AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORTIVE AND CHALLENGING FACTORS AMONG FIRST-GENERATION, PROFESSIONAL CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTERS STUDENTS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY.

By:

Cleopatra Sipika

A mini-thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Psychology (Clinical) in the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape

Supervisor: Ms Mariska Pienaar

Co-supervisor: Dr Leigh Adams Tucker

NOVEMBER 2021

Key words: First-generation students, higher education, professional training programme, clinical psychology, academic success, persistence.

ABSTRACT

Transformations in education policy following the establishment of a democratic South Africa have resulted in a marked increase in first-generation students in the country's higher education institutions. While broadening access to higher education certainly represents a positive shift, student success rates at South African higher education institutions are of great concern. The literature globally points to a wide range of challenges experienced by first-generation students that place them at risk of not completing their education. These include financial stress, poor social support, isolation and marginalisation, cultural adaptation challenges, and greater family and work responsibilities. There is, however, a significant gap in the South African literature pertaining to the challenges experienced by first-generation students.

The primary aim of this study was to explore the subjective experiences of first-generation students following the Master's Course in Clinical Psychology (MPsych) at a historically disadvantaged South African university. The aim was to obtain data on their experiences of the barriers and challenges to their academic success, and the factors that supported and facilitated their academic success. This qualitative study used an exploratory research design to conduct semi-structured, individual interviews online. The data was analysed thematically, and Cross's (1981) chain-of-response model was used to identify and understand the barriers and supportive factors, and to group them into dispositional, situational and institutional factors.

Despite encountering multiple obstacles and being under-prepared for the programme, the MPsych (Clinical) first-generation student participants persisted and completed their training programme. The findings indicated that these students had the support of their families and their clinical supervisors, and had the unique dispositional traits of self-motivation, altruism and

independence. The findings offer significant insight into interventions that could be implemented to improve support for MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students.

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1) I hereby declare that I understand what plagiarism entails.
2) I know that plagiarism is a punishable offence because it constitutes theft.
3) I understand the plagiarism policy of the University of the Western Cape.
4) I understand the consequences of committing plagiarism.
5) I hereby declare that the work presented is my own. Where I have made use of other sources, I have attributed ownership in the correct way.

Signature: _____ Date: _____25 November 2021_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the love and support of my family and friends. The writing of this dissertation would not have been possible without your prayers. It has been a challenging journey but your prayers gave me strength. A special word of gratitude to my friend, Steven. Mhlobo, I will forever be grateful for your support and for holding my hand up to the finish line.

Many thanks to the academic team in the Department of Psychology for the quality education and training. A special thanks to Mariska Pienaar, for your patience and the supportive role you have played throughout my studies. I could not have done this without your support, guidance and motivation. Thank you to Dr Leigh Adams-Tucker, for all your effort, guidance and encouragement. A special appreciation to the Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, Professor Rhoda, for the financial support and words of encouragement.

I would like to give special thanks to the five participants of this study. This project would not have been successful without your help.

Above all, glory and honour belongs to God, my Creator, who, after He began a good work, will surely carry it on to its completion.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the three strong women who raised me to be the woman I am today: my late grandmother, Nhana Florence Sipika, my late mother, Nolukhanyiso Ngcombela, and my aunt, Nosandla Sipika. You have always believed that investing in a girl's education is to provide resources for the nation, and that the future of our community would be secured through such an investment. I will forever be grateful to you for all your teachings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BUSS	Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement
CHS	Community and Health Sciences
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COR	Chain of Response
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
PASA	Psychological Association of South Africa
PoPI	Protection of Personal Information
PSYSSA	Psychological Society of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a background to this study on the subjective experiences of the supportive and challenging factors among first-generation, professional clinical psychology master's students at a South African university. The chapter provides a brief policy background on the restructuring of the system of higher education in South Africa since 1994, and how the doors to higher learning have been opened to an increasing number of students, many of whom are first-generation students. The problem statement, aims, objectives and research questions of this study are presented, and the data generation and analysis briefly described, after which a chapter outline of the thesis is presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The new democratic dispensation that emerged in South Africa after 1994 was faced with multiple demands, which included, but were not limited to, the need to transform educational policy and democratise higher education institutions. The response to these demands was to review and redress the fragmented discriminatory educational system, in order to usher South Africa into a new democracy (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2014). The structure of education had previously been characterised by the central principle of apartheid, which saw the government allocating resources and schooling infrastructure unequally for different race groups (Chisholm, 2012). Jansen (2001, p. 262) suggests that after 1994 "one of the major changes in education was the restructuring of policies to a new lexicon of efficiency, effectiveness and quality in organisation, governance and funding".

The restructuring of policies opened the door for many previously disadvantaged students to be able to access higher education. *Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education* (Department of Education [DoE], 1997) called upon higher education institutions to contribute to South Africa's political democratisation, economic reconstruction, development and redistribution policies. Such policies aimed to increase access to higher education for previously disadvantaged groups, such as Black women, mature individuals, and students with disabilities (DHET, 2014). As such, historically White universities experienced a dramatic diversification in the demographic profile of their students. This transition and change of demographics in higher education institutions also produced an increasing number of first-generation students.

The term "first-generation students" is a contested one. It generally defines students who come from a family or background where neither of the parents or guardians has attended college or university (Mehta et al., 2011). However, some definitions are a little broader, such as Abel's (2020) definition of first-generation students as students whose parent(s) did not complete a four-year college or university degree. This study focuses on students whose parents have no college, university or university of technology qualification, as defined by Abel (2020). However, it does not exclude cases where a student's siblings may have a tertiary qualification.

First-generation university students tend to be non-traditional, as they are often mature, older students (over the age of 24). These students often come from households with a low socioeconomic status, hold part-time jobs, and are financially independent (Duke-Benfield, 2015). In comparison with their peers, they tend to have greater family responsibilities, and hence are often employed (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Hodges-Payne, 2006). First-generation students are therefore likely to face greater financial and psychosocial challenges, as compared with non-first-generation students. They are recognised as underprivileged, but receive very

little support from the state and from universities (Tinto, 2006), and this is more likely to increase their dropout rate (Ishitani, 2016).

The international literature indicates that first-generation university students face unique challenges that their parents have not experienced; therefore, their parents are limited in their capacity to provide guidance to them (Ishitani, 2006). Some of the challenges first-generation students face include cultural differences, lack of parental support, and academic and financial difficulties. While the majority of studies show that first-generation students experience greater challenges with retention and throughput than non-first-generation students, little is known about their experiences and challenges. Consequently, there is still a difference between the success rates of first-generation and non-first-generation students (Ishitani, 2016).

While previous studies have examined the phenomenon of first-generation undergraduate students, not many studies have explored the experiences of postgraduate first-generation students. It is therefore important to obtain knowledge of the challenges experienced by first-generation postgraduate students in order to better support them and to bridge inequality. The revised *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET, 2014) highlights the need for effective equity-promotion policies to increase opportunities for disadvantaged students, and for measures that will assist in such policy development.

This study sought to contribute to the argument in favour of prioritising and extending training support to first-generation students, who are often identified as disadvantage or underprivileged students. A better understanding and improved knowledge of the experiences of postgraduate first-generation students could aid in bridging the success gap between first-generation students and non-first-generation students. This suggestion rests on the notion that postgraduate first-generation students have already successfully completed their undergraduate studies, and can thus provide information on the factors that facilitated their success.

Despite moving from a racially divided educational system to a democratic and more diverse educational system, there are still numerous critical challenges to transformation in South Africa. Access to universities does not guarantee meaningful social and academic engagement, levels of retention, or success (Morrow, 2009). Based on the limited research conducted in South Africa on this topic, a hypothesis is made that there are limited economic and psychosocial support structures in place to support the increased number of first-generation students that have emerged in higher education institutions in the post-apartheid era. Bailey (2014) suggests that this may be due to the fact that the policy direction of the South African government tends to construct educational institutions in a technical role without supplying the services that facilitate the implementation of policy. Nonetheless, there has been a shift to prioritise increased student access, opportunity and success in higher education, and to address the current issues of low participation rates in higher education, and low completion rates (DHET, 2014; Higher Education South Africa, 2014).

This study is a response to the mandate to prioritise an increase in student access, opportunity and success in higher education, and to address the current issues of low participation in higher education, high attrition rates, a lack of equity and low completion rates (Higher Education South Africa, 2014), as expressed in the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET, 2014). First-generation students experience higher dropout rates, thus frustrating efforts to address equity in the South African workforce and to address the country's critical skills shortage (Schargel & Smink, 2013).

However, the research on first-generation students in South Africa is still limited, and the topic thus represents a gap in the research. This lack of focused knowledge limits the opportunities for designing interventions that would promote the success of these students. Studies show that the dropout rates of students training for the healthcare professions are particularly high (Font

et al., 2015). A study conducted by Quinn et al. (2005) among first-generation students from working-class backgrounds in the health care profession showed that more than half of these students were reluctant to approach faculty staff for support, and that many students found the lecturers to be unapproachable or inaccessible. Consequently, withdrawal from academic programmes was attributed to a failure to gain academic support. However, there is very little research that addresses the factors that constitute barriers and the factors that facilitate academic success amongst postgraduate first-generation students in health professions degree programmes. Hence, this study focused on students who had been trained or who were still in training for the profession of clinical psychology.

The idea is not to assume that all South Africans who come from a disadvantaged background in contemporary South Africa are first-generation students, or that they are less competent than non-first-generation students (Liversage et al., 2018). The findings of this study have the potential to generate recommendations that could influence retention strategies and could contribute to the creation of effective interventions that reduce the obstacles identified by the first-generation student participants, and thus reduce attrition.

The above represents the rationale and potential value of this study.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

First-generation students are likely to face academic, social and financial challenges, as they are often less academically prepared than non-first-generation students, and thus face more challenges in relation to their novel experience of higher education (Becker et al., 2017). In certain contexts, first-generation students are recognised as underprivileged students and are afforded psychosocial and financial support from the state (Covarrubias et al., 2019; Hébert,

2018). In South Africa, research on the experiences of first-generation students is in its infancy, even though the number of first-generation students increased tremendously after the post-1994 reforms of South African higher education institutions.

There is also an increasing number of first-generation students in health-related professional programmes (Deanna, 2015). Thus, this study focused on students who are registered for the degree of Master's in Clinical Psychology (MPsych Clinical), and those who were previously registered in this programme. Although the role of psychology in South Africa is crucial in social transformation, training in psychology is still mired in debates and controversies around equity. As a profession, psychology has grown immensely during the post-apartheid period (Pillay et al., 2013). However, there is an increasing need to redress inequity and to increase opportunities for disadvantaged students. Thus, psychology training programmes in South Africa are under pressure to develop a new breed of graduates (Pillay et al., 2013).

1.4 POSITIONALITY

The exploration of subjective experiences in a qualitative study represents a significant challenge, since subjectivity renders experiences less amenable to traditional objective scientific conclusions (LeDoux et al., 2018). Qualitative research in its simplest form seeks to understand behaviour and motivations, and in doing so, subjectivity must be explored and understood. An emerging direction of this research focuses on the subjective feelings, experiences, drives and mental connections that relate to the realities of MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students.

To offer additional rationale and context, I share my positionality regarding this study. I identify as a first-generation student, as both my parents had no higher education qualifications. My

interest in this topic crystallised when I started to reflect on my own personal journey as a first-generation student in the MPsych (Clinical) programme. My passion for psychology can be traced back to my first year of university, when I learnt that there was a social science field of psychology. It took me 19 years from my first year to get into the training programme. It is worth noting that education has provided me with better opportunities. My pursuit of postgraduate studies — and my journey to becoming a clinical psychologist — has been both exciting and challenging. It has been a journey filled with mixed and conflicting emotions, from extreme excitement on admission to the programme to feelings of ambiguity and frustration throughout the training programme. I mainly did not feel as if I fit into the programme. I did not see my language and my social identity reflected in the training programme, and it therefore affected my confidence. I started to reflect on own personal challenges, and on what had influenced me to persist despite the challenges I had faced as a first-generation student, which stimulated my desire to explore further the experiences of other first-generation students who had completed or were currently in the training programme.

I commenced on the journey as principal researcher with the support and guidance of my two supervisors, who are both lecturers at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and in the professional training programme. As supportive as both my supervisors were throughout this research journey, I still struggled to share potentially negative feedback about the training in the programme, because they were both part of the teaching collective within the programme.

My study involved interviewing past trainees, one of whom I knew personally as a registered student in the professional training programme. The process of exploring their experiences led me as a researcher to question certain aspects and practices, both generally and specifically, as I was fully aware of the processes involved in training. The participants used the reflective language of their subjective experiences, which provided a complete and holistic view of their

individual journeys. They commonly expressed their experiences using phrases such as "*the experience was different*", and "*it was not something I could have imagined*", and described the training programme as "*the process*" and "*a journey*".

It was difficult not to be overwhelmed by my emotions in the process of interviewing the trainees, since I had had an emotionally and psychologically demanding experience of my own during the professional training programme. I needed to continuously monitor for the pitfalls of misconceptions and misinterpretations throughout the interviews, as the participants would sometimes seek validation and cues that I understood what they were talking about as MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students. It should be noted that throughout the study a concerted effort was made on my part, as the researcher, to minimise "researcher bias". Polit and Beck (2014, p. 734) describe researcher bias as "the threat that involves unintentional effects if the researcher has expectations or personal bias". As qualitative research projects are complex to manage (Thorpe, 2004), keeping a reflective journal was imperative as a self-reflective learning exercise for reviewing the merits and shortcomings of my involvement in the study.

While my experience may have differed from other MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students, given our individual social identities, I believe that lived experiences matter and are a valuable source of knowledge that can be leveraged to support first-generation students in the MPsych (Clinical) training programme. While my positionality was viewed in this research as an asset, qualitative research methods that offered transparency and enhanced trustworthiness were followed.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to explore the subjective experiences of first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students, in terms of the challenges and supportive factors that they experienced in relation to their first-generation status.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study was to identify the barriers to and facilitators of participation, retention and throughput in higher education for postgraduate first-generation students in a professional health sciences course.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.7.1 Primary research question

The study attempted to answer the following primary research question:

> *What are the subjective experiences of present and past first-generation students in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme, specifically as they relate to barriers to and facilitators of participation, retention, and throughput?*

1.7.2 Secondary research questions

The secondary research questions posed by the study were as follows:

1) What were the challenges experienced by the participants as first-generation students?

2) What were the supporting factors in the participants' experience as first-generation students? How did these factors facilitate their success in pursuing postgraduate studies?
3) From the data obtained about the barriers to and facilitators of academic success experienced by postgraduate first-generation students in the health professions field, what recommendations could inform interventions to improve the success rate of these students?

1.8 DATA GENERATION AND ANALYSIS

Five eligible participants were invited to participate in the study. The study employed a qualitative approach and an exploratory research design, and used semi-structured individual interviews conducted on an online platform. Clarke and Braun's (2018) six-step thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is comprised of six chapters, which are briefly outlined as follows:

1.9.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Chapter 1 has introduced the study, and has described the background to the research problem, the problem statement, the rationale of the study and the researcher's particular positionality.

The aims and objectives, research questions and research design of the study were presented, after which each chapter was briefly outlined.

1.9.2 Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

Chapter 2 consists of two sections. The first section is a review of the relevant existing literature on the challenges faced by first-generation students, as well as the supportive factors they experience. The literature review identified the gaps in the existing South African literature. The second section presents the theoretical framework for the study, which centres primarily on Cross's (1981) chain-of-response (COR) model. This section provides the reader with a sense of the role of Cross's model for the present study, and how it assisted in the formulation of the research questions, in organising the themes that emerged from the results, and in providing insight into the different levels at which intervention could be focused.

1.9.3 Chapter 3: Methodology, research setting and design

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, setting, and design, and the method of data analysis used in this qualitative, exploratory study. A justification for the study design is presented. This chapter also reports on the ethical considerations taken into account during the study. The chapter includes a description of the research context. It was important to highlight the background to UWC, as the legacy of the university and the history of the university's transformation are likely to contribute to a different experience for its first-generation students than might be the case at other local universities. Lastly, the chapter outlines the data analysis method proposed by Clarke and Braun (2018).

1.9.4 Chapter 4: Research findings

Chapter 4 presents the results of the thematic analysis, which employed Clarke and Braun's (2018) six-step process to identify and develop themes from the transcribed interview data. Cross's (1981) COR model was applied to guide the identification and understanding of the barriers and facilitative factors that the first-generation students in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme encountered and overcame to be successful in their training.

1.9.5 Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the major dispositional, situational and institutional factors that were found to have challenged and facilitated the academic success and well-being of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants. The research findings were integrated with the literature, as well as with Cross's (1981) COR model.

1.9.6 Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter 6 presents a summary of the study's main findings, followed by an acknowledgement of the limitations of the study. After a brief summation of the significance of this particular study, the implications of the study and recommendations for future research are outlined. Finally, the researcher concludes with a personal reflection on the overall research journey.

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the study and presented an overview of its various aspects. Background information about the research problem, the rationale of the study, the aims and objectives, and the research questions that guided the study were presented in order to contextualise the research topic. An outline of the chapters that follow was presented. The following chapter reviews the existing literature on the challenges experienced by first-generation students, and the factors that facilitate or hinder their success, and presents the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first part consists of a review of the existing literature on the challenges experienced by first-generation students in general and South African postgraduate clinical psychology students in particular, and the factors that facilitate or hinder their success; and the second part presents a discussion of the theoretical framework of this study.

The aim of the first part of this chapter is to identify and describe the barriers and protective factors that first-generation students experience in their efforts to access and be successful in higher education. It is important that these challenges be identified in order for suitable interventions to be formulated, so that the potential vulnerabilities of first-generation students can be addressed for the purposes of redress. It is particularly important in the South African context for such redress to occur, as there is an increased need for specialised skills in South Africa, and a tertiary education has become a requirement for employment (Simon, 2014). The literature review therefore begins with a discussion of the demographics of first-generation students and of the general nature of clinical psychology training in South Africa, before moving on to examine more closely the particular challenges and barriers to success experienced by first-generation students. The factors that facilitate and support the success of first-generation students are then described. The literature review also serves to identify the gaps in the existing South African research on the subjective experiences of postgraduate first-generation students.

The second part of the chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study, which centres primarily on Cross's (1981) chain-of-response (COR) model. This model informed the formulation of the research questions and the organisation of the themes that emerged from the results. Cross's dispositional, situational and institutional factors provide insight into the different levels at which interventions could be focused.

2.1.1 Demographics of first-generation students

Merritt (2008) highlights that there have been global demographic changes in first-generation students. Previously, white, working-class 'baby boomers' formed the majority of first-generation students, because they were represented most frequently as university students in total (Merritt, 2008). However, a shift in the demographics of university students in general, in terms of their race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic level, has resulted in the first-generation students of today having different characteristics (Merritt, 2008).

In South Africa, first-generation students disproportionately represent the most disadvantaged racial, economic, and gender groups, and thereby inhabit intersecting sites of oppression that uniquely position them within the broader context of educational stratification (Tinto, 2017). First-generation students in South Africa are Black, and often come from poverty-stricken areas that are characterised by a lack of parental supervision, single-parent homes or even child-headed households (Matshabane, 2016). Even in instances where both parents are present, unemployment usually presents additional problems, and even though some young people end up in the care of extended family members who have university degrees (Lindner & Peters, 2014), as students they are still defined as having first-generation status. In the context of this study, first-generation students are seen as a particular set of students who embody the unequal

and discriminatory racialised socio-political past of South Africa (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). While many studies indicate that first-generation students are a minority in other countries, at South African tertiary institutions these students constitute the vast majority of students, forming 78% of the total student population (South African Survey of Student Engagement, 2010). However, this does not imply that all students who embody the discriminatory, racialised past are first-generation students. Therefore, this study was not limited to only first-generation students who were defined by the racialized past, but focused on students who embodied first-generation status as defined in Chapter 1.

2.1.2 An overview of clinical psychology training in South Africa

Psychology is one of the most popular disciplines at universities, and is well established as a social science and a profession (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). Becoming a clinical psychologist requires five to six years of full-time study, depending on the training institution. Three years of undergraduate training, with average Psychology marks of at least 65%, is required for entry into an honours psychology programme. To qualify to be considered for acceptance into a professional master's psychology programme, a minimum 65% average for the honours degree is required. The two-year clinical psychology master's programme consists of one year of academic and practical training, and a second year focused solely on an internship at a suitable site (Health Professions Council of South Africa [HPCSA], 2017).

As a discipline, psychology in South Africa has been known for its historic alignment with narrow racial politics (Kagee, 2014). However, the advent of democracy resulted in a transformation of the discipline, setting the tone for a psychology that reflects social concerns, transcends personal interest and group prejudice, and is set to continue to serve humanity

(Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Pillay & Ahmed, 2004). This was marked by the disbanding of institutions such as the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) and the formation of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PSYSSA). While there are ongoing attempts to be more inclusive of previously disadvantaged groups, critics still suggest that the current structure of the profession may not be the best means to redress the issues of the past, and to improve mental wellbeing in South Africa (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Macleod, 2004).

There is a rapidly increasing body of literature that reviews the role that contextual barriers play in hindering access to psychological services for individuals in South Africa (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Macleod, 2004). However, Pillay et al. (2013, p. 47) highlight that there is "a relative paucity of critical research" into the training of psychologists in South Africa. This is of concern, because the appropriate recruitment and training of clinical psychologists in post-apartheid South Africa is important for addressing issues of equity and redress, for developing relevant policy, curricula and practices, and for producing graduates who are willing and able to work in the context of diversity and disadvantage (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004).

