within the family. It was found that married parent households were also seen as being the strongest indicator of paternal involvement within the family (Blackman et al., 2005). Additionally, it was believed that the safest form of household for children to be living in was an intact married parent household where a mother and father were present (Wilcox & Dew, 2008).

Goodman and Greaves (2010) mention that children in married parent households generally fare better when looking at schooling and in social and emotional development in comparison to children who were raised in other forms of family structures. Waldfogel et al. (2010) similarly mention that children in married parent households tend to do better than children in single parent households with regards to educational achievement, risk of teenage pregnancy and the world of work. In addition to this Musick and Meier (2010) looked at whether being reared by both parents was better than one. However when considering parental conflict and children's well-being it was suggested that children in married parent households generally are better than those in single parent households. However this was not the same for every child reared in a married parent household, as parental conflict tends to impact child well-being (Musick & Meier, 2010). Married parent households also seemed to have higher levels of supportiveness with their children than was found for unmarried households (Howard & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Furthermore Roman (2008; 2011) suggested that there was no significant difference between married and single households in terms of how parenting was perceived. When one considers the essence of what the literature presents there seems to be evidence of conflicting results of research conducted in the area of family structure. What is clear is that family structure has implications for children. Therefore it was important to investigate the prevalence of family structure among the participants in the study, where the results suggest that there were more participants from married than single parent households. However, the participants who found themselves in single parent households came largely from single mother headed households, rather than single father headed households.

## 5.5    Goals and aspirations in relation to family structure

The third objective of the study was *to compare the goals and aspirations of learners in single and married parent households*. Grolnick, Ryan and Deci (1991) have mentioned that

during development of an adolescent in light of future beliefs, values and goals, the family and parent environment plays an important role in facilitating the aspirations towards certain goals and aspirations. When adolescents aspire to certain goals and aspirations it forms part of a motivational process, and the realisation of these goals is considered to be important and forms part of an evaluative method (Malmberg, Ehrman & Lithén, 2005). This evaluative method is where adolescents assess and appraise themselves on the basis of their goals and aspirations. One element that is of importance during the process of goals and aspirations for adolescents is context (Malmberg, Ehrman & Lithén, 2005). Context is often considered to provide structure and guidance, and during this developmental period it further allows for adolescents to aspire to certain goals and aspirations and values and beliefs (Malmberg, Ehrman & Lithén, 2005).
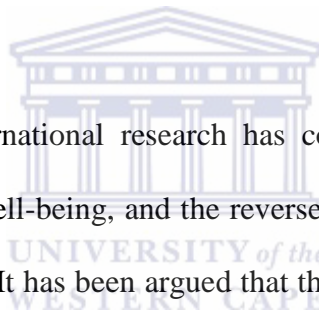
Therefore in light of what international research has concluded, intrinsic life goals and aspirations are associated with well-being, and the reverse was found for the aspirations and goals that are extrinsic in nature. It has been argued that the context or environment in which an individual finds him or herself assists in guiding and providing certain structure that allows for the aspirations towards certain goal content as suggested by Ingrid et al (2009). When one considers the important role that environment or context plays in the realisation and formation of certain goals and aspirations, the context or environment of family structure is just as important. Literature suggests that persons who find themselves in a single parent household would often have lower levels of educational, economical and employment attainment (Mueller & Cooper, 1986) and a decreased sense of achievement, and that there will be less time among single parents to spend with their children as they often have to manage more than one task or duty (Magnuson & Berger, 2009). The context of being in a single parent household is often made up of financial difficulties, psychological distress and limited social support (Jackson et al., 2000). Married parent households on the contrary are

often believed, according to literature, as involving greater parental involvement (Blackman et al., 2005) and there is an enhanced sense of achievement existing among children from married parent households (Waldfogel et al., 2010). Therefore in light of Self Determination Theory, and the aspirations towards certain goals it is believed that goals and aspirations are influenced by the context or environment in which the participants find themselves. The context or environment which is central to the results is that of family structure. The results therefore indicate that there was a significant difference between the individual goals and aspirations of the participants in relation to family structure. The participants from single parent households scored higher than participants from married parent households on the goals and aspirations of wealth, image, personal growth, relationships and health.