Several studies have highlighted how contemporary efforts at transformation have been directed at evaluating the relevance of clinical psychology as a discipline and profession in South Africa for the majority of South Africans (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Pillay, 2009; Stevens, 2003; Suffla & Seedat, 2004). There has also been growing concern around cultural, religious and epistemological relevance, and around efforts to Africanise psychology (Bojuwoye & Edwards, 2011; Ruane, 2010). Challenges have also arisen in relation to the highly competitive selection and admission process into the master's programmes, which accept a limited number of students at postgraduate level due to the intensity of the programme. Mhambi and Thobejane (2012) describe the process of master's student selection as highly competitive, and its intensity has deterred many Black students from applying.

International studies have been conducted to explore the factors that influence Black minority ethnic individuals to pursue a career in clinical psychology (Meredith & Baker, 2007; Helm & Wilson 2013).

Meredith and Baker's (2007) findings indicate that these factors include society's perception that psychology has a relatively low status in comparison with other healthcare professions such as medicine; a fear of going against the family; and the "Whiteness" of psychology as a profession and a subject. Other significant themes from Meredith and Baker's (2007) study that were specific to clinical psychology training, are issues of cultural sensitivity, fairness, appropriateness, and embeddedness or the overcoming of cultural bias. For example, the lack of family and community embeddedness was negatively perceived; importantly, this embeddedness was not perceived in relation to the culture of higher education, but rather to the far more specific culture of professional clinical psychology and its associated training. Meredith and Baker (2007) identified a cultural rejection and disapproval of clinical psychology by minority groups, both as a career and a source of help, and therefore recommended changing the workforce demographics of clinical psychology by increasing the proportion of its minority ethnic membership.

Socioeconomic concerns and perceptions of professional income have also emerged as a problem in psychology training (Carolissen et al., 2015). For many students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, being able to afford the costs of study and the wish to ease the burden on their familial income are primary concerns, so careers with shorter training periods, such as social work or even law, may be viewed as more viable options than psychology (Cornell, 2012; Mudhovozi, 2011; Sedumedi, 2002). Cornell (2012) finds that the difficulty of affording student fees did not feature as a prominent concern for White students, but they were concerned about whether they would be able to earn a good income as a psychologist. Some

studies show that psychology students find the course material and training to be a challenge, both intellectually and emotionally, which may indicate unsupportive teaching and learning practices in psychology (Mhambi & Thobejane, 2012; Sedumedi 2002).

Concerns are also increasing regarding the retention of students registered at South African universities for master's degrees in psychology. According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2014), the average number of years to complete a master's degree is about 3.5 years, and 37% of students at South African higher education institutions do not graduate within the minimum time period (CHE, 2009, p. 13). The MPsych (Clinical) training is offered to smaller, highly selected groupings, there still remains a risk of termination or non-completion, due to not reaching clinical competence, financial exclusion, difficulties in finishing research modules, or academic exclusion (Cyster, 2019; Koen et al., 2006; Senekal 2018). Figures from 2007–2014 indicate that 217 out of 286 students registered for a coursework master's in psychology in South Africa graduated within four years (CHE, 2014; Offord, 2016). Thus, 76% of those initially enrolled in 2007 had graduated by 2010. This percentage is considerably higher than the national average of 53%. (CHE, 2014) However, it is important to note that small numbers of students are selected for structured master's programmes, and that the higher completion rates still do not translate into a significantly greater number of registered psychologists.

Senekal's (2018) quantitative study conducted on the employment and employability of postgraduate psychology alumni, indicates that one out of three first-generation students graduates from clinical psychology training. Barriers to success in achieving the required programme outcomes in clinical psychology training have been found to be associated with the quality of the students' working relationships with their supervisors, in relation to both clinical and research supervision, and with the students' clinical competence (Hatcher & Lassiter, 2007;

Kaslow, 2004; Rubin et al., 2007). Other obstacles to completion have been found to include factors such as poor socialisation into the programme, insufficient academic preparation, approaches to research supervision, late completion of the dissertation, lack of motivation, personal problems, and inadequate mechanisms of support (Hoffman & Julie, 2012; Pillay & Kritzinger, 2007; Suhre et al., 2007). Research on the factors influencing student retention has furthermore been more focused on the experiences of undergraduate students than on those of postgraduate students.

2.2 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

The majority of first-generation students do not know what to expect when they arrive at institutions of higher learning (Timmey & Chapman, 2012). Several studies have highlighted that each university endorses a unique culture that students learn and adapt to through the transition process during their first year (Collins, 2000; Kish 2003). For new students, the adjustment to this university culture includes academic, social, and psychological aspects (Tinto, 2000). For some first-generation students, their failure to thrive at university is related not so much to academic under-preparedness but to challenges of a more social and cultural nature (Vincent & Hlatshwayo, 2018). Generally, first-generation students face more challenges than their peers (Jenkins et al., 2020) and find themselves in constant conflict, torn between two cultures — family and education (Kish, 2003, p. 3). In this section, I will discuss some of the challenges facing first-generation students, and more specifically, the following topics: 1) cultural adaptation, 2) language, 3) financial difficulties, 4) social networks, and 5) academic support.

2.2.1 Cultural adaptation

A number of studies have identified cultural adaptation as one of the challenges faced by first-generation students (Ivemark & Ambrose, 2021; Jenkins et al., 2013; Mehta et al., 2011). Makola (2014) identifies various necessary cultural adaptations, such as the transition from a traditional African culture to a modern Western culture, from a rural to an urban environment, and from being the high achiever in a small community to being one of many students in a larger, more diverse setting. Cuéllar (2000) explains how higher education is an avenue for acculturation, and how many first-generation students experience interactive cultural strain as they integrate acculturation with identity development and socialisation. The resulting distress from cultural strain may have negative health consequences, including physical, psychological, and social aspects linked to the acculturation process (Salgado et al., 2012).

While many students find the transition to university life difficult — as they are setting off by themselves for the first time and often feel a sense of "not belonging" while living on campus (Stebleton et al., 2014) — Pike and Kuh (2005) find that first-generation students tend to be even less satisfied with the campus environment than their peers, as the environment is completely foreign to many of them and they struggle to fit in. The transition from home to campus includes many changes in day-to-day life habits, such as eating differently, spending time establishing new friendships, creating a new daily routine, and the loss of immediate and daily support from family members at home (Clark, 2005).

Research on the cultural adaptation of students has focused primarily on the experiences of undergraduate first-generation students (Carlton, 2015), and there is comparatively little research on postgraduate students, let alone first-generation students at postgraduate level. However, several studies have identified academic transition as one of the barriers to the completion of postgraduate studies (Hoffman & Julie, 2012; West, 2012). West (2012) and

Hoffman and Julie (2012) report various types of transition from undergraduate studies to postgraduate studies, such as personal-emotional transition, social transition, and academic transition. Limited knowledge of the programme content and the expected academic requirements can be additional barriers to completion (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; Suhre et al., 2007). Pillay and Kritzinger (2007) highlight that non-completion of postgraduate programmes can leave a gap in the knowledge produced in a field of study, and has a detrimental effect on the research output produced by a university, especially where the research component of courses was not completed. This can also further delay progress in fully transforming the South African educational system. Although first-generation students may persist to postgraduate studies, their low throughput rates in comparison with their peers remain a great concern (Tinto, 2015).

2.2.2 Language

Several international and local studies have found first-generation students to be less prepared for university than non-first-generation students (Evans, 2013; Huerta et al., 2013; Rosner et al., 2015). Falcon (2015) pinpoints how this under-preparedness can often be attributed to how students from both rural and disadvantaged backgrounds tend to struggle to function effectively in urban university environments that exclusively use English as a medium of instruction. In other words, students' inability to efficiently address their obstacles is generally attributed to factors such as poor language proficiency (Howie, 2007). Various studies (De Matthews & Izquierdo, 2020; Espinosa, 2013; Tran et al., 2015) indicate that a lack of language proficiency has a negative impact on academic performance. The findings suggest that students who come from educational backgrounds characterised by English as a second language, experience more difficulties in completing their academic writing tasks, in articulating their thoughts, and in

presenting their arguments in an academically structured and logically coherent manner (Leibowitz, 2005). In the United States, dual-medium classrooms have improved the performance of such disadvantaged students (Friere, 2016).

In South Africa, a large percentage of first-generation students come from rural areas where English is not generally a first language, which then places them at a significant disadvantage in terms of academic achievement (Madadzhe, 2019; Owen-Smith, 2010; Zulu, 2008). It must be noted that during apartheid, language was used to exclude certain groups from the benefits of a better education (Tshotsho, 2013). However, the language issue in South Africa is still complicated. The country has 11 official languages, but English is the most commonly spoken language in official and commercial public life. While learners have the right to be taught in their home language until Grade 3, English is the official medium of instruction in schools, with the exception of a few schools and most universities (Madadzhe, 2019; Makoni & Severo, 2017). According to Kaya and Seleti (2013), globalisation has resulted in a large part of the higher education curriculum adopting Western forms of knowledge, thereby displacing traditional ideas and values with modern ones, and creating a contradiction for many students between learning and living (Kaya & Seleti, 2013, p. 41).

Additionally, Makoni and Severo (2017) find that the majority of first-generation students in South Africa come from ‘Black’ schools, where teachers — right up to high school — often use code-switching, or the practice of alternating between the learners’ home language and English, in order to make complex concepts more accessible to learners. As a result, many learners fail to develop competency in English, the medium of instruction that is critical for academic success. Owen-Smith (2010) emphasises that due to language barriers, the majority of African-language students learning using English perform 20–40% lower than English-

speaking students. However, English remains the language of instruction in South Africa (Zulu, 2008).

However, language is not the only factor that contributes to the poor performance of Black students (Munyuro & Dube, 2021). The challenge for these students lies not only in overcoming the language barrier, but also in overcoming low expectations and low academic performance, which affects their confidence (Mudaly & Singh, 2018). Garcia (2002) discovered that differences in communication styles can create a lack of self-confidence in first-generation students, resulting in them often feeling uncomfortable with or even afraid of expressing themselves. The mainstream culture in institutions of higher learning uses language primarily to express thoughts, feelings and ideas, and the majority of information is carried through verbal expression (Garcia, 2002). The transition to becoming an independent learner requires a shift in mind-set, academic language and practice. Thus, it is important for students to be aware of the challenges in their transition so that they can prepare themselves, and seek the necessary support, to meet the needs of the academic world at university (Makoni & Severo, 2017).

2.2.3 Financial difficulties

Tinto (2015) highlights that the transition to university can be difficult, and can precipitate both psychological and financial distress. International studies have identified financial difficulties as one of the primary causes of withdrawal among full-time students (Markle, 2015; Willcoxson et al., 2011). First-generation students are more likely to experience emotional stress about the financing of their university studies (Britt et al., 2015), and may have more financial responsibilities than other students, as they tend to study part-time while working full-time (Aruguete, 2017; Stephens et al., 2014). This is particularly true in the South African

context, where poverty may result in many students being forced to prioritise employment opportunities at the expense of their studies (Klasen & Woolard, 2009). Evidence from the literature suggests that working whilst studying has adverse effects on students' academic performance. The additional time commitment to their employment reduces the time they have available to dedicate to their studies, often resulting in missed lectures, fatigue from long hours at work, increased stress due to work commitments (Hershner & Chervin, 2014), and ultimately poorer academic performance and the decision to leave the institution (Vuyiseka, 2019).

Many students, including first-generation students from families with a low socioeconomic status, seek (higher) education as a mechanism to disrupt blockages to intergenerational mobility and progression (Blanden & Macmillan, 2014). For example, the families of first-generation students go to great lengths and make enormous sacrifices for their children to get into higher institutions of learning, and parents in urban areas often work two or three jobs, while those in rural areas will sell their most precious assets, including their livestock, with the hope that the student will complete the degree and find a well-paid job (Mdepa & Tshiwula, 2012). Given the strain on family and community resources, there is tremendous pressure on the student to avoid failure (Timmey & Chapman, 2012). Similarly, research by Anderson et al. (2001, cited in Sennett et al., 2003) highlights the importance of a stable family background in mitigating the negative relationship between low socioeconomic status and academic performance at university. Kromydas (2017) highlighted that not only does a student's family income influence which institution of higher education they select, but it also influences social interactions at university. First-generation students as a population have less annual family income and higher financial strain on average (Adams et al., 2016). When first-generation students do drop out due to financial constraints, they often leave with debt and a sense of failure (Cardoza, 2016). Cardoza (2016) further highlights that even when students accumulate

scholarships, loans or gifts from family and churches, once they get into university they find a whole range of new unanticipated financial barriers.

In South Africa, the persistent levels of inequality in society in general are reflected amongst postgraduate students; the differences in performance between students from low-income households and those from middle-class households, as well as between students from various race groups, remain a cause for concern (CHE, 2014). Poverty and the lack of adequate funding have been identified as the major causes of inequality in completing postgraduate studies (Letseka & Maile, 2008). An objective of South African higher education institutions was to grow postgraduate graduation rates to 50% by 2018 (DHET, 2015). Generally, financial difficulties, such as outstanding study debt, have always hindered many students from registering for postgraduate studies in South Africa (University of the Western Cape [UWC], 2018). These financial difficulties make it almost impossible for disadvantaged students who have completed their undergraduate degree to pursue postgraduate studies. In most cases, their personal circumstances compel them to find employment immediately after the successful completion of their undergraduate studies, in order to financially support their families and settle their outstanding study debt (UWC, 2004, p. 11).

2.2.4 Social networks

According to Kish (2003), issues of relative poverty, naïveté about large institutions, the role of family in their lives, and themes of resilience are common among first-generation students. International evidence suggests that family involvement is an important source of academic support at university (Altschul, 2012; Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Mazer & Thompson, 2017). Using Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural reproduction, parental influence is categorised in

terms of three types of capital, namely human, financial and cultural capital. Palloni et al. (2003) explored these three forms of capital, and pointed out that it is important to note that all of them are directly affected by financial capital, the most recognised form of capital that parents can transfer to their children. This type of capital is a collection of the economic resources within a household, including "income, assets and various monetary instruments" (Massey et al., 2003, p. 5). Affluent families are able to transfer more financial capital to their children, which in turn gives their children increased opportunities to pursue and afford higher education (Massey et al., 2003). Low-income families are often at a disadvantage in relation to the transfer of financial capital. Parents from low-income families have fewer economic resources to give to their children, and often view higher education as a venture for the rich (Falcon, 2015; Korsmo, 2014). Furthermore, the idea of pursuing higher education often seems unrealistic for these students, because they have formed the impression that their family is not financially able to afford the costs associated with higher education (Ashwin & Case, 2018).

Cultural capital is reflected in a parent's ability to create a home environment that is conducive to learning and helps children to develop critical thinking skills (Donkor, 2010; Okeke, 2014). Parents transmit cultural capital in different ways (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; McDonough, 1997). One of the more traditional methods of transmitting cultural capital includes taking children to educational and fine arts activities, including museum exhibits, plays, and concerts. Through these activities, children observe lifestyles, hear new languages and develop an awareness of other opportunities outside of their home environment (McDonough, 1997). First-generation students are at a disadvantage when it comes to the transmission of cultural capital from their parents.

Sanchez-Famoso et al. (2017) found that first-generation students automatically prompt certain shifts and transitions within their family system. Family responsibilities and roles shift, and

even though family members may be in full support of these shifts, the journey to educational achievement requires cultural assimilation on the part of the student that family members may not fully understand (Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2017). Most often, this disconnect appears at home. For example, many first-generation students have reported that their parents do not understand the study time that university-level work requires.

First-generation students may also lack sufficient knowledge of the higher education environment to understand the importance of becoming engaged outside their family systems, or social capital. Pascarella et al. (2004) found that first-generation students who are active and engaging on campus tend to have greater gains from extracurricular participation and peer interaction than other students on campus, and that such engagement may be a useful way for first-generation students to acquire the additional social capital needed to succeed in college.

Several studies include social capital as a framework that takes into consideration not only the resources explicitly held by an individual but also those available to the individual via his or her social relationships (Coleman, 1988; Croninger, & Lee, 2001; Lenhart et al., 2010; Wohn et al., 2013). Most of the prior work in this area has looked at the effects of different types of social capital as accrued through relationships with family (namely parents) or friends and peers, but few studies have looked at multiple relationships simultaneously. Social capital speaks to the resources that can be obtained through social connections, and understanding the resources available to an individual requires identifying the individual's social connections. Wohn et al.'s (2013) study conducted at Michigan State University revealed that first-generation students, who traditionally are less likely to attend college because they lack important application information and financial or emotional support, now have new opportunities to make their college dreams a reality because they spend significant time using electronic media. The study explored how social media such as Facebook may help first-

generation students to gain crucial information from their extended social network, and found that social media can be an effective means of getting information and emotional support for first-generation students (Wohn et al., 2013). The study's first-generation participants were encouraged to think about people in their extended social network, and how they could use those people for support as they moved through their education (Wohn et al., 2013).

2.2.5 Academic support

While first-generation students have the work ethic and personal characteristics needed to succeed in institutions of higher education, they often lack the support of academic staff, which is likely to hamper their progress. According to Weimer (2012), building a rapport with students, especially first-generation students, is one of the most important habits that academic staff can practise to create a positive and supportive learning environment. Frisby (2018, p. 10) defines rapport as "a mutual, trusting, respectful, enjoyable, and positive connection between lecturers and students". Research indicates that rapport does not result in learning, but it certainly helps to create conditions conducive to attaining things such as higher motivation, increased comfort, and enhanced communication for first-generation students. Davis (2010) identified that it is important for institutional staff to understand the complicated internal psychology of first-generation students, which often impedes the development of confidence and esteem.

Many South African institutions of higher learning are committed to the success of their students, and have thus made strides in ensuring this success (Strydom, 2017). However, the reality is that in South Africa many students carry the added burden of inadequate basic education systems, adding fuel to complaints about their lack of preparedness, their

unresponsiveness to traditional teaching methods, and the erosion of critical thinking skills and basic literacy (Alcock & Belluigi, 2018; Strydom, 2017). Under these circumstances, carefully targeted institutional support systems have become a necessity rather than an add-on, and research suggests that today's students have correctly come to expect more support from institutions. The Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement (BUSS), based at the University of the Free State, found that incoming students tend to perceive their academic journey as a collaboration between their own efforts and those of the institution (Strydom, 2017). Furthermore, contextual challenges related to success clearly underscore the need for research on what can realistically be done by institutions to adequately support students and improve their chances of attaining the degree or certification they seek (Strydom et al., 2010, p. 1).

2.3 FACILITATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE FACTORS FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

Several factors may facilitate the success of first-generation students despite the barriers they face at tertiary institutions. These facilitators include unique internal traits, actualising tendencies, and self-actualisation. According to Tinto (2015), students do not seek to be retained, but rather seek to persist. While it is in the institution's interest to increase the proportion of students who graduate from the institution, it is in the student's interest to complete a degree, often without regard for the institution at which it is earned (Tinto, 2015).

2.3.1 Internal traits of first-generation students

According to O'Shea (2015, 2016), the deficit approach to understanding first-generation students ignores heterogeneity. First-generation students have specific characteristics, such as their individual personal motivations and future aspirations (Waxman et al., 2003). They are also open to new experiences, are flexible to changing demands, and are more emotionally stable than their non-first-generation counterparts (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). Amongst other characteristics that first-generation students have is enthusiasm, as they are generally excited to be the first in their families to attend higher institutions of education (Davis, 2010). These students are likely to be dedicated and driven, as they believe that higher education will open paths to better lives (Bui, 2002; Saenz et al., 2007).

A study conducted by Galina (2016) indicated that first-generation students persist in the face of many stressors and barriers. The reasons given for this were predominantly related to their internal qualities, such as their commitment to "the greater good" and their perceived strengths of character, identity, and relational skills. Galina's (2016) study further revealed that the first-generation students' main reason for persisting in attaining higher education was the perception that they were achieving something bigger than themselves. Largely, they felt that they were changing generational patterns within their families, or within their communities, by obtaining a degree. Additionally, perseverance and resilience were presented as intertwined descriptors of character strengths that allowed first-generation students to manage difficulties.

Reed et al.'s (2019) study further finds that resilient traits are likely to develop through life experiences. First-generation students' traits of resourcefulness in coping with stressful challenges and resilience in coping with failure are largely learned and developed through life experiences, and have been linked to student success, university adaptation and self-efficacy (Collis & Reed, 2016; Reed, 2016).

Theron and Theron's (2010) study comparing South African and Canadian undergraduate first-generation students showed differences in their levels of resilience. The Canadian first-generation students were found to be less resilient than their South African counterparts, although the Canadian students were likely to achieve higher grades due to systemic factors such as academic resourcefulness. The failure of the South African first-generation students was attributed to external factors, such as a poorer educational background than that of the Canadian first-generation students. The conventional roots of the South African students' resilience suggest that resilience is not rare and that active steps can be taken to develop and sustain resilience among youth who are placed at risk by ordinary and extraordinary adversities (Theron & Theron, 2010). Some first-generation students resist the fear of failure, rejection and self-doubt, which some studies have found to be obstacles to the success of first-generation students (Alcock & Belluigi, 2018; Janse Van Rensburg & Kapp, 2014). Furthermore, first-generation students who proceed to postgraduate studies are students who have learned to adjust and adapt to university life, and have developed a high sense of resiliency, self-efficacy and persistence (Bangeni & Kapp, 2005; Tinto, 2017).

2.3.2 Self-actualisation and actualising tendencies

Much of the research on first-generation students focuses on deficits, with very little focusing on self-actualisation and actualising tendencies that may contribute to the success stories of some first-generation students (Graf, 2019). Self-actualisation represents the growth of an individual towards the fulfilment of a higher need (Maslow, 1965), but there is no research linking this concept to first-generation students specifically. Petty (2014) argues that there are some students who are motivated to overcome the obstacles that appear to hold them back from achieving their goals. However, Petty (2014) further acknowledges that needs such as social

and esteem needs are based on an internal state of mind that causes individuals to have certain attitudes and behaviours. These needs are linked to certain barriers to success experienced by first-generation students (Petty, 2014).

The desire of first-generation students to self-actualise may be the motivating factor for them to do well, despite their needs on the other four levels of Maslow's hierarchy not being met fully (Maslow, 1965). For example, due to their social and familial circumstances, first-generation students may develop the problem-solving skills that allow them to navigate the higher education process on their own and develop valuable qualities such as self-efficacy (Meyer et al., 2013). Students who believe they are capable of being academically successful are more likely to engage in learning strategies that lead to better academic performance (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). A student's confidence and personal qualities play an active role in the persistence and academic performance necessary for success in higher education (Ryan, 1995). Maslow suggests that self-actualisation contributes to intrinsic motivation, or what already exists within the individual (Maslow, 1965). The construct of intrinsic motivation describes this natural inclination toward mastery, assimilation, spontaneous interest and exploration that is so essential to cognitive and psychological development (Ryan, 1995). The process of this development is thus considered to be critical for human motivation and goal-directed behaviour, which could be the basis for perseverance, which thus leads to the success of some of the first-generation students.

Nichols and Miller's (1994) study on postgraduate students indicates that the factors motivating students to pursue postgraduate studies may range from self-actualisation, to improving social status, to the expansion of their knowledge. They found that more than half of their respondents indicated that they wanted to expand their body of knowledge, while a smaller proportion said they wanted to obtain a master's qualification to secure better employment and compensation.

Almost a third of the respondents indicated that postgraduate studies offered them a chance to improve their existing body of knowledge, while others indicated that such studies meant 'reaching self-actualisation'. Thus, the primary motivation of postgraduate students in this study appeared to be closely related to their intrinsic motivation. Likewise, Maslow (1965) suggests that self-actualisation contributes to intrinsic motivation.

Carl Rogers coined a similar concept, the "actualising tendency", which describes an inherent tendency in people to grow and reach their full potential (Meyer et al., 2013). Research has found that individuals who seek meaning and understanding in the dissatisfaction of life circumstances are likely to be motivated by actualising needs (Frana, 2013; Huss & Magos, 2014). This could be the motivation behind the success of some first-generation students. Furthermore, Rogers abstracted a number of principles about learning (Rogers, 1963, as cited in Schuck, 2012). One of them is that human beings have a natural potential for learning, independence, creativity and self-reliance. From Rogers' perspective, every person strives to be creative and fully functioning, and desires to reach his or her full potential. Thus, this striving is an ongoing motivation and is innate (Shuck, 2012), and could act as motivation for first-generation students. Actualising tendencies may therefore serve not only as an end goal for a selected few, but as an enduring motivation for first-generation students to complete their studies. First-generation students often describe themselves as hardworking, goal-oriented, independent, and mature (Wilkins, 2014). Indeed, in Wilkins' (2014, pg. 177) study, one student participant stated: "It's hard, it's expensive to go to school, so when you have it, you have to take it seriously".

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to achieve the aim and objectives of the study, and to address the research questions, the researcher constructed a theoretical framework that assisted in the formulation of the research questions and in organising the themes that emerged from the results. For the purpose of this study, an understanding of the factors that facilitate the academic success of MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students, and the barriers to this success, was informed by Cross's (1981) chain-of-response (COR) model. The COR model is used to understand adult participation in learning or training, and was designed as a theoretical framework to identify the relevant variables and hypothesise their interrelationships (Cross, 1981, p. 124). It recognises that the activity of learning is not an isolated act, but is the result of a complex chain of responses based on evaluating the position of individuals in their environment (Cross, 1981). The COR model argues that participation in educational training begins with the individual and extends toward outside forces. Although this model was developed 40 years ago, it has not been adequately researched, described and analysed in terms of its potential for increasing knowledge on adult training.

Cross (1981) advocates a conception of behaviour as a constantly flowing stream rather than a series of discrete events. This conception of behaviour was informed by Cross's work in motivation, which suggests that it is more important to understand the factors of change than to find what "drives" or impels specific behaviour. Whether or not the individual reaches the point of participation in training is controlled by misfortunes and the expectation that goals will be met (Beaudin, 1982). The COR model suggests that the key to understanding participation in adult training begins with understanding attitudes towards self and education (Cross, 1981).

2.4.1 Chain-of-response model

The present study sought to understand and explore the subjective experience of first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students based on the assumption that "participation in a learning activity […] is not a single act but the result of a chain of responses, each based on an evaluation of the position of the individual" (Cross, 1981, p. 125) within his or her environment. Patricia Cross (1981) developed the COR model as a conceptual framework aimed at investigating the barriers to participation in adult education. The model is a cycle, and consists of seven steps which each have their own impact on the process of deciding whether to or not to participate and persist in the learning activity (or professional training programme in the context of this study). It points to the importance of understanding the mechanisms of support and the barriers to success (which can sometimes be seen as different aspects of the same factor), as well as the individual's goals (Hovdhaugen & Wiers-Jenssen, 2021). The extent to which individuals expect to meet their goals is seen as an additional factor. Hence, Cross (1981) emphasises that the experiences an individual has with participating in training activities can create positive (supportive) or negative (barrier) cycles. Interactions with different spheres of life are important in Cross's work, and the arrows in Figure 2.1 below demonstrate these interactions within the COR model (Boren, 2019).

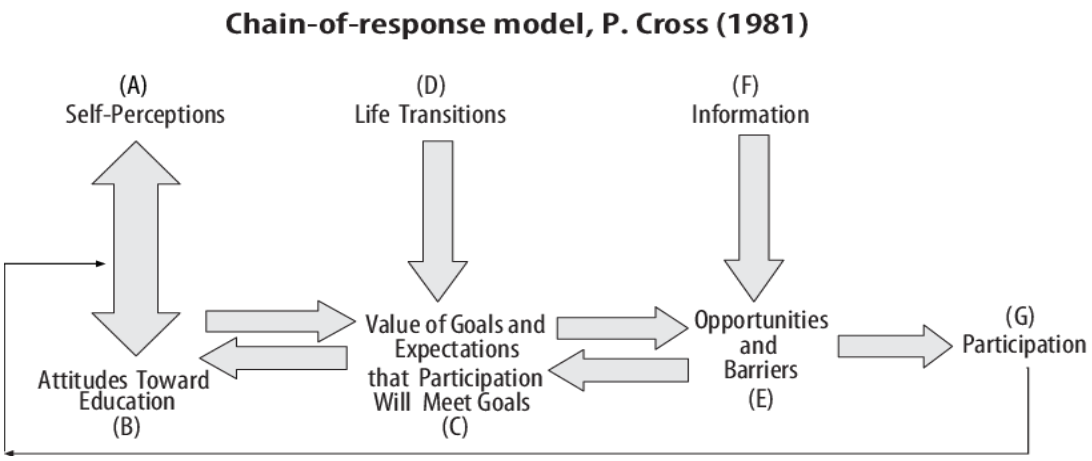

Figure 2.1: Cross's (1981) chain-of-response model

A barrier to learning is anything that prevents learners from fully engaging in learning (Bowles & Brindle, 2017). During a professional training programme, most students face several different barriers to learning; however, despite these challenges, the decision to participate in professional training can also be beneficial. The focus of this study was on understanding both the barriers to success and facilitative (supportive) factors for first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students in professional training programmes. Participation in a professional training programme can be the result of a complex decision-making process, as illustrated by the arrows in Figure 2.1. These arrows demonstrate one- or two-way relationships among the seven elements of the model, which include (a) the psychological variable of self-perceptions, which is interrelated with (b) attitudes toward education and (c) the importance of making and meeting goals, which can be affected by (d) life transitions and (e) opportunities and barriers, which in turn can be affected by (f) information about the environment while also affecting (g) participation, which in turn has an impact on (c) making and meeting goals.

Cross believed the model should not be viewed as linear, although aspects of her two-dimensional description are shown visually as linear relationships. As Merriam and Caffarella

(1991, p. 237) note, it is "also a reciprocal model in that participation in adult education (G) can affect how one feels about education (B) and oneself as a learner (A)". Cross (1981) recognised that pursuing professional training can be challenging, and involves different attributes. In understanding the processes surrounding these fundamental attributes and the complex decision-making processes, different theorists on adult participation in education have classified barriers according to different categories, but Cross (1981) classified three primary categories: dispositional, situational and institutional factors.

In conceptualising the personal narratives of the participants, the researcher — in tandem with the participants — endeavoured to explore the factors that challenged and supported the success of first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students using Cross's (1981) COR model. The aim was not to focus entirely on barriers, but to include the factors that supported the students and facilitated their success. As noted by Booysen and Naidoo (2016), challenging life experiences can also be turning points, as they encourage individuals to critically re-evaluate their decisions, thereby driving them to a higher or improved level of functioning. Cross's (1981) dispositional, situational and institutional factors are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

2.4.2 Dispositional factors

Dispositional factors arise from a student's self-perceptions, attitude, perceptions, beliefs and values (Carroll et al., 2009; Cross, 1981). These factors include students' self-confidence in undertaking an academic pursuit, their motivation, whether they possess realistic goals, and their feelings of satisfaction with the course of study (Carroll et al., 2009).

2.4.3 Situational factors

Situational factors arise from the personal circumstances of a student (Carroll et al., 2009; Cross, 1981), such as employment pressures, disconnection from their support networks (i.e., family and friends), controlling or supportive parents, family responsibilities, experiences of racism, their personal accommodation, low socio-economic status, poor physical health, and difficulties juggling work and studies (Bowles & Brindle, 2017). For many years the admission to the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme has been dominated by mature students rather than traditional higher education students (Booysen & Naidoo, 2016). In South Africa, these mature students are more likely to have responsibilities, such as family or employment, that make competing demands on their time. Such factors (employment commitments, family responsibilities, financial demands and health) can influence a student's decision to withdraw from training.

2.4.4 Institutional factors

Most of the research to date about barriers to educational success has been centred on individual and psychological attributes, with limited reference to external factors (Bowles & Brindle, 2017; Carroll et al., 2009). Cross (1981) included institutional barriers as a way of highlighting external factors that had previously been ignored by other theories. Institutional factors are factors within the educational institution, and include policies, procedures, or structural components that may encourage or discourage a student from staying in the programme (Carroll et al., 2009). Institutional factors may include access to financial aid, staff-student relationships, and the climate of learning.

Each of these COR factors was used to explore both facilitating factors and barriers to success for first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students. The COR model does not necessarily offer a blueprint for a solution to the problem of retaining these students; however, it can form part of the solution. Beaudin's (1982) review of the literature on student retention described the COR model as a means for understanding the barriers to successful adult training. Reynolds (1986) sought to refine the COR model and explain who participates in adult training by examining measures of self-actualisation and self-directed readiness among adult part-time students at institutions of higher learning. Reynolds (1986) found that (a) the motivation to participate is the result of an individual's perception of both positive and negative forces; (b) certain personality types are difficult to attract to education because of low self-esteem; (c) there is congruence between participation and anticipated learning outcomes; (d) higher order needs for achievement and self-actualisation cannot be fulfilled until lower-order needs for security and safety are met; and (e) expectations of reward are important to motivation.

However, Cross believed that the psychological aspects of her COR model were the most important: "If academic staff wish to understand why some trainees fail to persist in adult training programmes, they need to begin at the beginning of the COR model — with an understanding of attitudes toward self and education" (1981, p. 130). While Beaudin (1982) cautions that the COR model has not been tested in its entirety, this theoretical framework is worth considering in order to establish an overview of the phenomena associated with persistence. In this study, this was achieved by using the model to explore both the facilitating factors and the barriers to success experienced by first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students. However, it is worth noting that COR has yet to fulfil the promise of providing enough data to inform educational interventions with underrepresented populations, particularly in relation to what support is most useful and relevant to this group. In this study, the three primary categories

of “dispositional, situational, and institutional factors” are located within Step E (opportunities and barriers) of the model (see Figure 2.1, page 37).

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter consisted of two parts: a review of the existing literature on the challenges experienced by first-generation students in general and South African postgraduate clinical psychology students in particular, and the factors that facilitate or hinder their success; and a discussion of the theoretical framework of this study, which centred on Cross’s (1981) COR model. The chapter which follows provides a detailed description of the research methodology employed by the researcher in conducting the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the overall research methodology employed to conduct the study. The research approach and design are outlined, after which the research setting, the sampling procedure, and the specific methods of data collection and analysis are described. The researcher's efforts to ensure the trustworthiness of the research and to maintain a reflexive awareness of her positionality are then discussed. Finally, the ethical considerations that were taken into account for this study are presented.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the researcher employed an exploratory, qualitative approach, using semi-structured individual interviews conducted on an online platform. Exploratory research favours qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (Stebbins, 2001). Qualitative methods can provide rich descriptions of complex phenomena (Sofaer, 1999), and qualitative data can also serve to illuminate the experience of various phenomena by people with widely differing interests and roles (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The main purpose of using a qualitative approach was to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences by allowing them to express themselves freely, thus producing rich information. This approach was appropriate for the present study, as the aim of the study was to obtain in-depth and rich data on the subjective experiences of the participants in relation to the research questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

3.3 RESEARCH SETTING

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) served as the broader research setting. In the 1980s, UWC declared itself an institution whose doors were open to students of all race groups, and established its autonomy from direct political control (Rodrigues, 2002). Since then, UWC has evolved from a teaching institution to an institution that has made significant strides in developing into a research-intensive university (O'Connell, 2011). The types of research performed at UWC have vastly expanded and improved. Teaching still remains the institution's primary activity, but research is increasingly taking centre stage (UWC, 2009).

UWC was deemed an appropriate setting for the study because of its history as a disadvantaged institution (UWC, 2013a), and because the majority of its first-generation students come from disadvantaged race, gender and economic groups. These groups present intersecting sites of oppression, which position the students within a context of educational stratification (Tinto, 2017). In addition, the socio-demographic profile of the students at such historically disadvantaged universities presents unique challenges for these students when transitioning from undergraduate to postgraduate studies (Hoffman & Julie, 2012).

UWC consists of seven faculties (UWC, 2013b), but for the purpose of this study, the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences (CHS) was the focus. CHS aims to equip health professionals with the skills to transform the health and welfare services in South Africa. The Department of Psychology within CHS serves as the specific setting for the present study, as the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme is offered by the Department of Psychology. In South Africa, to become a clinical psychologist one needs to undergo professional training in clinical psychology at master's level at an accredited institute of higher education. The training must also be in accordance with the Scope of Practice of Clinical

Psychologists promulgated in 2011 by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2011).

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

As indicated in the literature review, students following health-related training programmes appear to be particularly vulnerable to attrition (Font et al., 2015), and it was therefore important to obtain greater knowledge and insight into the barriers and facilitators to academic success for the first-generation students following such degree programmes. The sampling frame for this study therefore consisted of UWC students from CHS who were registered, or had previously been registered, in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme. The training programme is offered by the Department of Psychology at UWC. Participants were considered from the sampling frame based on the following inclusion criteria: (i) they had to meet the criteria for first-generation status, and (ii) be currently registered, or have previously been registered, for the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme at UWC between 2010 and 2020.

The literature highlights various sampling methods used in qualitative studies, with purposive, selective and theoretical sampling being used to describe the same or similar sampling methods (De Vos, 2002). In this qualitative study, purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. The technique is often used for qualitative research, and involves the researcher approaching participants based on how well they represent the characteristics needed to effectively address the topic under study (De Vos, 2002). Potential participants were therefore identified using the MPsych (Clinical) database, which was provided by the MPsych (Clinical) administrator in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act No. 4 of 2013 (Republic of

South Africa, 2013), which establishes the lawful procedures for collecting data directly from a data subject. However, it must be noted that data was collected in August 2020, before the official commencement of certain sections of the PoPI Act on 30 June 2021. Invitations to participate were emailed to all prospective participants individually to protect their identity.

Snowball sampling was also used in this study to supplement the sample. Snowball sampling yields a study sample through referrals made among people who know of others who possess suitable characteristics that are the focus of the research. It is well suited to research focused on sensitive issues, where people with inside knowledge may assist in identifying participants (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141; Marshall, 1996). Participants were therefore also identified through referrals from other participants, due to the difficulties encountered in contacting and identifying a sufficient number of participants who met the inclusion criteria. The motivation for this sampling method was to access a diverse group of MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students in order to explore a broad range of rich descriptions of subjective experiences. The researcher did not aim to achieve generalizability, but aimed to add to the richness of the data through accessing individual, subjective experiences.

Potential participants were contacted by the researcher via email, and those who agreed to participate received electronic invitations via email. In the invitation emails, the potential participants received an English version of the study information sheet (Appendix C) as well as the informed consent form (Appendix D).

The sample consisted of five participants who had previously enrolled and trained in the UWC MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme. Only five participants met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The sample consisted of two male and three female participants, and included employed, self-employed and unemployed graduates. This diversity assisted the researcher in capturing a range of experiences. As previously stated, the aim was not to achieve

generalizability, but rather to gather rich data from individual, subjective experiences. A small sample group was deemed sufficient, as sample groups in qualitative research tend to be smaller than in quantitative research. Experts in qualitative research argue that there is no straightforward recommendation for how many participants satisfy the aims of a study, as the sample size is contingent on a number of factors relating to epistemological, methodological and practical issues (Baker &Edward, 2018, p. 8).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the systematic collection of information that is relevant to the research question(s) (Burns & Grove, 2011). In qualitative studies, researchers often use semi-structured data collection methods (e.g. interviews, observations, documents) to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2018). In this study, the researcher made use of semi-structured individual online interviews to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews are the most frequently used qualitative data source in health services-related research (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2018). This method typically consists of a dialogue between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes and comments.

Semi-structured interviews can be used in clinical settings or academic settings where there are few available resources, and so were a suitable choice for managing the resource constraints in this study. The benefit of semi-structured interviews is that they are extremely useful for developing an understanding of an as-of-yet not fully understood or appreciated culture, experience, or setting. Though semi-structured interviews are often an effective way to collect

open-ended data, there are some disadvantages as well. One common problem with interviewing is that not all interviewees make suitable participants. Some individuals are hard to engage in conversation or may be reluctant to share information about sensitive or personal topics (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2018). In this study, this limitation was managed by assuring the participants that their identity would not be disclosed, and that only themes emerging from the interview would be used.

The researcher was the primary interviewer for this study, as there were institutional and study-related confidentiality issues that prohibited the use of an external research assistant. Interviews were conducted in English. The interview schedule (Appendix E) was self-developed, and was informed by the constructs covered in the literature review and by the objectives of the study. The questions and the content were discussed and revised in conjunction with the researcher's supervisor before the first interview.

Email invitations were sent out to the participants by the researcher prior to the interviews, in which the aims and objectives of the study were explained. Upon their provisional agreement to participate in the study, consent forms (Appendix D) and information sheets (Appendix C) were sent to the participants by the researcher, to peruse before the meeting. The participants signed the consent document electronically, and returned it to the researcher via email. It is important to note that interviews only took place once formal consent had been granted by the participants. The researcher and participants agreed upon a scheduled time to conduct the online interviews.

The interviews took approximately 45 minutes. Because the study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible for the researcher and participants to interact in person. The interviews were therefore conducted on Zoom, an online video conferencing service. All

the participants indicated prior to the interviews that Zoom was a convenient online platform for them. The participants consented to the interviews being both audio and visually recorded.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Green and Thorogood (2004) propose that data needs to be broken down from field notes and interview transcripts into manageable units that are organised in a systematic way. The aim is to discover patterns and trends, and ultimately something of value to tell others in a relatively unbiased way. The initial stage of data analysis involved listening to the audio recordings several times after the in-depth interviews, and transcribing the interviews verbatim. This ensured that no information was lost.

The transcripts were analysed using Clarke and Braun's (2006) six-step process of thematic analysis. These steps include (1) familiarisation with the data; (2) generation of initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the research report (Clarke & Braun, 2018). The researcher studied the transcripts in order to familiarise herself with the data. Initial codes were then generated, using key words to categorise and organise the text (Sarantakos, 2013). The data was then further categorised and organised into themes and sub-themes that emerged during the processing of the data. The derived themes were then reviewed again to ensure accuracy. The themes that emerged from the data were defined and named. After the data had been analysed, the researcher interpreted it by identifying themes that were prevalent and that recurred throughout the transcripts, highlighting any similarities and differences in the data. Finally, the data was verified. During the verification process, the researcher checked the validity of the data by checking the

transcripts again. In the final presentation, the themes were categorised and presented in accordance with the theoretical framework of the study.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Aguinaldo (2004) proposes that trustworthiness in qualitative research requires a continuous interrogation of the multiple and often varied readings of the data. To ensure that the data collected was internally and externally valid and reliable, it was important to interrogate and verify the quality of the data collected. In verifying the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher focused on four constructs: dependability, transferability, credibility and confirmability (De Vos, 1998).