International literature suggests that single parent households often face financial difficulties and challenges; furthermore the lack of financial resources is one of the main concerns for single parent households (Jackson et al., 2000; Mueller & Cooper, 1986; Richards & Schmiege, 1993). When considering what international research suggests about the financial challenges that single parent households face, it can therefore be seen why participants from single parent households rated the wealth goals and aspirations higher than those from married parent households. A study by Amato (2005) suggests that children who come from households where both parents are present, generally tend to fare better than those from single parent households. These findings of research suggest that children from married parent households tend to see themselves as better than those from single parent households, and there is a need to obtain a desirable image among children from single parent households. The results from this study suggest that participants from single parent households have rated the aspiration of image higher than those from married parent households. The findings within literature such as Amato (2005) could be the basis on which these participants rate image as being higher, due to the view of children from married parent households as always

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faring better than those from single parent households. Research further suggests that individuals from single parent households tend not to place great importance on achievement and aspirations towards self-advancement (Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Richards & Schmiege, 1993; Musick & Meier, 2010). The results that were obtained within this study are different to what previous research on family structure and personal development has suggested. According to previous research (Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Richards & Schmiege, 1993; Musick & Meier, 2010) individuals from single parent households do not place real importance on personal development and growth, but the findings of this study suggest that the participants from single parent households have placed a greater importance on the life goal of personal growth and development in comparison to participants from married parent households. These aspirations towards self-advancement and development could also be accounted for by resilience among participants from single parent households. The results suggest that participants from single parent households have rated the life goal of relationships higher than participants from married parent households. These findings are similar to previous research that suggested that individuals from single parent households tend to become involved in relationships and generally tend to start their families at a young age as well (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). When looking at research that focuses on health and family structure, it suggests that individuals from single parent households tend to have a number of poor child developmental consequences (Musick & Meier, 2010). Schmeer (2012) also found in the examination of health trajectories among children from various family structures that individuals from married parent households tend to have higher associations with good health than individuals from single parent households. Literature therefore suggests that individuals from single parent households tend to have lower associations with good health; however the results obtained within the study suggest that participants from single parent households have rated the life goal of health higher than the participants from

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single parent households. The high rating of health among participants from single parent households can also be accounted for by their striving towards accessing good health in the future.

Currently there is no literature available that has examined family structure in relation to goals and aspirations within the context of Self Determination Theory. However internationally, literature exists that examines individual goals and aspirations within the framework of Self Determination Theory. Furthermore this study is the first within South Africa that looks at life goals and aspiration in relation to family structure within the context of Self Determination Theory. Moreover, when considering the overall goal content of the participants in relation to family structure, it is found that participants from single parent households have scored higher for intrinsic life goals than participants from married parent households. Kasser and Ryan (2001) believe that intrinsic life goals and aspirations from the premise of Self Determination Theory, are goals that are 'naturally consistent with human nature and needs' (Ingrid et al., 2009) and are naturally satisfying to pursue (Grouzet et al., 2005). The pursuit of intrinsic life goals is further believed to be related to behaviour and actions that are considered 'self-determined' in nature (McHoskey, 1999). However, the contrary is assumed for the aspirations towards extrinsic life goals, which are deemed less regular in light of 'positive human nature' (Ingrid et al., 2009). Furthermore extrinsic life goals are assumed to be associated with negative association with self-actualisation and positive affect (Williams et al., 2000). International literature provides an understanding and basis of intrinsic and extrinsic life goals among individuals and the assumptions of the effects they have on the well-being of individuals (as can be seen in the following studies: Schmuck, Kasser & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2008; Schmuck, 2001; Grouzet et al., 2005; Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; McHoskey, 1999; Ryan et al, 1999). The results that have been generated by this study are unable to compare to

international literature (such as Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Grouzet et al., 2005; McHoskey, 1999; Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009) as to whether the goals and aspirations that are intrinsic in nature are associated with an enhanced sense of well-being and health, and the opposite for extrinsic goals, as the study did not intend to examine the associations between goal content and well-being in relation to family. However, international literature still needs to explore goal content in relation to family structure from a Self Determination Theory point of view. Moreover literature does exist on the influence and effects that certain environments and contexts have on the formation and aspirations towards certain goal content. Ingrid et al. (2009) examined the effects of environment on an individual's life goals and aspirations. Research suggests that an individual's life goals and aspirations are reflective of their economic and cultural situations in which they live (Ingrid et al., 2009). International research therefore suggests that the context or environment plays a role in the goals that individuals aspire to. Within the context of the study, the environment or context will be that of family structure (single and married parent households). Ingrid et al. (2009) further state that research within Western countries has suggested that the aspirations towards extrinsic life goals were associated with a diminished sense of well-being; however this has not been generalised to individuals from all cultures as it still needs to be tested. Therefore the results that indicate that a large proportion of the sample have aspired to extrinsic goals, does not mean that it will be linked to negative well-being and health, as these findings have only been tested within Western countries. Ingrid et al. (2009) further state that the experiences and meanings attached to extrinsic life goals may be experienced differently in non-Western countries. Abramson and Inglehart (1995) have also put forward that individuals from less affluent countries tend to be more materialistic (or within reference to Self Determination Theory tend to aspire to extrinsic goals more) than individuals from affluent countries. The findings as proposed by Ingrid et al. (2009) and Abramson and Inglehart (1995) suggest that