The construct of dependability seeks to examine whether using the same procedures and processes would produce the same results in the same context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Dependability was addressed through an inquiry audit, whereby the researcher's supervisor and co-supervisor examined the processes of data collection and data analysis. Transferability refers to the probability that the study findings would have meaning for other researchers in similar situations (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Transferability is the extent to which qualitative findings can be transferred to other settings or groups (Polit & Beck, 2010, p. 570). The researcher was of the view that the findings of this study may be useful for researchers conducting other similar studies to read and evaluate, as limited studies have been conducted on postgraduate first-generation students. According to Polit and Beck (2010), confirmability as a criterion for integrity in a qualitative inquiry refers to the objectivity or neutrality of the data and its interpretation. Confirmability was ensured by involving independent coders, guided by the researcher's primary supervisor and co-supervisor. Written notes and the visual and

audio recordings served as references and support to the data from the online individual interviews.

3.8 REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity is the act of reflecting on the role the researcher plays through his or her own "personal, political and intellectual autobiographies in creating, interpreting and theorising data" (McKay et al., 2003, p. 52). As a first-generation student in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme, the researcher took note of the possible impact that her experiences may have had on the interpretation of the data collected from the research interviews, by disclosing her positionality regarding the study (see Chapter 1, section 1.5). Being a first-generation student in the training programme, however, assisted the researcher in building a rapport with the participants, allowing for more complex and richer data to be generated.

The researcher was honest and cautious about her own perspectives, and her pre-existing thoughts and beliefs, and engaged in the self-reflective process of bracketing. Tufford and Newman (2012, p. 80) define bracketing as "a method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of misconceptions that may taint the research process". The researcher understood that this study was likely to evoke assumptions, preconceptions, strong feelings, attitudes and beliefs in both the researcher and participants. It is worth noting that when these preconceptions, assumptions, feelings and attitudes emerged, the researcher recorded and reflected on such manifestations. The researcher kept a journal in which she recorded her experiences and reflections throughout the research process. In this reflective diary, the researcher focused on four key points, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1982):

1. A log of evolving perceptions.
2. A log of day-to-day procedures.
3. A log of methodological decision points.
4. A log of day-to-day personal information.

3.9 ETHICS

Ethical clearance and study registration were granted by the Faculty Higher Degrees Research Committee of UWC as well as the UWC Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A). Permission to conduct the study at UWC was requested and granted by the registrar, as the study involved past and current students (Appendix B). Permission to conduct the study at the university was subject to the prescriptions of the PoPI Act (Republic of South Africa, 2013), which prescribes the lawful procedures for collecting data directly from a data subject.

During the process of establishing informed consent, the participants were informed that all participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time without fear of any negative consequence. Informed consent to participate was obtained from the participants (Appendix D). The completed interview schedules and transcripts were anonymised, and confidentiality was maintained by assigning codes and pseudonyms. Limited demographic information was used in reporting the findings, in order to protect the participants. The collected electronic data was stored securely in password-protected electronic files. “Hard copy” data, such as transcripts and consent forms, have been stored in the primary supervisor’s locked filing cabinet, where they will remain for the minimum required period of five years.

Owing to the personal nature of the research topic, there was a risk of triggering distressing emotions in the participants. To manage such risk, a debriefing was conducted on completion of the interviews, and sources of support and counselling were explored with participants, as needed. However, the participants did not access the recommended services.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the research methodology employed in conducting this study, which included a discussion of the research approach and design, the research setting, the sampling procedure, and the specific methods of data collection and analysis. The researcher's efforts to ensure the trustworthiness of the research and to maintain a reflexive awareness of her positionality were also discussed, as were the ethical considerations that were taken into account for this study. The following chapter presents and analyses the research findings from the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the experiences of postgraduate first-generation students who were either enrolled or had previously been enrolled for the UWC Master's in Clinical Psychology (MPsych). This information was obtained from data generated through online (video call), in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the participants. This chapter presents the results obtained from a thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews, and discusses them in relation to the aim and objectives of the study. The themes that were produced are presented in conjunction with the researcher's interpretation and analysis of the findings, and are supported by verbatim extracts from the participants. The overarching aim of the study was to explore the subjective experiences of first-generation students following the MPsych professional training programme, in terms of both the barriers or challenging factors, and the facilitative or supporting factors they experienced throughout their higher education.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The sample consisted of two male and three female participants. The five participants represented employed, self-employed and unemployed MPsych graduates, and this diversity therefore allowed a nuanced range of experiences to be captured during the interviews. Table 4.1 below presents the demographics of the participants who were interviewed online. A limited amount of demographic information is presented, as this was a small sample and detailed elaboration may compromise the participants' anonymity. A brief overview of the participants' backgrounds will also be presented.

Table 4.1: Participants' demographic information

Pseudonym	Gender	[1]Ethnicity	Occupation	Range of years since M1 was completed	Private, public, unemployed/student
Kiara	Female	White	Registered MPsych (Clinical) student (completed M1 and internship, mini thesis pending)	3–5	Internship completed and in the process of completing dissertation
Lincoln	Male	Coloured	Registered as intern clinical psychologist	3–5	Internship and dissertation completed
Zigqibo	Female	Black	Registered for community service (comm. serv.)	3–5	Completed internship and dissertation
Mishka	Female	Coloured	Registered clinical psychologist	5–8	Registered as clinical psychologist and working for public sector
Josh	Male	White	Registered clinical psychologist	8–10	Graduated, registered as clinical psychologist and working for private sector (self-employed)

[1] Ethnicity: Racial categories in South Africa were introduced during the apartheid era, and while post-apartheid South Africa is committed to non-racialism, these categories remain ingrained, and are relevant for discussions around redress (Republic of South Africa, 1950). Some of the participants expressed concern about the continued use of racial/ethnic classification in democratic South Africa. However, they agreed to define themselves according to one of the five generic racial categorisations, as per South African law.

The literature highlights that the formal definition of a first-generation student may not fully account for the rich diversity of first-generation students (Tate et al., 2015). Some participants may come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, and thus be considered previously disadvantaged, while others may be from working-class White families (Tate et al., 2015). In the South African context, first-generation students are a set of students who embody the unequal and discriminatory racialised socio-political past of the country (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). It is therefore important to provide an overview of the participants' backgrounds, as the five participants who participated in the study showed the rich diversity that Tate et al. (2015) allude to.

Kiara was in her 50s, and both of her parents had no higher education qualification. She was the first born of the family and was the first to attend university. She came from a working-class family. Kiara highlighted how her personal characteristics had influenced her persistence, even with the limited support she received from her family. The success of her family depended on her, as she had the responsibility of changing her family status quo through academic achievement. She commented on the challenges she experienced in relation to class differences, social integration, and academic spaces for a "White middle-aged housewife" who was also a first-generation student.

Lincoln was in his early 50s, and came from a Coloured family with a low socioeconomic status. He had obtained his first bachelor's degree through distance learning. His older siblings have university qualifications, but they did not study directly after school. In his interview, Lincoln focused on being a purpose-driven, mature student whose motivation was to attain the MPsych (Clinical) qualification as a source of meaning and fulfilment. He explicitly linked his educational success to his positive social networks. He became emotionally charged when he spoke about the sacrifices and contributions made by his parents to enable him to get an

education. In addition, he identified the difficulties he experienced because of his limited preparedness, and the barriers created by his lack of social and financial capital. Lincoln provided a broader view on the institutional challenges he experienced, referring to noticeable distinctions between students and the teaching collective (the academic staff), to the difficulties he experienced in adjusting to the academic demands and expectations required of students in the training programme.

Zigqibo was in her 40s. She was the seventh born of 10 children, and came from a previously disadvantaged and poor socioeconomic background. She described her family as a poor family that was passionate about education. Although both her parents had no higher education qualifications, she was not the first one in her family to attend university, as her elder siblings had higher education qualifications. Zigqibo's identity as a first-generation student was characterised by culturally and socially homogeneous circumstances that instilled a sense of self-reliance and independence in her from an early age. She alluded to personal development challenges, and the embedded value of education in Black society.

Mishka was in her late 30s. Both her parents had never attended university, and she was the first in her family to obtain a higher education qualification. Mishka spoke in depth about financial stressors, and provided a broader context to the disadvantages of lacking a privileged social network, even after one has qualified. In addition, she alluded to the limitations posed by her lack of academic preparedness, and the importance of a positive support system.

Josh was in his mid-to-late 30s, and came from a working-class family. He described his family as a traditional Afrikaans family, and was the second born of three siblings. Both his parents had no higher education qualification. However, he was not the first in his family to attend university, as his elder sister had a university qualification. Josh described his MPsych (Clinical) journey as a "traumatic experience". He spoke at length of the challenges he had

experienced in relation to the pressures and demands of the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme. He recognised and acknowledged that this training had facilitated a change in his worldview, and that as a result he had started to differentiate from the views of his family (culturally and generationally), which had led to a slight rift between him and his parents. Josh identified relational support as a facilitative factor.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ON DEFINITIONAL QUESTIONS

There are differing definitions of the term "first-generation student", and each of these definitions is based on the parents' educational status. As support for first-generation students in institutions of higher learning gains popularity in research globally, the debate over how to define "first-generation" continues to be a point of disagreement (Supiano, 2014; Ward et al., 2012). The least inclusive definition requires that a student's parents have no education past secondary level (Ward et al., 2012), while other research defines a "first-generation" student as one whose parents have not completed a four-year degree (Supiano, 2014). Supiano has argued that these two definitions represent the opposite ends of a continuum of inclusivity. For example, those students whose parents have some higher education experience, or whose parents have completed two-year degrees, may benefit from varying levels of social and cultural capital, as compared with students whose parents who have no education past secondary level. It could be argued that first-generation students whose parents dropped out of higher institutions of learning may be negatively affected by their parents' potentially negative predisposition towards higher education, as a result of not being able to achieve their educational goals (Bowen et al., 2009; Eveland, 2020; Padgett, et al., 2012). The present study defines first-generation students as those whose parents have not obtained a bachelor's degree (Bowen et al., 2009; Eveland, 2020; Supiano, 2014; Ward et al., 2012).

It was important for the researcher to carefully establish each participant's understanding of the term "first-generation student", especially at the beginning of each interview, in order to address possible differences between the researcher's and the participant's definitions and understandings of what constitutes a first-generation student. Establishing a shared meaning of "first-generation student" was critical for the researcher's understanding of how the participants' responses addressed the research questions. Establishing a clear sense of each participant's definition was important for enabling the researcher to understand how each participant self-identified as a first-generation student, and for establishing an understanding of the possible ways in which institutions of higher learning could better reach out to these students to potentially offer support and intervention. A clear understanding of each participant's definition also provided a context for understanding who the participants are, and for understanding how their definition and perceptions of first-generation students framed their experiences.

As demonstrated in the following excerpts, the researcher found that the participants demonstrated a similar understanding of "first-generation students", primarily indicating that to be a first-generation student means that neither of your parents has any qualification from a higher institution of learning (i.e., a college, university, or university of technology qualification).

> **Josh**: *So as far as I know …, there is a difference between being a first-generation and a first in the family to attend tertiary education … So, the first generation is …, a first-generation student is all of those members of the family who are the first kind of level of that family.*

> **Kiara**: *I thought I had an idea … I thought it meant possibly the first in the family to study at university.*

Mishka: *Well … it would be the first student in probably both sets of biological parents' family history that goes to a tertiary … Or pursues and completes a tertiary education.*

Lincoln: *So … my understanding is that I'm the first of my family when it comes to parents not having had university or you know, finishing school, finishing university, having a degree. So, I understand myself to be the first generation after my parents who go to university … So I'm the first of the line going to university if that makes sense.*

The participants' understanding of what defined a first-generation student was based on two primary criteria: (i) that both parents of the student had no higher education qualification; and (ii) that the student's parents had never pursued higher education, or if they did, had never completed it. The participants demonstrated a broad understanding of the concept of a first-generation student, as they acknowledged that a student is still a first-generation student even if they have older siblings who have achieved higher education qualifications.

4.4 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Clarke and Braun's (2018) thematic analysis was used to identify and develop themes from the transcribed interview data. In this study, Cross's (1981) COR model was applied to guide the identification and understanding of the barriers and facilitating factors that the first-generation students in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme encountered and overcame to be successful in their training. Cross's (1981) model was originally used to identify barriers (facilitating factors were not included) in the context of adult participation in lifelong learning. Cross (1981) identified dispositional, situational, and institutional obstacles to adults' lifelong learning. Dispositional factors, as described by Cross (1981), relate to the learner's beliefs, values, attitudes, and perceptions of self. Situational factors are those which result from the

personal circumstances of the student, such as employment or family responsibilities (Cross, 1981). Institutional factors consist of policy and practices created, usually subconsciously, by the higher education institution, as well as by those in national and provincial government responsible for educational policy (MacKeracher et al., 2006, p. 3). These factors are discussed in the next section in relation to the barriers and factors that challenge student success in the MPsych (Clinical) programme, and in relation to facilitative and supportive factors in the section that follows.

4.5 BARRIERS AND CHALLENGING FACTORS

This study explored the barriers and challenging factors experienced by first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students and graduates using Cross's (1981) COR model, which consists of three categories: dispositional, situational, and institutional factors. Table 4.2 below presents the themes that were identified in the participants' responses in relation to these challenges and barriers, grouped according to Cross's (1981) three categories.

Table 4.2: Themes related to the barriers and challenging factors experienced by the MPsych (Clinical) participants during their studies

CATEGORY	THEMES
1. Dispositional	a) Lack of confidence b) Maturity / life experiences c) Changed worldviews d) Personal development
2. Situational	a) Transition to clinical work b) Perceived status of higher education c) Social networks d) Financial stress
3. Institutional	a) Lack of knowledge of university processes b) Lack of support from academic staff

4.5.1 Dispositional factors

Dispositional factors are distinct characteristics that comprise the 'make-up' of each individual and shape his or her core values and beliefs (Johnston et al., 2016). In the present study, four dispositional factors that operated as barriers were identified as themes using Clarke and Braun's (2018) thematic analysis of the data: lack of confidence, maturity/life experiences, changed worldviews, and personal development.

4.5.1.1 Lack of confidence

Students undergo a rigorous selection process to gain entry into the MPsych (Clinical) programme in South Africa, to ensure their capability and personal suitability (Booysen & Naidoo, 2016). Because the selection process was so rigorous, the participants entered the clinical professional training programme with a sense of determination and increased

confidence. However, the participants described experiencing the loss of this confidence early on in the programme, and mentioned that their lack of confidence then persisted throughout the programme. They identified that this lack of confidence perpetuated their feelings of inadequacy, further elaborated by Josh as "imposter syndrome":

> **Josh**: *I always felt like there is a term that has become quite popular now: imposter syndrome. I think I felt like that since master's and in a way it's kind of stayed with me that feeling during master's like I shouldn't really be here.*

Kiara reported a similar loss of confidence during the programme, and indicated that it was related to transitioning from a distance-learning to a full-time learning programme. She elaborated that her perception was that this loss of confidence was not shared by her fellow students, even though there were other first-generation students in her class. She felt that her experience was different from other first-generation students, as her classmates had already had the experience of studying full-time undergraduate degrees at on-site universities.

> **Kiara**: *All that confidence that I had in the selection interviews, it went into exile … So, it was an extremely tough year and definitely there I felt …, often I would come home because even though the rest of the group were also first-generation students, they had been to university.*

When describing the processes that had contributed to their loss of confidence, the participants reported feeling a sense of anxiety and despondency in the professional training programme. Josh and Kiara indicated how they had struggled with self-doubt, even during moments of success:

> **Josh**: *So, I was always second-guessing myself — even when, when I did relatively well on an assignment or got even just adequate feedback on my assignments or a report or*

something, I always felt like it wasn't enough … And for me, it makes motivation quite hard and so obviously that has a big knock-on effect with academic work and so on.

Kiara: *I think that as I got towards the end of the year, I had very little confidence. I really — I kept thinking I don't think I'm going to make a good clinical psychologist, I don't think like a clinician, ja … I didn't think that my clinical skills were good. I didn't think that my clinical skills were good. In the first oral exams, the mid-year oral exams, I actually got the highest mark in the class, which was like — well it wasn't very high anyway — but that did sort of make me start to consider that maybe I should have just a little bit more confidence.*

Self-doubt can be understood as a feeling of uncertainty regarding one or more aspects of the self, such as one's confidence or one's likeability (Schwarz et al., 1991). Mishka expressed that the professional training programme process had had a negative impact on her mental health and motivation, and had consequently increased her feelings of self-doubt, even introducing thoughts of 'dropping out'.

Mishka: *My partner started noticing, I mean … I was sort of voicing my doubts of just feeling uncertain about the commitment I had made and whether I should pursue and complete this programme. But it wasn't anything … it wasn't that my academics were lacking … would say I was probably the least confident person there.*

Based on the data generated from the interviews, the participants regarded self-doubt as a challenge that affected not only their academic progress, but also their mental health. Numerous studies have found a similar connection between self-doubt and psychological issues, such as lower self-esteem (Nguyen et al., 2019).

4.5.1.2 Maturity

This theme was significant to the participants, who identified themselves as mature students. These participants considered their age to be a barrier that set them apart from their classmates in terms of academic performance and social integration. This was an interesting disclosure from the participants, as many psychology programmes welcome students who are training for their second or even third career (Tracy, 2005). The participants described how they felt no sense of student belonging, because of their mature age and their family commitments, which involved time and sacrifice, leaving little time to socialise with their fellow students.

> **Mishka**: *I would say … I was probably the least confident person there because … I felt out of my depth. In the beginning I felt like I shouldn't be there, you know, I'm one of the oldest students.*
>
> **Kiara**: *Well, I'm sure you can see that I'm a much older student, I'm 58 this year.*
>
> **Lincoln**: *You know with age and getting back into studies, that is — not to say I'm very old — but when you're young it's easier. When you're older you've got lots of family commitments.*

As a first-generation student who was also older, Lincoln experienced challenges in relation to the personal and academic paradigm shifts he was required to undergo:

> **Lincoln**: *So, the challenge …, challenges were basically trying to get the brain to work. Those were … know those were part of the challenges. It has … like I say my foundation at home was set for me to be able to take on this journey … but it was about how I am going to be able to fit all of these things into my head … so that I can remember what I need to do. So that I can go and be successful in my exam that I do.*

The above quotes highlight how, as mature students, the participants tended to assess their cognitive abilities with a great deal of self-doubt. This is shown in particular by Lincoln's reported anxieties about his brain's ability to hold information as a mature student, compared with what is implied as the better ability of the younger students' brains.

4.5.1.3 Changed worldviews

A worldview is a broad perspective on life and the universe (Pinxten, 2015). In this study, the participants shared their views on their exposure to new concepts or ideas, on freedom of expression, and on their changed worldviews. The price of Josh's and Kiara's decisions to pursue higher education was a change in their worldviews. When students experience such a change, their new worldview tends to come into conflict with the worldviews of those close to them. A change in one's worldview can also prove to be a challenging factor when it conflicts with the views that one held about oneself at an earlier stage in life. The participants reported the development of new insights to be a barrier, and Josh explicitly linked the experience to a conflict of ideologies, which created a slight rift between him and his parents.

> **Josh**: *... I was being thoughtful in a different kind of way to the ways that they would be thoughtful and I think it, for a while it's kind of created a bit of a rift between us ... Not that we didn't speak or didn't have a relationship, but it just made it a little bit more difficult to connect in the same way. You know ... there is that old saying that says "ignorance is bliss" and you know, I think going to university robs you of ignorance and I think particularly in training like psychology training it forces you to come to terms with a lot of stuff that you know, you can't plead ignorance for any more.*

Josh elaborated on how his worldview had changed, and how it had come into conflict with the beliefs and thoughts he had had prior to his exposure to the clinical programme:

> **Josh**: *I think about going to university and studying at a tertiary level … it gives you a very different point of view and outlook that didn't always agree with what my parents believed or thought, and so it became kind of not necessarily — I mean we didn't have big fights or arguments but you know, there would be a lot of disagreements about. I would be thinking about the world in a different way and I think particularly as I progressed and got up to honours and master's, you know, it became a lot more difficult for my parents to understand the points of view that I was coming home with.*

For Kiara, the change in her worldview and being in an environment that allowed freedom of expression came as a shocking personal experience. It was a challenge for her to navigate the new freedom in her life that she was not used to.

> **Kiara**: *You know …, I could be rebellious in high school, but all of a sudden in an environment where my opinions were considered, the shock value wasn't there for the lecturers … So, I think that that was also quite a thing for me was just to navigate the level of freedom that I had that I just wasn't used to experiencing.*

4.5.1.4 Personal development

Although it is not specifically stated as a mandatory requirement in the training of future therapists, personal growth is integral to the MPsych (Clinical) programme in that it involves the developmental processes of gaining self-acceptance, genuineness, congruence, and the development of empathy — the basic qualities a helpful professional should possess (Malikiosi-Loizos, 2013). Zigqibo spoke in depth about the challenging issue of personal development.

She also conveyed that the process of personal development involved letting go of those defence mechanisms that had once made her feel psychologically secure:

> **Zigqibo**: *The thing is, it meant to expose all the defences that I've been using all along and as a result, because of that — I imagine that is the aim — and because you know, if that needs to take place … if you take away all my defences that I've used to build up into this self I know to be … if you take away all my defences what do you leave, you know? So necessarily I would have to break and then build from scratch for a new self, but as I say, there is no, the work is so rapid that there's no time to breathe and say okay now that I've lost that let me replace this, because there are other things that are demanding your attention.*

Zigqibo highlighted that the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme was challenging and complex in many ways. As part of the personal development stimulated by the course, Zigqibo had to engage in serious self-reflection and constantly engage in questions of identity. This required a receptive approach to feedback and to personal awareness, as she explained:

> **Zigqibo**: *So I thought okay, so here I am, I'm coming just to add, you know, to my box of tools, I'm going to add now psychology tools that I can use to help people … But with what I learned from Psych, which was very difficult for me to grasp, was the fact that I was the tool, and the idea of me being the tool and as a result the work had to be about me, it was just so difficult because it meant that I had to accept feedback about myself that was not always positive. Actually, that was always negative and that didn't go very well, so it was very difficult because it meant that I had to constantly be looking at myself, which is something you know, I would normally just avoid.*

The views expressed in the excerpts above reflect the multifaceted challenges the participants experienced in their MPsych (Clinical) professional training in relation to their personal development. For example, Zigqibo described discomforts related to her personal awareness, reflection and feedback.

4.5.2 Situational factors

Situational factors are external factors that are influenced by our immediate environment and surroundings (Cross, 1981). In this study, four situational factors were identified using Clarke and Braun's (2018) thematic analysis, namely, transition to clinical work, perceived status of higher education, social networks, and financial stress.

4.5.2.1 Transition to clinical work

The transition to clinical work was identified as a challenge by some of the participants. Clinical psychology is one of the largest specialty areas within psychology (Kangos et al., 2014). In the context of training to be a clinical psychologist, the participants identified several underlying struggles, such as difficulties in learning the necessary new skills to help them to function within the existing health care system. Josh and Mishka described the challenges they faced during their transition to clinical work as follows:

> **Josh**: *So, I did the year at the Student Services and I felt like that was a space where I could develop the soft skills, the listening, the rapport building, those kinds of skills … In terms of like the clinical diagnostic sort of skills, there was a kind of, shall I say a paper application? So, if you gave me a list of symptoms or something you know I could*

do that in an assignment or a test or an exam, but I think the integration of that in terms of actually sitting down with someone in front of you, that took so much longer.

Mishka: *I think I was taking on a new identity and wasn't probably as aware of it in the beginning of the course, that I was changing. And I think I had fought against that quite hard. I didn't want to change. I wanted to remain the same. I had this idea of myself. But the courses are of such a nature that you are not only academically changing, but you are being clinically groomed into a therapist and that for me was quite challenging.*

Some participants reported how adopting a professional clinical identity had presented them with a vast array of emotional experiences, beliefs, values, and worldviews. These participants described the transition to clinical work as a challenging and strenuous process. For some of the participants, the shift to being a professional was a multifaceted challenge. In a sense, they had to change how they thought, how they related to others, and even their dress code, as described by Josh:

Josh: *I think the other really challenging thing that I hadn't really been prepared for was that a master's in psychology is master's in professional training so you're not … you're technically a student but you, you're a professional in training. And so, making the shift in my own mind from you know, I'm there in tekkies and a hoodie, to actually now I'm a professional and you know, dress as if you're going to work. And I think that was a real challenge for me. You know, for the first time in my life now, all those years since I left high school are actually okay, so what does it mean to be training for the profession, not just studying an abstract thing? And that was kind of another level of shifting that needed to happen for me.*

In the extracts above, the participants expressed how challenging it was to integrate what they had learnt from theory into practical work. As aspiring clinicians, the participants needed to be able to accurately diagnose the presenting concerns of clients, using the dominant clinical language, while at the same time they needed to develop other relevant skills.

4.5.2.2 Perceived status of higher education

The majority of the participants expressed the view that the perceived status of higher education comes with pressure, uncommunicated expectations, and a sense of burden. They reflected on their internal struggles, and their inability to discuss these struggles openly with their families. The participants explained that their family's perceptions of the status of higher education placed added pressure on them, which they believed non-first-generation students did not feel.

> **Lincoln**: *I think that the pressure of being a first-generation student comes from, I would say, it would be external as well as internal. So, your parents never achieved academically, for example, and not to say it was a bad thing, but for them it was contextually okay for them not going to university. Because they were able to provide for us and get us to the level where we were when we then went off on our own. So, for me to be successful at what I do, I think is a reflection … is a reflection on what my parents have done for me to be set up in a way that I'm set up.*
>
> **Mishka**: *But even within those limited options I remember my parents being quite excited with just the idea of having someone study, whatever the choice was …*
>
> **Kiara**: *I think ja, I think bearing also in mind that when I did my teaching. I never qualified, but it was a diploma, it wasn't a degree but I certainly can say that I think that there was a very high expectation on me because of the fact that first I was the*

eldest and I was the first to be studying at tertiary level. So, there were really high expectations for me to do well.

Josh: *I think there was a lot of that external pressure, ja. I think that's probably the main thing. It was an external pressure from my parents, but they didn't really understand the limitations or the context of that pressure. It wasn't an environment they had ever been exposed to.*

Lincoln experienced pressure as a result of both his parents' expectations of him, and his expectations of himself, and there was a constant struggle to balance the two:

Lincoln: *Trying to not disappoint others because I know what they are, I say I know what they expect but it's more my expectation that they want me to succeed and they then feel proud of me.*

It could be argued that the familial value placed on higher education had been internalised by the participants, and had therefore become more of a dispositional trait. However, these pressures were often referred to in direct relation to the family influence, and are therefore regarded as a potential situational barrier.

Mishka reported that the pressure of a perceived change of status became a reality as community members started to entrust her with responsibilities, and started see her as a community social worker, even when she studied social work as an undergraduate student. Mishka's role in the community developed into a prestigious one from as early as her first year of university:

Mishka: *And also, I think within the community that I grew up in, overnight, you become someone that other community members would come and consult and ask for advice.*

According to Josh, his parents provided overwhelming support. This, however, seemed to have placed a subtle pressure on him, in the form of the expectation that one qualification was not enough:

> **Josh**: *My father was … he always encouraged us to go the next step, the next level, he made you believe that it was necessary for us to stand out from the rest of our peers and to have greater education and training … So, you know, he was the kind of person who as soon as you finished undergrad he'd say okay great,* honours now. *And then the ink has hardly dried on your honours certificate and he'd say okay great, now you're gonna do your master's, you know.*

Kiara, on the other hand, experienced immense pressure as a result of being one of the first members of her family to earn a university degree. For Kiara, it was a 'walking in blind' process, with no one else's experience to use as a reference point and nobody else to get advice from. Instead, there was an added sense of pressure and an expectation that she redeem her family name through academic qualifications:

> **Kiara**: *So, because my mom and her sister never matriculated … they left school in Grade 10 — in those days it was called a junior certificate — and I was also the first daughter to not fall pregnant as a teenager … or even have an abortion which was the case with my aunt and my mom. So, there were all of them, kind of looking at me too … I suppose in some ways maybe redeem the family to sort of bring a bit of status to the family. So, the sense of sharing in my accomplishments and also because my parents thought that I was clever they expected me to do well. So, it wasn't enough to just pass, I had to do well and anything under a C was regarded as a failure by them, even a C was.*

As much as the attainment of higher education is important for first-generation students, it often does not influence or change the structure of the traditional family system, as described by Mishka:

> **Mishka**: *In my family there's the saying, my mother would say you're not too big for your boots, and I think that statement holds a lot of context. So, I think even if I should have five doctorates, the hierarchy of my family is very much set and I respect that. So, I don't think that it changed the relationship. Maybe just I understand the context of our family probably a bit differently than what they do.*

The views expressed by Mishka in the excerpt above indicate that even though there is status accorded to higher education, it does not fundamentally alter the hierarchies within the family structure.

4.5.2.3 Social networks

The participants were asked about the challenges they had faced in relation to social networks as first-generation students, both as undergraduate students and in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programmes. In their responses, the participants shared that although their parents were somewhat involved in their education in various ways, their parents did not fully understand the demands of higher education. The participants seemed to understand the complexities of their families, and how and why their parents did not support them as much as they would have liked them to. For example, Mishka spoke about her parents lacking the ability to offer support, since they were relatively uneducated, stating: "*My parents did not study*". She further elaborated:

Mishka: *You feel the weight of your family's expectations. There's a lot of hope that's placed on you, and that can … you know, if I think back now that that was very difficult at times to manage your family's expectations of you to succeed, and then the actual case work and burden of being a student. So that was very difficult I think throughout my first degree. That was a challenge.*

Josh linked his disconnection from his family support system to a paradigm shift within the family system, as he was swiftly differentiating from his family's activities and ways of thinking, prompted by his employment and his studies:

Josh: *My parents weren't people that I could necessarily go to for help. It was difficult also I think in terms of the family dynamic because I then became busier, I was working part-time, I was attending classes. I think it became a lot more difficult to kind of maintain the family cohesion in the same way, my sister had just moved away, I was busy, I was trying to you know, establish friendships and that kind of thing and it meant that, I think my parents didn't really know how to manage that, they didn't know how to handle the fact that my life was looking quite different and quite quickly.*

The participants reflected on how their parents had not experienced the university process. Therefore, as parents of first-generation students, they did not have the same level of social network or connections to higher education as parents who had already completed the process themselves. Their lack of social network, or limited social capital, prevented the parents of first-generation students from providing direct procedural and emotional support to their children. In describing her social networks during her undergraduate studies, Mishka shared that she had experienced feelings of isolation and a lack of understanding from her family:

Mishka: *It wasn't a shared experience … I felt quite isolated at times in terms of my family not maybe understanding what I was experiencing every day …*

Social networks were discussed as a beneficial support system; however, the participants highlighted how these networks (whether they were family networks or peer networks) did not always provide positive support and interaction. The participants linked the disconnect in their support system to their cultural backgrounds, their home circumstances, and the "roles" they played within the family system. Josh explained that there was sometimes a lack of understanding and support, as well as particular expectations from his family, which he attributed to the fact that they lacked an understanding of the demands of studying as a result of not having experienced tertiary education themselves:

Josh: *Because my parents didn't have an exposure to what studying toward university was like, I think they didn't always understand the time constraints, the time need that there was, and with completing assignments and things and … there would be a lot of occasions where you know, I would be asked to do tasks around the home and helping with the general running of the household or help with this or go fetch this or and run across town to get that or whatever the case is, and I suppose my family, my dad's side of the family is Afrikaans and it's quite a traditional sort of upbringing in terms of always being very respectful and respecting one's parents is very important, so I never really felt like I could express my frustration to my parents.*

In a similar way to Josh, Kiara also highlighted particular expectations that her family had of her in terms of the tasks that she had to perform in the family:

Kiara: *I needed to get out of the house — it was an incredibly volatile environment. My parents fought a lot, they were loud fights, there was so much tension in the home. As*

the eldest I was expected to look after my brothers, to cook, to help with the running of the house, to keep everyone happy. A lot of the time I played the mediator in the family, so I would be trying to get my parents to be less strict on my brothers and then I would also try and get them to not fight, so it wasn't a, it wasn't a family where my needs were considered.

Although some of the participants had siblings who had already attended university, none of them reported receiving direct support from their siblings. This lack of support was not due to a lack of desire, but rather to their siblings not knowing the process well enough themselves, as well as their lack of availability. As Josh explained:

Josh: *... I'm a middle child so my older sister had attended university but what I think was a little different for me was by the time I got to university she had already immigrated so she lives in the U.K. with her husband ... And so, I think even though I wasn't technically the first in my family to attend university, I didn't necessarily have her as a resource in the home to lean on ...*

It is widely known that a lack of involvement in extracurricular activities limits one's social integration and social networks, but Josh and Lincoln often fell short as they struggled to strike a balance between their social lives and their study workload:

Josh: *I also found it very difficult to maintain some of my friendships because if I wasn't at college or university then I was working and so I had pretty limited time within which to socialise, to see friends, to have that support. And in fact, I distinctly remember at one point saying to my group of friends, please still invite me to things because I felt like they kept inviting me to things and I kept having to say no. So, I said please still*

invite me, I still want to you know, hang out and be part of the social circle, but it, ja — it was a challenge to manage that and I remember that quite distinctly.

Lincoln: *My sole and whole focus was on my studies and I always asked myself the question: how is it that students are able to get involved with the SRC and all these kinds of things, but I don't have the time for that? How is it … what are they doing right, what am I doing wrong? What is it that they are able to do and still get through the year where I, whereas I'm working flat out and I'm still not touching ground, I'm still trying to find my feet, I'm still struggling.*

Josh described his feelings of anxiety on entering the MPsych (Clinical) programme, as a result of the programme's well-known reputation for alienating the trainees from their social networks:

Josh: *So, I think that was the, before even starting the year I think the anxiety about what it would require, what it would cost in terms of you know, not just financially but you know my personal, relational resources … A lot of people, they would say kind of really unhelpful things like ah …, this is going to be like the absolute worst year of your life and people would say things like you know this is called the "divorce course", right, and all kinds of things like that, that it just, it almost kind of starts putting you off before you even begin.*

4.5.2.4 Financial stress

The participants spoke about the financial stress that had altered their priorities as students, and the necessity for them to do paid work as a way of minimising their financial hardships. Both Mishka and Josh explained the difficulties that they had experienced in having to balance the

demands of their studies with the demands of having to work as a result of financial stress. The demands of having to balance both their studies and their work left them pressed for time to complete university tasks:

> **Mishka**: *Unfortunately, my father's company had retrenched him that same month, that December. So as a family we were faced with the sole income provider being retrenched, not having a job and me with all these hopes that were placed on me failing. So that was a very tough time. I was then, the question was posed: do you want to quit or are you going to continue, and I decided I was going to continue and I needed to get a job. So that December I got a job as a packer at *(popular retail shop) and I had to pack boxes in the storeroom, and I managed to make enough to get my entry fee for the next year, for the administration fee. And then I was solely responsible for trying to pay my own university fees. So, I got a night job and worked at a call centre and I got a weekend job as well. So, I had two jobs and I was studying full time.*

> **Josh**: *But in undergrad I often found myself, once or twice not being able to complete assignments or assignments kind of then having to be completed you know like just, just by the due date, like only just getting it in on time.*

The participants reported on their struggles to balance and prioritise studying with their added employment obligations. They described their increasing fatigue and the difficulties they experienced in managing their time:

> **Mishka**: *I worked at a call centre from half past four till nine o'clock, and then I worked on Saturdays and Sundays. I was tired all the time. I was just exhausted …*

> **Josh**: *I found myself a lot more drained and tired than some of my other classmates because I was having to … waitering you work until quite late at night — and you know*

usually starting fairly early so by 4 or 5 in the afternoon, so it means a lot of the time that you usually would have spent perhaps studying or working on assignments I didn't have.

Mishka touched on the complexities of finding ways to obtain course resources, such as textbooks, as well as the sense of guilt she experienced, believing that she was placing extra financial burdens on her family.

Mishka: *For me not being able to afford a textbook and sitting in a lecture. You know, I had to have very good people skills to get other kids to lend me their textbooks to make copies, or* [inaudible] *up the library. So that for me was a different experience. And then also not wanting to burden my family with extra cost. I carried a lot of guilt that, you know, me trying to better myself was actually quite expensive on a family that was already struggling. So, I tried to minimise the cost for them as much as I could.*

4.5.3 Institutional factors

The data from the interviews reflected that the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students faced challenges and barriers that were multi-layered, and amongst these were various institutional factors. An institutional factor is defined as a factor that is under the jurisdiction of the higher education institution (Cross, 1981). This study identified two potential institutional factors: (i) a lack of knowledge of university processes, and (ii) academic staff support.

4.5.3.1 Lack of knowledge of university processes

A lack of knowledge of the university processes emerged as a theme from the thematic analysis of the transcribed interview data. The participants spoke about various challenges that they had experienced in relation to university processes, such as confusion around etiquette, linguistic challenges, a lack of knowledge about the available resources within the institution, and inadequate guidance from the institution staff. These challenges were emphasised by Lincoln and Kiara in particular:

> **Lincoln**: *Getting into university and the way it works was very …, was a challenge and I think …, I assume that all your lecturers at university assume that you know what you need to do. They all take it for granted that you know what you need to do, and I've come across a lot of times where I don't know what the next step is, I don't know how to go about doing this, how to go about …*
>
> **Kiara**: *I often felt that there was a protocol and a university etiquette that I didn't understand. There were just things that I felt like a bit of a peasant, that I just didn't quite get. It was, and I can't even say, I'm trying to think of specific instances. Again, the things like admin and working in the library and plagiarism declarations and those sorts of things that, I just weren't — a lot of those sort of subtle things were a bit lost on me and there also seem to be a language that I didn't speak — that I just really, often, felt like a housewife. I thought oh my gosh, I really am actually … just a White middle-class housewife. I felt like that a lot of the time.*

Kiara elaborated further on the challenges she had experienced in relation to language and etiquette, such as the right tone, approach and forms of address to use when addressing teaching staff:

Kiara: *I think I was dunked in the class, yes. The process, you know, how do you address people, how do you address lecturers? What's the etiquette? I think for me that was the …* [interference]. *Who do you defer, that was always, I never felt I got this right in terms of understanding that.*

Traversing unfamiliar spaces can be threatening and scary. Kiara elaborated on how terrifying it was for her to navigate her way around university and its processes:

Kiara: *I think it was also really terrifying having to find my way around so you know, where was the admin office and where was this block and where was that block and so those sorts of things were very, very scary for me.*

4.5.3.2 Lack of support from academic staff

The data from the interviews revealed that a lack of support from academic staff was a significant challenge for the participants, who spoke in depth about the power relations between themselves and the academic staff in relation to expectations, perceptions, and roles. The participants spoke explicitly about how the trainers were collectively perceived as governors of the training process, and how they employed a top-down approach, also referred to as autocratic leadership, where subordinates (in this case, the students) were unable to contribute to the overall processes and goals of the programme (Kroenig, 2019). Kiara, Lincoln, and Josh reported that there was either no support or inconsistent support from the training collective.

Kiara: *When I was in crisis — there was a lot of support and encouragement to just take it easy on myself and to remember that I didn't get selected because they felt sorry for me, but I think in the sort of non-crises I sometimes felt that the environment was a*

little bit top-down, so it was very clear that "we are the lecturers and you are the student". So that was quite a challenge for me. In terms of research supervision, at the time I didn't realise it, but at the time I had changed supervisors and I was terrified of my second supervisor — absolutely terrified of him. And then thank goodness he left.

Lincoln: *I think the collective basically divorces themselves from the M1, even though they say we're a family and we're actually colleagues now, we're not colleagues. We actually, we are just students and it doesn't matter that we're doing master's because we are just students at the end of the day. We are not taken in — there is still the them and the us and I'm not talking about us as M1 saying that, it's the collective saying that. The M1 is an entity on its own, it's not part of who we are.*

The participants also described the training (teaching) staff dynamics, and how they felt that some staff members had more ability to exert influence and control than other staff members in the training programme:

Lincoln: *What I'm talking about is the collective itself where it's been controlled by certain people and I think those who have good enough things to say don't get their voices heard, and that is where the problem comes in. So, it's not everybody who treats us as just students …*

Josh: *… and even as people were available I suppose I could have gone to you know, staff members or lecturers, but it didn't feel like we could and I know there was also a lot of changes happening in the department at that time so it felt like those who were supposed to contain us were also beset by their own uncertainties. So, you know, that was very challenging, ja.*

The participants elaborated further on how they had felt excluded from many decisions and developments within the training programme, and how being supported and receiving empathy would have helped them to adjust better to the programme:

> **Lincoln**: *And I'm not saying I want to sit in their meetings, that's not what I'm saying. I'm just saying that, at the stage or at the grade of where we are, we should have been seen in a different way and we should have been treated in a different way I think. Saying that, but then again, yes, we should have been treated differently or more inclusive, but also there should have been more empathy in how we were dealt with. I think so. Because then I think the issues that we experience in M1 would have been a lot easier to palate than the way it went down.*
>
> **Josh**: *The training required a lot of you personally and it didn't feel like the staff really acknowledged that …*

Furthermore, Lincoln highlighted that the training collective had high expectations of the students, in terms of performance, progress, and the emotional aspect of the course:

> **Lincoln**: *I think that is, as in MPsych (Clinical), is a challenge all the time because you have to be good at everything that you do. You're expected to, you're doing a master's, so you're expected to be a master at what you do and I think that is a challenge because you know what, even though we're doing master's, it doesn't mean we know everything … I don't want to say, you know what, our lecturers were a problem or things like that, but we did have a fair share of those kind of things and I think from university's side if they look at dealing a little bit more emphatically with people going through challenges, the academics side of … it is not going to change much because you have get through the caseload, the workload that is there. But I think where it comes to your emotionality*

of doing things, that's where you need your support like supervisors, lecturers, those kinds of things. And I feel in certain instances that was very lacking, especially with certain students that we know of. So, I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done on that side to just try to make that part of things easier.

Zigqibo commented on how the professional services ethos and service standards could become barriers. She touched on the new consumer culture of education, with its perception that students must be treated as customers, and voiced dissatisfaction with how students were treated in general by the institution staff.

Zigqibo: *I felt that students were not treated as customers and it always bothered me so I used to really fight you know, with, or give them attitude — whoever — because it felt like you were there to beg people when you are actually paying them for the services that they are rendering. So that was one thing I could never understand and what was really frustrating for me is the treatment that we were receiving as students, which is obviously something that happens in government institutions when you go there. But overall, it was a very positive experience and it really opened me up to other people and ja, I don't know what else to say.*

The participants also spoke explicitly about the inconsistent support they received from the academic staff, and how this lack of consistency had a negative impact on their academic progress.