the context or environment in which one finds oneself does influence the goals and aspirations of an individual. Therefore in light of the study, it is evident that family structure does have an effect on the life goal and aspirations of individuals.

**5.6     Limitations of the study**

The limitations that were encountered during this research study:

- The research study took on a cross-sectional design and this was considered as being a limitation in that it provided a once off perspective into the family structure and goals and aspirations of the participants.

- Initially the participants needed to obtain consent from the parents and complete assent forms before participation in the study. However due to the lack of response from potential participants, a children's rights professional was consulted to waive parental consent as the subject matter of the research was not sensitive and did not have any known harmful effects on the participants.

- It is not possible to generalise the findings of the study to the South African population, but it is intended that it might be a stepping stone for future research within this field.

- The data collection process posed a serious challenge as some schools were reluctant to allow research to be conducted at their institutions.

## 5.7    Conclusion

It is evident from the results that were yielded in this research study that there is a significant difference in the goals and aspirations of learners from single and married parent households. The results suggest that participants from single parent households place more emphasis on intrinsic goals while the total sample and the participants from married parent households placed more emphasis on extrinsic goals. Self Determination Theory also postulated that emphasis placed on intrinsic goals enhances well-being, and the opposite is true for emphasis placed on extrinsic goals. This study has been the first to consider the goals and aspirations of individuals in sub-Saharan Africa and to compare the goals and aspirations on the basis of family structure. The intention of this study is to create awareness of the need for family structure research on the African continent and move towards a non-Western approach to family.

## 5.8    Recommendations

The following are suggestions for programme implementation, development and future research:

- Based on the results that were obtained, participants from single parent households rated intrinsic life goals higher than participants from married parent households. Within the framework of SDT, intrinsic life goals are associated with health and well-being. The results therefore suggest that there is a need to foster aspirations towards intrinsic goals among individuals from both single and married parent households.

- The results suggest that South African youth tend to aspire more to the extrinsic life goal of wealth, and as literature has suggested, it is due to the economic situations that individuals find themselves in. The results suggest that there is large number of persons who come from households where there is a lack of resources and that

aspiring toward wealth goals would assist in their development. As a recommendation, state departments should assist with programme development and make resources available to assist young South Africans so that there can be more focus on intrinsic goals that promote well-being.

- Based on the results that were obtained from the study and the significant difference that existed on the basis of family structure and intrinsic goals, it would be interesting to conduct research on the goals and aspirations of South African participants in relation to psychological well-being. This would allow us to see whether the assumption of Self Determination Theory on the basis of extrinsic goals associated with a diminished sense of well-being, would be the same for the South African population.

- Future research should try and do a nationwide study to assist in generating knowledge on the influence family structure has on the life goals and aspirations of South Africans.

- It is hoped that the study has created the platform in establishing the gap in family structure research in relation to the future goals and aspirations and to emphasise the need for more research on family structure conducted from a non-Western perspective.
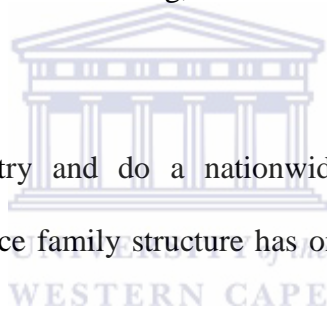
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**Appendix I:**

| PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BY TICKING YOUR RESPONSE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GENDER** | MALE | | | FEMALE | |
| **AGE** | | | | | |
| **GRADE** | | | | | |
| **NAME OF SCHOOL** | | | | | |
| **RACE** | COLOURED | BLACK AFRICAN | WHITE | INDIAN/ASIAN | |
| **I live with** | Both my parents | Only mother | Only father | Guardian/Caregiver | |
| **Home Language** | English | Afrikaans | IsiXhosa | Other | |
| **My parents are:** | Married | Live together but not married | Single and do not live together because they have never been married | Single because he/she is widowed | Single because he/she is divorced |

| ASPIRATIONS |
|---|
| **Everyone has long-term Goals or Aspirations. These are the things that individuals hope to accomplish over the course of their lives. In this section, you will find a number of life goals, presented one at a time, and we ask you three questions about each goal. (a) How important is this goal to you? (b) How likely is it that you will attain this goal in your future?** |

| To be a very wealthy person | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To grow and learn new things | | | | |