4.6 FACILITATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE FACTORS

Students entering South African universities come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds that give them different life experiences, different educational opportunities, and

a great variety of expectations, needs and academic potential (Panther et.al., 2021). According to attribution theorists (Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1986), motivation and success in higher education is influenced by individuals' perceptions about the causes of their successes and failures. Research has identified supportive and facilitative factors as the most significant factors for a student's academic success (Irlbeck et al., 2014; Lombardi et al., 2012; Mehta et al., 2011). Although achievement outcomes may be attributed to a variety of causes, in this study the causes that were most frequently mentioned included dispositional (personal-internal) and modifiable (situational and institutional) causes. Table 4.3 below presents the themes that were identified as representing facilitative factors in the participants' successful university journeys.

Table 4.3: Themes relating to the supportive and facilitative factors experienced during the participants' studies

CATEGORY	THEMES
1. Dispositional	a) Driven/self-motivated b) Independence c) Altruism/purpose
2. Situational	a) Social networks (e.g. family, cultural, friends) b) Perceived status of higher education
3. Institutional	a) Support from academic staff b) Financial support

4.6.1 Dispositional factors

As previously mentioned, dispositional factors are an individual's personal or internal characteristics (Bowles & Brindle, 2017). The thematic analysis of the verbatim interview

transcripts identified three dispositional factors that served as facilitative or supportive factors in the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students: driven/self-motivated, independence, and altruism. In this study, the participants attributed their academic success to these personal characteristics.

4.6.1.1 Driven/self-motivated

The participants described themselves as self-motivated, hardworking and goal orientated. They also highlighted that they had the desire to reach a certain academic level, which served as motivation that elicited an independent mind-set and an action orientation. The majority of the participants elaborated on what had motivated them to persist to postgraduate studies:

> **Lincoln**: *I was self-motivated because I knew what my goals were and why I was on the trajectory that I was on.*
>
> **Zigqibo**: *I remember I sat myself down and I asked myself okay, out of all the people — you know, I looked at everyone and asked myself who do you want to be? And I looked — I was very objective about it but I said okay, I want to be me, and so, and then make it okay, how do I become the best me? I was excelling in all my subjects. I did really, really well in university, and also, I was, and I wanted to do well which was surprising. I really, really wanted to do well, so I put a lot of pressure on myself to do well.*

Mishka's reflection touched on her desire to qualify to do a particular kind of job, as well as her drive to work hard in order to achieve this.

Mishka: *I think for me it was the reality of if I drop out then the work that I'm doing at that time is what I'm probably going to do for the rest of my life. So that was the strongest motivator for me. I had to make a choice of sacrificing a couple of years by working extremely hard and having a better future, or giving up and staying as a shop assistant or a packer and working my way up in a company, which for me wasn't an option.*

Kiara had been determined to get into the MPsych (Clinical) programme, and had remained motivated even after she had failed to get in the first time. She re-applied even after she had been refused entry on her first application. Kiara's inner drive had been essential for her to accomplish what she had set herself to do:

Kiara: *I got in the second time, so I think very few people have that story, but it was, I just did not want to do anything else and I didn't want to practise unethically, so for me it was well, I don't feel a change. I'm not, there's nothing inside me that's shifting and saying perhaps you should* [interference 29.00] *consider some other career or perhaps you should … I really want to do this and then the only way that I can do it ethically is to get a master's degree. That was, I think once I made that decision, that was it. And it's very much part of my temperament, I can take a long time to decide but once I've set my mind to it, you know, then I won't stop. So, I really, I would have kept applying until they said to me, "Stop, we're not ever going to accept you".*

4.6.1.2 Independence

Covarrubias et al. (2019) identified that for many first-generation students, the ways of enacting independence include freedom and self-reliance. In relation to this theme, a few participants

spoke about their inner need to rely on themselves for the improvement of their lives, and about how education was the key for them to break the cycle of poverty:

> **Mishka**: *I wanted to be independent. I wanted to get a good job. I wanted to travel. I did not want to … I think independence probably was the strongest motivator for me. I did not want to be financially dependent on a father or on a husband. So, I saw myself probably going to university rather than just getting a job somewhere. I did not want to follow the sort of pattern that I saw in my community and with my family in terms of finishing school, getting a job, and getting married and that sort of thing. The end of life. I wanted a different future for myself, and I realised that education probably would be the best way to get that.*
>
> **Zigqibo**: *It was at a time when if you wanted to pursue education you had to go yourself.*

For Zigqibo, the key marker of her identity was having been brought up in culturally and socially homogeneous circumstances:

> **Zigqibo**: *No, there was no, ja, no there was just, I don't know — that's how we were raised you know, that you go yourself without anyone. I mean I walked alone too and maybe I had … I know my friends couldn't come with me. I remember I took a train, went to UWC, got my application forms, applied — I went to UCT myself — applied there as well, returned, did everything myself. All I did was to say okay this is what I'm doing mom. So, the decision for a course was mine.*

Zigqibo highlighted that contextually, going through the process of applying for admission on her own was not a foreign experience, as she had been raised to be independent and self-reliant from an early age.

Zigqibo: *So, but that was normal then. Everyone, I mean I went to UWC, I met other people like myself who were in Grade 12 who were just going there to apply for themselves — it was the way I said, normal.*

4.6.1.3 Altruism (purpose)

Altruism is the state of motivation that humans frequently visit (Batson, 2011). Altruistic behaviours primarily generate public or external benefits for the individuals of such behaviour — i.e., benefits for society — and only secondarily generate private internal benefits, such as self-fulfilment (Nagel, 2016). As long as humans believe altruism exists, they are likely to seek it on the edge of their experiences and in acts of self-sacrifice. Thus, for some participants in this study, altruism had contributed greatly to their persistence and had facilitated their success:

Zigqibo: *I'm very positive. I feel like … for me I think this is a calling and I'm not being delusional or psychotic when I say that. I feel this is my calling and as a result I feel that my approach to it, is that I am here for a reason and I am providing a space for healing wherever I am, and I am providing you know, a different kind of conversation for someone who may never have an encounter with a psychologist.*

Lincoln: *And this is what fascinated me about then looking further into psychology. And this is why, I think, when I actually saw that just being able to spend the time with the person and allowing them the space, they can then heal — this is what I wanted to do, because the way I can help somebody heal is not by me telling them how, but them actually bringing everything out and me just guiding and assisting and facilitating; and I think that was a, the greatest driver for me in pursuing the postgraduate studies — because of what psychology offers.*

Zigqibo and Lincoln described how a profession in clinical psychology was not just a career path, but was a professional calling for which it was worth deferring other responsibilities and gratifications. Lincoln and Zigqibo referred particularly to the desire to help others and facilitate healing for others.

4.6.2 Situational factors

Demanding, unpredictable environments, such as institutions of higher learning, are likely to evoke potential stressors that may be difficult to detect early in one's course of study (Purpura, 2013). However, facilitative situational factors are likely to influence proactive coping and facilitate support. In understanding situational supportive factors, therefore, one needs to consider the complexity of the dynamic social situation, and the many individuals acting in different roles who will ultimately contribute to the outcome (Matthews, 2020).

4.6.2.1 Social networks

"Social networks" and "social support" are general terms used to describe different aspects of social relationships, including those mechanisms that may protect the individual from the negative effects of stress (Slavich & Iwirn, 2014). In this study, the participants recognised the role of positive social networks and social support during their time at university. They described the social support that had been offered by their social networks, or the people around them who were ready to help, and on whom they counted for support. The following extracts, for example, demonstrate how Zigqibo and Mishka had identified multiple individuals who provided such support, such as parents, siblings and romantic partners:

Zigqibo: *I think I had a very supportive family … which, my sisters were very supportive because they were older … and as a result, just in terms of, if I know, I got into any difficulty they were there to just support me.*

Mishka: *I had phenomenal support. I think I wouldn't have achieved anything if it wasn't for my partner, if it wasn't for my parents, my brother, people stepped in when I had to diligently go to bed every night at eleven o'clock, wake up early, work weekends on my thesis and on my academic work. So, I had phenomenal support. I wouldn't have achieved anything without them.*

Mishka felt supported and comforted by the knowledge that her network would 'step in' to take over responsibilities when her time and availability was limited due to her studies.

In responding to questions about receiving social support as a first-generation student, Josh used his Whiteness as a lens to highlight how experiences and social support may differ based on race, class, and economic status:

Josh: *I think many first-generation students are Black, people of colour. And so, coming from a White family I think my, even though I'm technically first-generation, I think my experience is very different to most first-generation students. You know I had resources at home like the Internet, I had, even though my immediate family, my sister and I were probably and some of our cousins were also some of the only ones to go to university. You know we had family friends who were, had gone to university so it wasn't a totally foreign experience in that sense.*

In the extract above, Josh describes how networks of relationships can support students in unfamiliar environments. He also elaborates on the benefits of the provision of basic structural resources at home, like the Internet, to facilitate learning.

4.6.2.2 Perceived status of higher education

In relation to this second facilitative theme under situational factors, Zigqibo and Lincoln spoke passionately about how deeply embedded the value of education is, and how it is expressed in different ways in different cultures. According to Zigqibo, the image of certificates being displayed on a coffin portrayed a powerful and symbolic message about the perceived value of education in Black society. The individual motivation to study was therefore tightly wound up with the goals of the family system (honour, commitment, pride, sacrifice):

> **Zigqibo**: *However, there was just something about them both of them (parents), where they wanted, they pushed — they wanted us to complete our schooling and I mean, I do remember one time my mom came back from a funeral and she was like yo, you know, this man's certificates were on top of his box — what do you call it — coffin. So, they were on top of his coffin with all his garb, you know his academic garb and for them, and they were saying you know what, no-one can ever take your education away from you so once you have it, it's yours forever, you will go to the grave with it.*

Lincoln explained how the sacrifices made by his mother to allow him to pursue higher education served as a motivating force for him to be successful:

> **Lincoln**: *And only as you get older do you realise but wait a minute, this was actually a total sacrifice for me that my mother did when she … she … had five children to rear, she was a single mother, she had all these things that she had to do. She had to go and work and provide and see that everything was okay. So, for her going through all those challenges, I couldn't but succeed. I couldn't help but work hard to succeed. I needed to succeed — it had to happen. And that was my motivation.*

In the excerpts above, both Zigqibo and Lincoln speak about the value attached to education and how it influenced their persistence. This suggests that the perceived status of higher education can influence persistence and eventual success.

4.6.3 Institutional factors

The participants identified two institutional factors that had facilitated their success in their MPsych (Clinical) professional training: (i) support from academic staff, and (ii) financial support.

4.6.3.1 Support from academic staff

Supported learning and a safe learning environment are important components of training programmes (CHE, 2010). Learner support can be an engaging and effective approach for training students from diverse backgrounds, including first-generation students (Bates, 2019). Training to be a psychologist is widely understood to be an onerous process that requires support, be it institutional or situational (Wahass, 2005). Kiara described her sense of feeling supported when her performance and skills were viewed positively by the teaching staff. However, it was only in her internship year, following her master's training, that she could retrospectively appreciate the weight of that support and the progress she had made.

> **Kiara**: *So, they were encouraging me, they were probably tearing their hair out because I was taking so long just to get my proposal in. I mean … never mind finishing the thesis. And they had said to me that my skills were good. My diagnostic skills are good, and my clinical skills were good, so it was like come on, just do this, and think that … ja, it*

did help me. It did reassure me a bit but I think it was really only when I started my internship that I started feeling confident about my clinical skills.

Students in the UWC MPsych (Clinical) programme receive both clinical supervision for their client case work and research supervision for the thesis component of their degree. As part of the institutional support offered, clinical supervision in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programmes is mandatory to ensure that the supervisor and the trainee work together to develop the efficacy of the therapist-client relationship (Malikiosi-Loizos, 2013). Furthermore, supervision often serves as a support system in the training process. The participants acknowledged that the support they received from their clinical supervisors reduced the sense of isolation that is often felt when participating in a clinical programme, as described by Zigqibo and Josh:

Zigqibo: *I think they were very supportive, I think, and I would put them as also one of the reasons I … it was because, I think it's … I don't know, to me it felt like it would be really difficult to drop out because of all the resources that were available for us. I think they realised how difficult the course was and they were, so we had supervisors that we could speak to. I think maybe part of the difficulty for me was the fact that I wasn't seeing any psychologists as well.*

Josh: *I think it comes down to relationships. So, I had a relationship with Mr S …, who was my thesis supervisor and mentor and I remember sitting in his office and just being completely deflated and, and I said to him, "Listen, I'm thinking of dropping out, of course I don't think I can keep going". And he said to me, and this is another one of those defining moments of my career — he said to me I'm not losing you to the profession.*

Both Zigqibo and Josh highlighted that it had been the nature and quality of the individual relationships they had had with their supervisor/mentor that had contributed to their sense of feeling supported.

4.6.3.2 Financial support

Funding is a powerful motivator of institutional performance. The model used to fund higher education institutions is an important way of ensuring that the higher education system can deliver the outcomes sought by society. Zigqibo and Mishka reported that they had benefited from institutional financial support, which had minimised their financial stressors:

> **Mishka**: *For my MPsych (Clinical) I had research grants, so I got a* [inaudible] *grant and one of the lecturers in psychology was busy doing his PhD and I did a sub-study for him, and then I got a grant. So that was very helpful.*

> **Zigqibo**: *Financially also I had, for my honours year I had a bursary as well as for me, I got a scholarship for my honours year and for my master's I had a scholarship, so my studies were covered and everything else.*

Zigqibo highlighted various sources of financial support (bursaries and scholarships), primarily for the postgraduate years of her studies. Mishka's support was linked to the research funding of her research supervisor, suggesting that the support offered by academic staff may extend beyond emotional factors to include the provision of practical resources.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings from the research study have been presented in relation to the research objectives set out at the beginning of the study. The interview data was analysed to identify the factors that challenged and the factors that facilitated the success and well-being of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants, and the prominent themes that emerged were presented according to the three categories of Cross's (1981) COR model: situational, institutional and dispositional factors. Chapter 5 presents a more detailed discussion of these findings in relation to the literature and to Cross's (1981) COR model.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the subjective experiences of first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students. The researcher framed these intricate experiences using Cross's (1981) chain-of-response (COR) model. The participants' experiences were grouped into dispositional (internal), situational (external) and institutional factors, even though these factors were found to be somewhat interconnected. In comparison with other theories mentioned in this study — such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Rogers' person-centred theories, which concentrate on self-actualisation and actualising tendencies while potentially neglecting other areas, such as institutional factors — Cross's (1981) COR model provided a useful method of identifying and understanding the factors that challenged and the factors that facilitated the success and well-being of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants, as it interrogates various types of factors (internal, external, and institutional).

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4, in relation to the literature and to Cross's (1981) COR model.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The following sections present a discussion of the major dispositional, situational and institutional factors that were found to have challenged and facilitated the academic success and well-being of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants. The findings in this study support the existing research on first-generation students, as reviewed in Chapter 2. These

findings were significant because they related specifically to knowledge on the factors that influence the success of first-generation students following an MPsych (Clinical) postgraduate professional training programme, and to the researcher's knowledge, no study to date has explored the subjective experiences of these particular students in South Africa.

5.3 BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

The study findings were conceptualised in terms of the theoretical framework guiding this study. The results show a wide range of barriers, or factors that negatively impact the academic success and well-being of first-generation students taking part in MPsych (Clinical) professional training programmes. Studies that focused on barriers and challenges for first-generation students showed that these students are often motivated to do well in their academic progress (Schelbe et al., 2019; Jury et al., 2017). However, first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students are often disadvantaged in comparison with their peers, as they face various dispositional, situational and institutional challenges. These findings from the present study are discussed below. It is worth noting that the sub-themes under dispositional barriers and challenges are interrelated and interdependent. However, they will be treated individually in order to properly illuminate the study findings.

5.3.1 Dispositional barriers and challenges

Dispositional barriers relate to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of adults, such as negative self-perception and lack of confidence or interest (Cross, 1981). Based on the findings of this study, the dispositional challenges and barriers experienced by the first-generation

MPsych (Clinical) students were found to include lack of confidence, changed worldviews, maturity, and personal development.

5.3.1.1 Lack of confidence

Becoming a professional clinical psychologist entails multiple demands, challenges and responsibilities that might directly or indirectly affect the trainees' quality of life and training efficiency (Dudău et al., 2015, p. 158). The findings of this study suggest that the MPsych (Clinical) first-generation trainees entered the programme with determination and increased confidence, because they had been selected for a highly competitive and exclusive training programme. However, their initial confidence gradually subsided due to the overwhelming nature of the programme. This was congruent with Scott et al.'s (2011) finding that clinical psychology trainees often report high levels of concern about their capacity to be effective therapists. They also tend to experience high levels of stress during their clinical training, in response to both the emotional and academic demands of the programme.

Regarding their clinical skills, the participants in this study expressed concern and doubt about their clinical efficiency. This changed, however, after they had completed their internship. Josh specifically referred to experiencing imposter syndrome, which produced a loss of confidence in him. Imposter syndrome can be defined as a collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist, despite evident success (Corkindale, 2008). These findings supported research that demonstrates that it is usually the case for first-generation students to have low self-esteem and self-doubt, which prevents them from excelling in their academic studies (Froggé & Woods, 2018; Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014).

Mishka indicated that her age influenced her confidence and self-esteem, and that because of her age she felt out of place during the MPsych (Clinical) training. This is congruent with Hadi and Muhammad's (2019) finding that age proved to be a huge factor in postgraduate students' overall performance, as a higher age added to their feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt. There has been a significant amount of research exploring the barriers to the participation of adults in higher education. Cross (1981) lists a series of filters within the educational system, including barriers related to one's attitudes, motivation and self-perception as a competent student. In relation to the latter, the research indicates that for adult students, certain abilities decline or are lost, such as eyesight, hearing, and reaction time, but their intellectual abilities (such as decision-making skills, reasoning, and vocabulary) can gradually improve, and the overall self-concept of mature students can therefore change. This affects the psychological aspects of their learning process (Liu, 2021; UKEssays, 2018).

The narrative accounts provided by the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students in this study reflected psychological distress that was related to their feelings self-doubt and lack of confidence, due to the increased demands and responsibilities of the training programmes. Mishka expressed how self-doubt and lack of confidence had a negative impact on her overall mental well-being. This was consistent with the findings of several studies that investigated the impact of self-doubt and lack of self-confidence, which showed that uncertainty and lack of confidence can precipitate a decline in one's mental health (Hermann et al., 2002). This indicates that while there is a strong likelihood that MPsych (Clinical) training has an impact on the trainees' emotional and psychological state of being, the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students are already at a disadvantage, on the basis that they are "strangers in a strange land", simultaneously adjusting to the social and academic demands of higher education without necessarily the same resources, skills, and knowledge as their non-first-generation peers (Armstrong & Hamilton 2013; Wilbur & Roscigno 2016).

5.3.1.2 Changed worldviews

The study findings suggested that the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants encountered unfamiliar challenges, such as experiencing changes in their personal worldviews. For these students, the pursuit of higher education involved acquiring new insights that may at times have been in conflict with the ideologies of their families and their familiar world. The students' changed worldviews potentially produced conflict between them and their families, who did not necessarily agree with these new worldviews. The participants stated that experiencing a different way of seeing the world and being exposed to new ideas were challenges that required behavioural changes from them. Davis (2010) finds that these actions, such as speaking up about one's views or questioning authority, are often difficult for first-generation students, as there is often a hierarchical relationship between the individual and authority figures such as parental figures.

5.3.1.3 Maturity

First-generation university students tend to be non-traditional, as they are older and more mature (over the age of 24) (Harvey, 2004–21). There are many advantages to studying as a mature student, as one has more life experience and it is often considered to be an opportunity to reinvigorate one's career and one's life in general (Durham, 2020). Research has revealed that essentially, mature students tend to have improved mental aptitude, increased confidence and are more highly motivated than their younger peers (Durham, 2020). In MPsych (Clinical) professional training, maturity has long been considered an advantage, and the majority of trainees are more mature than traditional university students (Cai, 2008; Gill et al., 2015). While mature students often bring a diverse range of experiences that may contribute to their success

in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training, such diversity may also present challenges and may necessitate a redesign of effective pedagogy.

In this study, two threads that challenged the literature emerged from the data. The participants considered age to be a barrier that set them apart from their classmates in terms of both academic performance and social integration. Furthermore, the participants revealed that they lacked a sense of belonging because of their age. These are significant findings, as they demonstrate a divergence from the literature. A number of studies have focused wholly on understanding mature students' motivations for engaging in higher education programmes of study, and have explored the sense of unfulfilled potential often borne by those who opt to return to education; however, little is known about the connection between maturity and lack of self-esteem (Gill et al., 2015).

5.3.1.4 Personal development

The findings of this study further highlighted the challenges that are often encountered by first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students in their training programmes in relation to personal development. The participants described how they faced the challenge of deep self-reflection produced by personal development. This process required the trainees to reflect on themselves from different perspectives and through different lenses, which was something they were not used to. Nonetheless, this process was also important in their professional development. Therefore, their constant personal and professional development entailed the development of self-acceptance, genuineness, congruence, and empathy. These are the basic qualities an efficient and resourceful professional therapist should possess (Malikiosi-Loizos, 2013). Consistent with the latter, Kottler and Swartz (2004) note that becoming a psychologist is

regarded as a “rite of passage”. Mangayi (2013) described this process as challenging, regardless of where one trains, whether locally or internationally. Trainers in MPsych (Clinical) training programmes require trainees to become intimately involved in the pain, conflicts, disappointments and hardships of the lives of people whose mental health in some way is in jeopardy (Kottler & Swartz, 2004; Mangayi, 2013). The self-awareness that is precipitated through such reflective practice is becoming a critical component in the training of student-psychologists (Griffith & Frieden, 2000). Reflective practice is a complex process that allows trainees to construct experiences in new ways (Stedmon & Dallos, 2009).