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To have my name known by many people**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To successfully hide the signs of aging**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To work for the betterment of society**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To be physically healthy**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To have many expensive possessions**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To be admired by many people**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

**To share my life with someone I love**

| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To have people comment often about how attractive I look** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To feel good about my level of physical fitness** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To be financially successful** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To be famous** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To have committed, intimate relationships** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To keep up with fashions in hair and clothing** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To work to make the world a better place** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To keep myself healthy and well** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To be rich** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To know and accept who I really am** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To have my name appear frequently in the media** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| **To achieve the "look" I've been after** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| To help others improve their lives | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To be relatively free from sickness | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To have enough money to buy everything I want | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To gain increasing insight into why I do the things I do | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To be admired by lots of different people | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To have deep enduring relationships | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To have an image that others find appealing | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |
| To help people in need | | | | |
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

| To have a physically healthy life style | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How important is this to you? | Not important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| How likely is it that this will happen in your future? | Not likely at all | Somewhat likely | Likely | Very likely |

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## INFORMATION SHEET

**Project Title: Does family structure matter? A comparison of the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools.**

**What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Eugene Lee Davids at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to voluntarily participate in this research project because you are Grade 11 learners at a secondary school. The purpose of this research project is to determine and examine the influence of family structure in the identification of goals and aspirations of Grade 11 learners.

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

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire will ask you questions about:

- You, your family structure and the goals and aspirations you have for your future.

This questionnaire will be completed at school, with permission of your parents, principal and teachers at a time which is not disruptive to your learning. Completion of the questionnaire will be less than 30 minutes.

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

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, the information you provide will be totally private; no names will be used so

there is no way that you can be identified as a participant in this study. The information will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality. Your name will not be reflected on the questionnaire. The information obtained from the survey will be collated with the information from other completed surveys. Therefore there will be no way to connect you to the survey questionnaire.

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

There are no known risks in participating in the study.

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

Information about this topic is limited. This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools. Since information about this particular research in South Africa is relatively limited, this study will increase the knowledge for (1) parents, (2) teachers/school, (3) practitioners and (4) the broader society. Furthermore, this study will highlight the pivot role family structure plays in the identification of the goals and aspirations we have for our future.
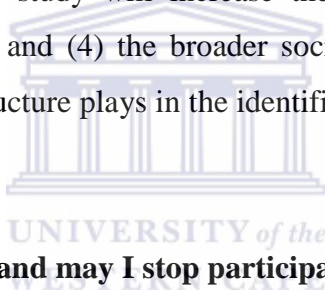
**Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

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

**Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?**

Every effort has been taken to protect you from any harm in this study. If however, you may feel affected you can be referred to your nearest community resource for assistance.

**What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by Eugene Lee Davids in the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Eugene Lee Davids at: 0716715654 or email: davidse.psych@gmail.com or the research supervisor Dr Roman at: 0219592277/2970 or email: nroman@uwc.ac.za.

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

**Professor Hester Klopper – Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences**
**Tel No: 021 959 2631/2746**
**Email address: hklopper@uwc.ac.za**
*This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.*

**Appendix III:**

# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
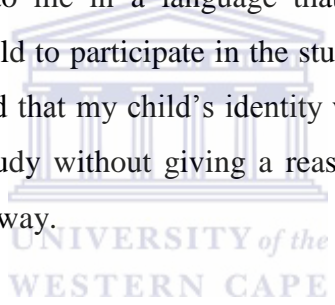
**Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa**

*Tel: +27 21-9592970/2277*
E-mail: nroman@uwc.ac.za

## CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

**Title of Research Project:**

**Does family structure matter? A comparison of the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools.**

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to allow my child to participate in the study. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my child's identity will not be disclosed and that my child may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect my child in any way.