5.3.2 Situational barriers and challenges

Cross (1981) presents evidence that students in the context of lifelong learning face a wide range of situational challenges. Situational factors and institutional factors are external, more systematic and cannot be controlled by the individual (Dixson & Bairamova, 2019). In the present study, situational barriers arose from the participants’ transition to clinical work, the perceived status of higher education, their social networks, and financial stress. These situational factors are discussed independently below.

5.3.2.1 Transition to clinical work

MPsych (Clinical) professional training is one of the few postgraduate courses that requires daily attendance, due to its intensity. The workload is often high and the training requires the trainees to develop a complex set of skills, which fall outside of the purely academic range of tasks (Scott et al., 2011). The findings in this study are consistent with those of Scott et al. (2011), who suggest that MPsych first-generation trainees face more challenges in relation to

the transition to clinical work. The participants reported high levels of anxiety about their abilities. MPsych (Clinical) training includes academic, research and practical aspects, which are far more challenging than the demands of training at undergraduate and honours levels. This further exacerbated the participants' high levels of stress during their clinical training.

Malau-Aduli et al. (2020) describe the key areas in which students encounter changes during the transition to clinical work as including professional socialisation, workload, patient contact, knowledge and skills, and learning and education. The participants in this study reported similar challenges, and described how they struggled to cope with their caseload, with clinical language, and with information overload in relation to skills and knowledge. For example, Kiara spoke of her lack of confidence in relation to clinical reasoning. Clinical reasoning and judgement are among the modes of thinking used by clinicians to provide quality health care to patients that prevents incidents and patient harm (Benner et al., 2008). Kiara thought that she was not going to be a good clinical psychologist, as she struggled with the transition to clinical work, and reported that she gained her confidence later on during her internship.

The participants highlighted the difficulties in transitioning to clinical work in tandem with the challenges they experienced in relation to the development of a professional identity. The development of a strong professional identity is essential for the proliferation of the helping professions (Holter, 2018). However, the participants described encountering multifaceted challenges in relation to their professional identity. On a surface level, the trainees had to determine how they were going to present themselves professionally, and this included the development of a clinical language, behaviour, punctuation, dress code, etc. Furthermore, at a deeper level, the trainees had to engage in introspection, and learn how to use themselves as a psychological resource based on learned theoretical ideologies and frameworks. While their

parents valued education, these first-generation students were not exposed to the stratified social systems that demonstrated professional conduct (Leyva, 2011).

Research on the mental health professions, such as clinical psychology and family therapy, have revealed that there are different conceptions regarding the adoption of a professional identity. One such notion is reflective practice, which emphasises how one should be cognizant of the attitudes and behaviours that a person exhibits (Kuyken et al., 2003). It is also important to highlight that developing a professional identity may at times pose a challenge to the trainee's well-being. Zigqibo described how the process of professional development requires an individual to strip away all psychological defences. From a psychological viewpoint, defence mechanisms are perceived as maladaptive patterns that protect individuals from unacceptable feelings and an experience of their real self in relation to the world and others (Freud, 1916). In the context of therapy and a process of attaining self-knowledge, the challenges of defence mechanisms are significant, because they help individuals to function effectively to deal with their neurosis (Bailey & Pico, 2021).

5.3.2.2 Perceived status of higher education

The findings in this study indicated that MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students encounter socially constructed notions that can be detrimental to their overall academic success during their undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The participants described how their families and/or communities placed a high value on the pursuit of higher education, and how the expectations and significance placed on education by their families created implicit demands, thus putting pressure on them to succeed in their studies. This is consistent with Durden's (2018) finding that first-generation students feel a responsibility to pursue educational

advancement with everything they have, because of who they are (first-generation) and because of the value attached to education by their families. Such pressure is further compounded by the idiosyncrasies and challenges inherent in the MPsych (Clinical) training, as highlighted by the participants in this study. The participants expressed difficulty with sharing openly with their families the struggles that they faced in the training programme.

5.3.2.3 Social networks

Social networks are categorised into three aspects: human, financial and cultural (Okeke, 2014). Burt (1992, p. 9) defines social capital as friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through whom one receives opportunities to use other forms of capital. The findings from the present study indicated that the participants' social networks were associated with both cultural and economic status. For example, Josh used his Whiteness as a lens to highlight how one's experiences of social support may differ based on one's race, class, and economic status. He felt more privileged than other first-generation students, as he had better access to resources.

Some participants found it difficult to foster social relationships due to the heavy demands of the course. However, it is worth noting that the participants' diverse backgrounds informed the nature of their relationships and experiences. For some participants, their friends, families or partners were more understanding of their academic commitments and the demands of the programme, and these participants were still able to access support from their social networks. However, other participants had very limited social networks and resources. For example, Josh mentioned that even though his parents had had no university experiences, as a White first-generation student he had resources at home, such as an Internet connection, and cousins to offer support, and he compared this with the majority of first-generation students who are

Black. Several studies have shown that without social capital and established social networks, previously disadvantaged groups often experience cultural discontinuity and disconnect in their support systems while studying (Herbet, 2018; Hornby, 2011; Jones et al., 2008).

In addition, the findings of this study suggested that the MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students did not have the quality of social networks or connections during their higher education experience as their non-first-generation peers, whose parents had already completed the university process themselves. This was congruent with Lozano-Partida's (2018) finding that first-generation students seemed to have insight about the complexities of their families, and the reasons for the disconnect in familial social support. For example, the participants in this study explained that their lack of family support was due to reasons such as their parents being illiterate, differences in views, and the various roles they played within the family system. Being the first to pursue higher education meant that they served as role models for their younger siblings and cousins, and for their communities at large — a responsibility that sometimes burdened the participants. For first-generation students, their lack of consistent social support, and the ambivalence and confusion demonstrated by their families in relation to their educational goals and the demands placed on them, often led to a deep reflection on issues of belonging (Levya, 2011).

5.3.2.4 Financial stress

Research on first-generation students often links them to issues of financial stress (Aruguete, 2017; Hershner & Chervin, 2014; Potter et al., 2017; Stephens et al., 2014), as the majority of first-generation students are from families with a low socio-economic status. Due to financial challenges, first-generation students are likely to lack navigational capital, and opt for fixed

employment. As a result, they often suffer financial anxiety, and encounter practical problems created by financial hardship, such as not being able to afford the books and supplies for courses, and high levels of student debt.

The findings of this study did not show that the participants experienced significant financial stress at postgraduate level or in the professional training programme. However, they did speak about their financial stressors during their undergraduate studies. The participants discussed in depth the difficulties of balancing work and studies, and the complexities of trying to obtain course materials as undergraduate first-generation students. These findings suggest that first-generation students may need more financial support from the very beginning of their higher education studies.

It is worth nothing that during MPsych (Clinical) professional training, the trainees cannot hold any fixed employment. This is due to the intensity of the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme, which is one of the few postgraduate courses that requires daily attendance (Plante, 2005). The training is full "of extrinsic and intrinsic stressors" that present multiple demands, and the workload is often high (Mhambi, 2012). The findings of this study are consistent with the literature, which suggests that working whilst studying has adverse effects on students' mental health and academic performance (Hershner & Chervin, 2012; Tinto, 2015; Vuyiseka, 2019).

5.3.3 Institutional barriers and challenges

The research findings showed that the institutional challenges faced by the MPsych (Clinical) first-generation trainees included barriers such as a lack of knowledge of university processes, and lack of support from the academic staff. These findings were consistent with Soria and

Stebleton's (2012) observation that first-generation students tend to encounter specific obstacles related to lack of knowledge about institutional processes and limited support from staff.

5.3.3.1 Lack of knowledge of university processes

The research findings indicated that all the participants had been fairly unprepared for higher education, and were not familiar with the university processes as either undergraduate or postgraduate students. Their parents could not help, since they themselves had had no exposure to the culture of higher education either socially or academically. While higher education is rich in diversity and rewards, it can be particularly arduous for first-generation students at institutions of higher education (Otu & Mkhize, 2018). The majority of the participants indicated that their lack of knowledge of university processes was related to unpreparedness. This was congruent with Timmey and Chapman's (2012) finding that there is a general dissatisfaction with the state of higher education preparedness, especially for first-generation students.

In addition, the research findings of the present study indicated that the participants lacked knowledge on how to access the academic resources that were available on campus. For example, one of the participants mentioned that while lecturers often assumed that students knew what to do and which steps to follow, this was not always the case. This was consistent with Stebleton et al.'s (2014) finding that many first-generation students feel a sense of "not belonging" on campus. Clark (2005) found that the difficulties with the transition from home to campus included many changes in day-to-day life habits, eating differently, spending time

establishing new friendships, creating a new daily routine, and the loss of immediate and daily support from family members at home.

5.3.3.2 Lack of support from academic staff

The findings of this study revealed that a significant challenge reported by the participants related to the quality of support and assistance from academic staff. This issue was experienced as a barrier in two different ways. Firstly, the participants described problematic experiences in relation to support from within the teaching collective, reporting either no support or inconsistent support. This is supported by two South African studies (Mhambi & Thobejane, 2012; Sedumedi 2002), which show that psychology students find the course material and training to be challenging, both intellectually and emotionally, and that this may be related to unsupportive teaching and learning practices in the field. Secondly, the participants experienced lack of support from academic staff in relation to how the programme was governed, which they referred to as "autocratic". The participants described their difficulties in adjusting to the top-down approach, which they felt was largely used in the training programme.

These findings suggested a disconnect between trainers and trainees, and contrasted with the CHE (2010) recommendations, which state that teaching activities should be well communicated and supportive of students. Communication is complex and multidisciplinary in nature, and this complexity can create barriers between lecturers and students. Tinto (1997) argues that even though communication can be complex, effective communication and interaction within an academic environment encourages learning from many points of contact, which has a greater influence on engagement and success. Spengen (2013) finds that first-generation students display lower levels of academic engagement, and Soria and Stebleton

(2012) conclude that they display reduced levels of class participation, insightful questioning, connection of concepts across courses during instruction, and interaction with faculty members during lectures. Tinto (1997) emphasised that the classroom may be one of the most beneficial sites to create opportunities for involvement where involvement may not otherwise exist.

5.4 FACILITATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE FACTORS

The factors which influence student retention in tertiary-level training courses are complex (Bowels & Brindle, 2017). In addition to the factors discussed in the previous section, which negatively impacted the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students, this study also examined the factors that facilitated and supported their academic success, in order to propose recommendations on how first-generation students in postgraduate degree programmes could be better supported to optimise their chances for academic success and throughput.

Facilitative and supportive factors are those factors that enable students to persist and succeed at institutions of higher learning (Lombardi et al., 2012). In this study, these factors were categorised as dispositional, situational and institutional, in accordance with Cross's (1981) COR model. The findings showed that even though the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students faced various challenges, they had resources that enabled them to succeed with their studies.

5.4.1 Dispositional factors

Dispositional factors are largely intrapersonal, and therefore depend on the individual rather than on external influences (Cross, 1981). The three dispositional factors that facilitated and supported the participants' educational success were found to be self-motivation, independence, and altruism.

5.4.1.1 Self-motivation (driven)

The findings in this study revealed that self-motivation, as an internal quality, was important for the participants' achievement of academic success as first-generation students. This is congruent with Wilkins' (2014) finding that first-generation students are mostly goal-driven and self-reliant. It is important for first-generation students to remain focused and motivated, because they are likely to face many challenges and barriers. The participants in this study described how in order to remain motivated and achieve academic success they had to have academic goals they aspired to. This self-motivation was also informed by each participant's background. For instance, Zigqibo was raised to be independent, and this pushed her to do things on her own, and thus remain self-motivated. This was the same motivation that led the participants to strive to get their MPsych (Clinical) degrees in order to secure a stable future for themselves.

The above findings are consistent with Maslow's theory of self-actualisation. Maslow (1965) suggested that self-actualisation contributes to the intrinsic motivation that already exists within the individual (Maslow, 1965). The construct of intrinsic motivation describes the natural inclination of these participants toward mastery, unprompted interest and exploration, which are essential to cognitive and psychological development (Ryan, 1995). Self-actualisation is

considered to be critical for human motivation and goal-directed behaviour, which are the basis for perseverance, and which one could argue led to the success of the participants in this study. Similarly, research has identified that individuals who seek meaning and understanding in their dissatisfaction with their life circumstances are likely to be motivated by actualising needs (Frana, 2013; Huss & Magos, 2014).

5.4.1.2 Independence

The findings revealed that the desire to gain independence, especially financial independence, and to find a stable job, were crucial factors in the participants' decision to obtain a degree. Typically, first-generation students have familial and social challenges, which require them to be independent and thus develop effective problem-solving skills (Meyer et al., 2013). Additionally, Waxman et al. (2003) highlights the need for independence in first-generation students, which allows them to thrive and succeed. Likewise, Wilkins (2014) notes that first-generation students tend to describe themselves as hardworking and independent. Furthermore, independence leads to an improved ability to adjust. Accordingly, first-generation students who thrive in postgraduate studies tend to show high levels of adaptability and initiative (Alcock & Belluigi, 2018; Tinto, 2017). The findings of the present study are consistent with the above, as they suggest that the adversity experienced by the participants had the effect of eliciting strengths and qualities from them that would otherwise have lain dormant, thus developing their independence.

5.4.1.3 Altruism (purpose)

The study findings indicated that the participants had pursued a higher education degree, in particular the MPsych (Clinical), out of a desire to help others. The participants saw clinical psychology as a calling that gave them a sense of purpose, and this sense of purpose drove them to focus and expend more effort on their studies. These findings demonstrated that it is important for people to study degrees for which they have a passion, as this passion stimulates hard work and persistence. By making meaning of one's struggles, and other people's struggles, individuals can remain motivated to achieve their full potential (Frana, 2013; Huss & Magos, 2014).

5.4.2 Situational factors

Situational facilitative factors are factors that are likely to influence proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) in a social context that affects the students' overall academic performance. These factors may be externally oriented, but they can serve as supportive structures for students. The two situational factors that emerged from this study that were found to facilitate the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students were social networks and the perceived status of higher education.

5.4.2.1 Social networks

It emerged from the study findings that social support structures and networks, such as the participants' siblings, parents and spouses, were central to the participants' ability to finish their studies. This is congruent with Barnett and Duvall's (2004) and Desforges and Abouchaar's

(2003) studies, which highlight the importance of the roles families play in students' academic achievements. From a financial point of view, middle to upper-class families are more likely than lower class families to contribute to their children's studies, and this increases their chances of persisting with postgraduate courses. This adds to the difficulties experienced by first-generation students from low-income families in completing their postgraduate studies. However, there are other supportive resources in addition to finances that can be utilised by first-generation students to thrive academically, such as their personal drive, and family, community and religious support (Barnett & Duvall, 2004).

One participant in this study stated that religion was also an important aspect of their support network. This was congruent with Kapp et al. (2014), Mgqwashu (2009) and Nomdo (2006), who found that first-generation students in South Africa are likely to attribute their academic success to religious or spiritual entities. Another participant also indicated that in South Africa, one's experiences of support differ according to one's race and social class. Indeed, students from a White middle to upper class family might have more support from their family members, even if these family members have not attended university. This therefore informs the overall experiences of postgraduate students and the extent to which they complete their studies (CHE, 2014; Letseka & Maile, 2008).

5.4.2.2 Perceived status of higher education

The study findings further revealed that the manner in which one's society views education is also important. The participants in this study emphasised that the significance placed on education by their families and larger community played a huge role in motivating them to achieve more academically. Working hard in school and pursuing higher education was

encouraged by the participants' families, who mostly believed that education is the key to professional success and earns one status in the community. Likewise, Nichols and Miller (1994) found that improving one's status in society and in the community motivates people to attain higher education.

5.4.3 Institutional factors

Institutional factors are mostly centred on the type of support and assistance that institutions provide to their students (Cross, 1981). In this study, the institutional factors that were found to facilitate the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students were identified as support from academic staff and financial support.

5.4.3.1 Support from academic staff

The participants in this study stated that it was important for them as MPsych (Clinical) students to receive sufficient academic support, especially since supervision was central to their training. The participants described their clinical and research supervisors as supportive, and this support allowed them to persist with their studies and to remain focused, even though they felt unsupported by the teaching collective as a whole. Congruent with this finding, Tinto (2012) also notes that sufficient institutional support leads to academic success for students. Supervision and support are therefore crucial during clinical psychology training, since most psychology students find the training emotionally and academically demanding (Mhambi & Thobejane, 2012; Sedumedi, 2002).

5.4.3.2 Financial support

The study findings demonstrated that it was possible for the participants to obtain funding as postgraduate students. This is consistent with Hyde and Gess-Newsome's (2000) finding that financial support is crucial for women in the health sciences to complete their studies, particularly in fields where these women feel that they are at a disadvantage. Furthermore, in the present study, financial assistance from UWC was deemed to be crucial for the participants, since first-generation students are likely to forego postgraduate studies in favour of getting a job after obtaining their undergraduate degree (UWC, 2015). However, it was rather challenging to differentiate between challenges specific to first-generation students and challenges that emerged from the nature of postgraduate clinical training in general, or from the nature of higher education training.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the factors that challenged and the factors that facilitated the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) students were discussed in relation to the literature and to Cross's (1981) COR model. The study findings were consistent with most of the international literature on the barriers and supportive factors experienced by first-generation students. Based on the study findings and the literature, it is apparent that in South Africa, more support structures need to be provided in institutions of higher learning, in order to assist first-generation students to thrive at all levels of academia.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the study's main findings, followed by an acknowledgement of the limitations of the study. After a brief summation of the significance of this particular study, the implications of the study and recommendations for future research are outlined. Finally, the researcher concludes with a personal reflection on the overall research journey.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

This section presents the results in relation to the main research objectives and research questions of the study.

The study had two main objectives:

1) To identify the barriers to and facilitators of participation, retention and throughput in higher education for postgraduate first-generation students in a professional health sciences course; and,

From these primary objectives, the specific research questions were derived. The primary research question that the study attempted to answer was as follows:

> *What are the subjective experiences of present and past first-generation students in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme, specifically as they relate to barriers to and facilitators of participation, retention, and throughput?*

This primary research question was used to formulate the secondary research questions that the study aimed to address, which were as follows:

1) What were the challenges experienced by the participants as first-generation students?
2) What were the supporting factors in the participants' experience as first-generation students? How did these factors facilitate their success in pursuing postgraduate studies?

A total of five participants took part in this study, which was conducted via online, semi-structured interviews (see the interview schedule attached as Appendix E). A summary of the results is presented as follows.

6.2.1 Barriers and challenges

In response to the first research question (*What were the challenges experienced by the participants as first-generation students?*), and guided by Cross's (1981) COR model, the researcher identified dispositional, situational and institutional barriers and challenges to the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants.

The four primary dispositional challenges that were identified in this study were the participants' lack of confidence, their maturity, their changed worldview, and their personal development. When discussing these challenges, the participants reported that their lack of confidence as MPsych (Clinical) professional trainees was primarily caused by the negative impact on their psychological and emotional wellbeing of feelings of anxiety, imposter syndrome and self-doubt. The mature age of the participants was a significant dispositional factor in the study. The majority of the participants described themselves as mature students, and they considered their age to be a barrier that set them apart from their classmates.

The change of worldview brought about by their accumulating education was also experienced as a challenge by the MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students. It led to a shift in their family interactions, and managing this change in family relationships was reported to be problematic, since these particular students were raised in a more passive style than their peers. Ambivalence and difficulty in dealing with the changes brought by higher education is to be expected, as evident in Reay's (1996) finding that despite the fact that they had 'made it', first-generation students still suffered from feelings of shame or cultural inadequacy, and the sense that they were only 'passing' as students. The majority of the participants described the pressure, implicit expectations and burden that come with the perceived status of education.

Four dominant situational challenges were identified in this study: transition to clinical work, perceived status of higher education, social networks, and financial stress. The participants described the difficult process of having to strip away their defence mechanisms in the transition to clinical work, which required them to challenge their behavioural patterns and who they had learnt to become. It is generally believed that progress in clinical psychology training depends on decreasing one's use of defence mechanisms, which otherwise work to "protect" trainees from being in touch with personal feelings that they might find challenging (Volsky et al., 1965, p. 80). The participants also described how the high value that their families and/or communities placed on the pursuit of higher education created expectations and implicit demands that put pressure on them to succeed in their studies. Furthermore, the findings indicated a possible disconnect in the first-generation students' social networks, suggesting that the MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students did not have the quality of social networks or connections during their higher education experience as their non-first-generation peers, whose parents had already completed the university process themselves. The participants also acknowledged that first-generation students do not receive the same level of support from their families as their non-first-generation peers. These situational challenges reflected Cross's

(1981) recognition that learning is not an isolated act, but is the result of a complex chain of responses based on the evaluation of one's position in the environment.