**Parent's name…………………………..**

**Parent's signature……………………………….**

**Witness………………………………..**

**Date………………………**

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Study Coordinator's Name:  Dr N Roman**

**University of the Western Cape**

**Private Bag X17, Belville 7535**

**Telephone: 021 959 2277/2970**

**Email: nroman@uwc.ac.za**

**Appendix IV:**

# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa**

*Tel: +27 21-9592970/2277*
E-mail: nroman@uwc.ac.za

### ASSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Title of Research Project:**

**Does family structure matter? A comparison of the goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools.**

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

**Participant's name………………………………**

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

**Witness……………………………..**

**Date………………………**

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

**Study Coordinator's Name:  Dr N Roman**

**University of the Western Cape**

**Private Bag X17, Belville 7535**

**Telephone: 021 959 2277/2970**

**Email: nroman@uwc.ac.za**

**Appendix V:**

# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa**
*Tel: +27 21-9592970/2277*
**E-mail: nroman@uwc.ac.za**

## RESEARCH INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Parent / Guardian.

Your son / daughter has been involved in a research study titled *The influence of parenting practices and basic psychological needs in the identification of goals and aspirations of learners in secondary schools* that forms part of a study conducted by Dr Nicolette Roman and Eugene Lee Davids at the University of the Western Cape.

The main aim of the study was to identify and examine family structure in the identification of goals and aspirations of learners at secondary school. The study took the form of a questionnaire that took thirty minutes to administer.

Your son / daughter's participation in the study was voluntary and all the information that was collected will be treated with the highest confidentiality and participant anonymity is guaranteed. There have been no known risks in the participation of this study.

The benefits of your son / daughter's involvement in this study will assist in increasing knowledge of the goals and aspirations of learners and family structure as South African research in this area is very limited.

Should you require further information on the study or your son / daughter's participation do not hesitate to contact Dr Nicolette Roman at 021 959 2277/2970 or via email: nroman@uwc.ac.za or Eugene Lee Davids at 071 671 5654 or via email: davidse.psych@gmail.com.

Yours in research,

Dr N. Roman (Study Coordinator)
Head of Department: Social Work
Programme Manager: Child and Family Studies
University of the Western Cape
Office: 021 959 2277/2970
Email: nroman@uwc.ac.za

**Appendix VI:**

**Table 4.1:    Variable Coding in SPSS**

| *Abbreviation:* | *Variable:* |
| --- | --- |
| **WEALTH** | Wealth - Extrinsic Goal |
| **WEALTHImp** | Wealth Importance |
| **WEALTHLikeli** | Wealth Likelihood |
| **FAME** | Fame - Extrinsic Goal |
| **FAMEImp** | Fame Importance |
| **FAMELikeli** | Fame Likelihood |
| **IMAGE** | Image - Extrinsic Goal |
| **IMAGEImp** | Image Importance |
| **IMAGELikeli** | Image Likelihood |
| **PG** | Personal Growth - Intrinsic Goal |
| **PGImp** | Personal Growth Importance |
| **PGLikeli** | Personal Growth Likelihood |
| **REL** | Relationship - Intrinsic Goal |
| **RELImp** | Relationship Importance |
| **RELLikeli** | Relationship Likelihood |
| **COMTY** | Community - Intrinsic Goal |
| **COMTYImp** | Community Importance |
| **COMTYLikeli** | Community Likelihood |
| **HEALTH** | Health - Intrinsic Goal |
| **HEALTHImp** | Health Importance |
| **HEALTHLikeli** | Health Likelihood |

| | |
|---|---|
| **INTGOALS** | Intrinsic Goal Index |
| **EXTGOALS** | Extrinsic Goal Index |
| **MS** | Marital Status of Parents |

**Table 4.2:    Cronbach Alpha Scores – Aspirations Index**

| *Variable* | *Number of Items (n)* | *Alpha Score (α)* |
|---|---|---|
| **WEALTH** | 10 | |
| **WEALTHImp** | 5 | .90 |
| **WEALTHLikeli** | 5 | |
| **FAME** | 10 | |
| **FAMEImp** | 5 | .94 |
| **FAMELikeli** | 5 | |
| **IMAGE** | 10 | |
| **IMAGEImp** | 5 | .96 |
| **IMAGELikeli** | 5 | |
| **PG** | 10 | |
| **PGImp** | 5 | .96 |
| **PGLikeli** | 5 | |
| **REL** | 10 | |
| **RELImp** | 5 | .96 |
| **RELLikeli** | 5 | |
| **COMTY** | 10 | |
| **COMTYImp** | 5 | .92 |
| **COMTYLikeli** | 5 | |
| **HEALTH** | 10 | |
| **HEALTHImp** | 5 | .94 |
| **HEALTHLikeli** | 5 | |
| **INTGOALS** | 40 | .91 |
| **EXTGOALS** | 30 | .89 |