Two dominant institutional barriers were presented in the findings: lack of knowledge of university support, and lack of support from academic staff, which represented a combination of both situational and institutional factors. The inability of the parents of first-generation students to assist their children due to their lack of understanding of higher education processes, and the limited support provided by academic staff, resulted in the first-generation participants feeling less prepared than their peers for the university process, both in their undergraduate studies and in their admission to the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme. The findings further revealed a disconnect between the students (trainees) and the academic staff (trainers) in the UWC MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme.

6.2.2 Facilitative and supportive factors

In response to the second research question (*What were the supporting factors in the participants' experience as first-generation students? How did these factors facilitate their success in pursuing postgraduate studies?*), and guided by Cross's (1981) COR model, the researcher identified dispositional, situational and institutional factors that facilitated and supported the academic success of the first-generation MPsych (Clinical) participants.

The three dispositional factors, or internal qualities, that were identified in this study as facilitating and supporting the academic success of the first-generation students were self-motivation, independence and altruism, which helped them to self-actualise and thrive with their academics. The situational factors that facilitated their success were their social networks and the perceived status of higher education, while the institutional factors that facilitated their

persistence with their postgraduate studies were support from academic staff and financial support. This was found to correspond with the literature. However, it could be argued that postgraduate first-generation students are likely to effectively adjust to the challenges of university given that they have already successfully completed their undergraduate studies.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

The potential limitations of this study are considered here. First, the participants in this study were MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students at one South African institution of higher learning. The results of this particular study may therefore not be generalisable to other contexts, for multiple reasons. Firstly, it is not clear whether the results and conclusions of this study would apply to other clinical psychology trainees at other institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Another limitation which can be given consideration is the implications that although they are first generation students, they were, at the time of interview, first generation *masters* students who have had a set of unique experiences since they were undergraduate students. Another limitation was that although the participants were first-generation students, they were, at the time of interview, past first-generation *master's* students who had had a set of unique experiences since they were undergraduate students. Thus, this study of first-generation postgraduate students provided insight into the factors that had facilitated their progress to this advanced level of study. According to Polit and Beck (2014, p. 734), "the threat of researcher bias involves the unintentional effects that the researcher herself has on the study if the researcher has expectations or personal bias". During the data generation process, the researcher conducted online interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule with standardised instructions; however, the follow up questions could have led some participants to casually or thoughtlessly respond to the interview questions, as they may have assumed that

I was familiar with the MPsych (Clinical) journey. The researcher has stated her positionality (see section 1.5), and has been transparent and reflexive about her possible preconceptions and relationship dynamics, and about the analytical processes by means of which the data was generated and analysed.

Another limitation is that the sample size was smaller as there were only five participants who met the inclusion criteria. However, it was previously noted that MPsych (Clinical) training programmes are smaller in sizes. According to Hacksaw (2008), while small studies can provide results quickly, they do not normally yield consistent estimates.

6.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provided an opportunity for the students in the sample to engage in a reflective process about their experiences as first-generation students in the MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme. The information gained on the subjective experiences of these first-generation postgraduate students from a historically disadvantaged university could be used as a basis for more detailed research on the factors that facilitate the success of first-generation students, particularly in the context of a master's programme in clinical psychology. The findings could further be used to develop or enhance retention strategies at universities, and to inform the provision of effective interventions for first-generation students.

6.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since this study was exploratory and interpretive in nature, it raised a number of opportunities for future research, in terms of theory development, practice, interventions and concept

validation. First, while this study focused on exploring the subjective experiences of MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students regarding the factors that challenged and facilitated their academic success, very little can be said of the facilitating factors. This study could thus be extended to test its quantitative, statistical generalisability, rather than its qualitative analytical generalisability, as the researcher sought to do here. Quantitative studies should therefore be conducted to supplement this qualitative study.

Extending this study also offers the opportunity to refine and validate the concepts and constructs that emerged from the data analysis. For example, the idea of academic support needs further refinement and elaboration, in terms of both its component elements and its internal dynamics. One could also ask whether and to what extent academic support could be strengthened, so that effective interventions for student success could be designed both at institutional and at policy development levels. Institutions of higher learning could enhance their intervention and support structures in order to increase the graduation and retention rate of first-generation students. Furthermore, based on the study findings, educational policies could be geared towards enhancing the academic and psychosocial support of first-generation students throughout their studies. Such support could possibly include leniency in relation to tuition fees and financial support, regardless of the particular student's academic performance, given that first-generation students contend with multiple challenges to their academic success.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The value of this research is that its findings could be used to develop meaningful and effective interventions that could support the academic success of MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students. The findings of this research could assist the Community Health and Sciences Faculty

at UWC and other relevant departments, specifically the Department of Psychology, the administrators, and advocates for first-generation students, to begin the process of informing practice with research. The early identification of first-generation students should be able to assist student affairs professionals in understanding the needs of these students, and in providing them with special attention during the first year of their studies and beyond.

The data collected in this study has begun to answer the question of how universities could provide meaningful support to strengthen the existing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of first-generation students. Further exploratory research would be useful for exploring other issues that this study was unable to address due to its limited scope. For instance, future researchers could employ other data collection methods to obtain specific information (such as what support they need) from students, especially at the beginning of each academic year.

It has also been noted that a great deal of research exists on the barriers to success experienced by first-generation students, but there is a scarcity of research that examines the factors that support and facilitate academic success for these students. Discovering these factors would allow researchers, administrators and academic staff to pinpoint areas of focus to strengthen the existing supportive and facilitating factors. The evidence in this study showed that all the participants successfully completed their MPsych (Clinical) professional training programme, despite their first-generation status. Further research could allow researchers to reframe the deficit-based paradigm that informs most of the literature on these students, who are considered to be at risk of dropping out. The findings from this study could be used to develop and implement supportive programmes that last a full year, which could include offering trainees peer mentoring provided by former MPsych (Clinical) first-generation students. In addition, a similar study could be conducted across different institutions, preferably with a larger sample,

to establish whether their MPsych (Clinical) trainees who are first-generation students have shared similar experiences.

6.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a brief summary of the study's major findings, which were grouped into barriers and challenges on the one hand, and facilitating and supportive factors on the other. This was followed by a discussion of the possible limitations of the study, and its significance, especially in the South African context where most graduates are first-generation students. Lastly, the researcher provided recommendations for further research that could be conducted in relation to this topic, and shared her reflections on the overall research process.

REFERENCES

Abel, R. (2020). *Culturally relevant pedagogy and first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging* [Doctoral thesis, National Louis University]. Digital Commons@NLU. https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss/548/

Adams, D. R., Meyers, S. A., & Beidas, R. S. (2016). The relationship between financial strain, perceived stress, psychological symptoms, and academic and social integration in undergraduate students. *Journal of American College Health*, *64*(5), 362–370.

Aguinaldo, J. P. (2004). Rethinking validity in qualitative research from a social constructionist perspective: From "Is this valid research?" to "What is this research valid for?" *The Qualitative Report*, *9*(1), 127–136.

Ahmed, R., & Pillay, A. L. (2004). Reviewing clinical psychology training in the post-apartheid period: Have we made any progress? *South African Journal of Psychology*, *34*(4), 630–656. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F008124630403400408

Alcock, A., & Belluigi, D. Z. (2018). Positioning home for resilience on campus: First-generation students negotiate powerless/full conditions in South African Higher Education. *Education as Change*, *22*(1), 1–27.

Armstrong, E., & Hamilton, L. (2013). *Paying for the party: How college maintains inequality*. Harvard University Press

Aruguete, M. S. (2017). Recognizing challenges and predicting success in first-generation university students. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, *18*(2), 40–44.

Ashwin, P., & Case, J. M. (2018). *Higher education pathways: South African undergraduate education and the public good*. African Minds.

Aspinwall, L. G., & Taylor, S. E. (1997). A stitch in time: Self-regulation and proactive coping. *Psychological Bulletin*, *121*(3), 417–436.

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Oxford University Press.

Bailey, T. (2014). The roles of national councils and commissions in African higher education system governance. In N. Cloete, P. Maassen & T. Bailey (eds), *Knowledge production and contradictory functions in African higher education* (pp. 171–202). African Minds.

Bailey, R., & Pico, J. (2021). Defense mechanisms. StatPearls Publishing. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32644532/

Bangeni, B., & Kapp, R. (2005). Identities in transition: Shifting conceptions of home among "Black" South African university students. *African Studies Review*, *48*(3), 1–19.

Barnett, M., & Duvall, R. (Eds.). (2004). *Power in global governance* (Vol. 98). Cambridge University Press.

Bates, A. T. (2019). *Teaching in a digital age*. Second edition. Tony Bates Associates, Ltd.

Batson, C. D. (2011). *Altruism in humans*. Oxford University Press.

Beaudin, B. (1982). *Retaining adult students*. Overview: ERIC Fact Sheet No. 12. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED237800.pdf

Becker, M. A. S., Schelbe, L., Romano, K., & Spinelli, C. (2017). Promoting first-generation college students' mental well-being: Student perceptions of an academic enrichment program. *Journal of College Student Development*, *58*(8), 1166–1183.

Benner, P., Hughes, R. G., & Sutphen, M. (2008). Clinical reasoning, decisionmaking, and action: Thinking critically and clinically. In R. G. Hughes (ed.), *Patient safety and quality: An evidence-based handbook for nurses* (pp. 1–23). Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological Methods & Research, 10,* 141–163.

Blanden, J. & Macmillan, L. (2014). *Education and intergenerational mobility: Help or hindrance?* (Working Paper No.14-01, January 2014). Department of Quantitative Social Science. Institute of Education, University of London. http://repec.ioe.ac.uk/REPEc/pdf/qsswp1401.pdf

Bojuwoye, O., & Edwards, S. (2011). Integrating ancestral consciousness into conventional counselling. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *21*(3), 375–381.

Boren, M. E. (2019). *Student resistance: A history of the unruly subject*. Routledge.

Booysen, D. D., & Naidoo, A. V. (2016). On becoming a clinical psychologist: The experiences of initially unsuccessful applicants. *New Voices in Psychology*, *12*(1), 23–39.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Halsey (eds), *Power and ideology in education* (pp. 487–511). Oxford University Press

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Second edition. Sage.

Bowles, T. V., & Brindle, K. A. (2017). Identifying facilitating factors and barriers to improving student retention rates in tertiary teaching courses: A systematic review. *Higher Education Research and Development*, *36*(5), 903–919.

Bowen, W. G., Chingos, M. M., & McPherson, M. S. (2009). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America's public universities*. Princeton University Press.

Britt, S. L., Canale, A., Fernatt, F., Stutz, K., & Tibbetts, R. (2015). Financial stress and financial counseling: Helping college students. *Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning*, *26*(2), 172–186.

Bui, K. V. T. (2002). First-generation college students at a four-year university: Background characteristics, reasons for pursuing higher education, and first-year experiences. *College Student Journal, 36*, 3–11.

Burns, N., & Grove, S. K. (2011). *Understanding nursing research: Building an evidence-based practice*. 5th edition. Elsevier.

Burt, R. S. (1992). *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership.

Cai, Y. (2008). *A primer of child and adolescent psychiatry*. World Scientific.

Cardoza, K. (2016, January 20). First-generation college students are not succeeding in college, and money isn't the problem. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/01/20/first-generation-college-students-are-not-succeeding-in-college-and-money-isnt-the-problem/?utm_term=.f5b807fc489b

Carlton, M. T. (2015). First-generation students and post-undergraduate aspirations. *SAGE Open*, *5*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2158244015618433 .

Carolissen, R., Shefer, T., & Smit, E. (2015). A critical review of practices of inclusion and exclusion in the psychology curriculum in higher education. *Psychology in Society*, *49*, 7–24. https://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2309-8708/2015/n49a2

Carroll, J. C., Rideout, A. L., Wilson, B. J., Allanson, J. M., Blaine, S. M., Esplen, M. J., ... & Taylor, S. (2009). Genetic education for primary care providers: Improving attitudes, knowledge, and confidence. *Canadian Family Physician*, *55*(12), e92–e99.

Chisholm, L. (2012). Apartheid education legacies and new directions in post-apartheid South Africa. *Storia Delle Donne*, *8*(1), 81–103.

Clark, C. (2005). The structure of educational research. *British Educational Research Journal*, *31*(3), 289–308.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2018). Using thematic analysis in counselling and psychotherapy research: A critical reflection. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, *18*(2), 107–110.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, *94*, 95–120.

Collins, S. (2000). *There are days I wonder: First-generation college students' search for cultural membership in higher education* [Doctoral dissertation]. The University of Vermont.

Collis, R., & Reed, M. (2016). *Non-traditional students, non-traditional teaching: Pathways to academic success include resourcefulness and adaptation skills*. Paper presented at the Higher Education in Transformation Symposium, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. https://arrow.tudublin.ie/heit165/6/

Corkindale, G. (2008, May 7). Overcoming imposter syndrome. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2008/05/overcoming-imposter-syndrome

Cooper, S., & Nicholas, L. (2012). An overview of South African psychology. *International Journal of Psychology*, *47*(2), 89–101.

Cornell, J. (2012). *UCT undergraduate psychology students' perceptions of psychology in the context of the 'relevance debate'* [Honours project]. Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town. http://www.psychology.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/117/Josephine.Cornell.pdf.

Council on Higher Education (CHE). (2009). *Postgraduate studies in South Africa: A statistical profile*. https://www.che.ac.za/file/5346/download?token=BxptNA6B

Council on Higher Education (CHE). (2010). *Access and throughput in South African higher education: Three case studies.* Higher Education Monitor 9. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Council on Higher Education (CHE). (2014). *Framework for institutional quality enhancement in the second period of quality assurance*. CHE. https://www.uj.ac.za/corporateservices/quality-promotion/Documents/quality%20docs/national/QEP%20Framework%20Feb%202014.pdf

Covarrubias, R., Valle, I., Laiduc, G., & Azmitia, M. (2019). "You never become fully independent": Family roles and independence in first-generation college students. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *34*(4), 381–410.

Croninger, R., & Lee, V. (2001). Social capital and dropping out of high school: Benefits to at-risk students of teachers. *Teachers College Record*, *103*(4), 548–581.

Cross, K. P. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Cuéllar, I. (2000). Acculturation and mental health: Ecological transactional relations of adjustment. In I. Cuéllar & F. A. Paniagua (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural mental health: Assessment and treatment of diverse populations* (pp. 45–62). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Cyster, G. A. (2019). *Narratives in postgraduate studies: Stories of six master's students who have experienced supervision-related challenges at a South African university* [Master's dissertation]. University of the Western Cape.

Davis, J. (2010). *The first-generation student experience: Implications for campus practice, and strategies for improving persistence and success*. Stylus.

Deanna, L. M. (2015). Health and academic success: A look at the challenges of first-generation community college. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*, *28*(4), 227–232. https://doi.org/10.1002/2327-6924.12345

DeJonckheere, M, & Vaughn, L. M. (2018). Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: A balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, *7*(2), e000057. https://doi:10.1136/ fmch-2018-000057

DeMatthews, D. E., & Izquierdo, E. (2020). Supporting Mexican American immigrant students on the border: A case study of culturally responsive leadership in a dual language elementary school. *Urban Education*, *55*(3), 362–393.

Department of Education [DoE]. (1997). Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education. *Government Gazette, 386*(18207). https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/18207gen11960.pdf

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). (2014). *White paper for post-school education and training*. Government Gazette No. 37229, 15 January 2014. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/37229gon11.pdf

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). (2015). *Are we making progress with systemic structural transformation resourcing access, success, staffing and researching in higher education? What does the data say?* Paper presented at the second national Higher Education Transformation Summit, Durban, October 2015.

Desforges, C., & Abouchaar, A. (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review*. Department for Education and Skills. https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/impact_of_parental_involvement/the_impact_of_parental_involvement.pdf

De Vos, A. S. (1998). *Research at grass roots: A primer for the caring professions*. Van Schaik Publishers.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. (2002). *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human professions* (2nd edition). Van Schaik Publishers.

Dixson, C., & Bairamova, N. (2019). *Barriers to learning, part* 2. https://edtech.worlded.org/barriers-to-learning-part-2/

Donkor, A. K. (2010). Parental involvement in education in Ghana: The case of a private elementary school. *International Journal about Parents in Education, 4*(1), 23–38.

Dudău, D. P., Sfeatcu, I. R., Funieru, C., & Dumitrache, M. A. (2015). Professional stress in relation to anxiety, depression and irrational beliefs among dental and psychotherapy students. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 187*, 158–162.

Duke-Benfield, A. E. (2015). Bolstering non-traditional student success: A comprehensive student aid system using financial aid, public benefits, and refundable tax credits. Centre for Postsecondary and Economic Success at CLASP. https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Bolstering-NonTraditional-Student-Success.pdf

Durden, G. (2018). Accounting for the context in phenomenography-variation theory: Evidence of English graduates' conceptions of price. *International Journal of Educational Research, 87*, 12–21.

Durham, S. (2020). *Why being a mature student is great!* The South African College of Applied Psychology. https://www.sacap.edu.za/blog/applied-psychology/benefits-of-being-a-mature-student/

Đurišić, M., & Bunijevac, M. (2017). Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 7*(3), 137–153.

Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2013). *What is qualitative interviewing*? Bloomsbury.

Engle, J., & Tinto, V. (2008). *Moving beyond access: College for low-income, first-generation students*. The Pell Institute.

Espinosa, L. M. (2013). *Early education for dual language learners: Promoting school readiness and early school success*. National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, Migration Policy Institute.

Evans, S. M. (2013). *The stories of successful, first-generation, female, African American college graduates* [Doctoral dissertation]. Walden University.

Eveland, T. J. (2020). Supporting first-generation college students: Analyzing academic and social support's effects on academic performance. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *44*(8), 1039–1051.

Falcon, L. (2015). Breaking down barriers: First-generation college students and college success. *Innovation Showcase*, *10*(6). https://www.league.org/innovation-showcase/breaking-down-barriers-first-generation-college-students-and-college-success

Font, A., Corti, V., & Berger, R. (2015). Burnout in healthcare professionals in oncology. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, *23*, 228–232.

Frana, J. F. (2013). Humanistic correctional programming: A test of self-actualization in a correctional cognitive behavioral program in the United States. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, *8*(1), 63–72.

Froggé, G. M., & Woods, K. H. (2018). Characteristics and tendencies of first and second-generation university students. *College Quarterly*, *21*(2), n2.

Freud, S. (1916). The history of the psychoanalytic movement. *Psychoanalytic Review*, *3*(4), 406–454.

Freire, J. A. (2016). Nepantleras/os and their teachers in dual language education: Developing sociopolitical consciousness to contest language education policies. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, *10*(1).

Frisby, B. (2018). On rapport: Connecting with students. *Greater Faculties: A Review of Teaching and Learning*, *2*(1), 3.

Galina, B. (2016). *Teaching first-generation college students*. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-first-generation-college-students/

Garcia, E. E. (2002). Bilingualism and schooling in the United States. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *155–156*, 1–92.

Gbollie, C., & Keamu, H. P. (2017). Student academic performance: The role of motivation, strategies, and perceived factors hindering Liberian junior and senior high school students' learning. *Education Research International*, *11*, Article ID 1789084. https://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/edri/2017/1789084.pdf

Graf, A. J. (2019). First-generation students and libraries: Beyond the deficit narrative. In N-Y. Tran & S. Higgins (Ed.), Supporting today's students in the library: Strategies for retaining and graduating international, transfer, first-generation, and re-entry students (pp. 3–21). ACRL Press.

Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2004). Analysing qualitative data. In D. Silverman (ed.), *Qualitative methods for health research* (pp. 173–200). Sage.

Griffith, B., & Frieden, G. (2000). Facilitating reflective thinking in counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, *40*(2), 82–93.

Hadi, N. U., & Muhammad, B. (2019). Factors influencing postgraduate students' performance: A high order top down structural equation modelling approach. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, *19*(2), 58–73. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1215205.pdf.

Hackshaw, A. (2008). Small studies: strengths and limitations. *European Respiratory Journal*, *32*(5), 1141-1143.

Harvey, L. (2004–21). *Analytic quality glossary*. Quality Research International. http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/

Hatcher, R. L., & Lassiter, K. D. (2007). Initial training in professional psychology: The practicum competencies outline. *Training and education in professional psychology*, *1*(1), 49–63. https://doi.org/10.1037/1931-3918.1.1.49

Health Professions Council of South Africa. (2017). *National survey of all registered psychology practitioners*. www.whpcsa.co.za/Uploads/editor/UserFiles/downloads/psych/HPCSA_Psychology_Survey_ Report_FIN_20Feb%202017.pdf

Hébert, T. P. (2018). An examination of high-achieving first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *62*(1), 96–110.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. Wiley.

Helm, K. M., & Wilson, T. (2013). Culturally sensitive assessment approaches and considerations for African American couples. In K. M. Helm & J. Carlson (eds), *Love, intimacy, and the African American couple* (pp. 195–220). Routledge.

Hermann, A. D., Leonardelli, G. J., & Arkin, R. M. (2002). Self-doubt and self-esteem: A threat from within. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *28*(3), 395–408.

Hershner, S. D., & Chervin, R. D. (2014). Causes and consequences of sleepiness among college students. *Nature and science of sleep*, *6*, 73–84. https://dx.doi.org/10.2147%2FNSS.S62907

Heymann, L., & Carolissen, R. (2011). The concept of first-generation students in the literature: implications for South African higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *25*(7), 1378–1396.

Gill, B., Hayes, S., & Senior, C. (2015). The effects of family support and gender on mature student engagement in higher education. *Frontiers in psychology*, *6*, 156. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00156

Higher Education South Africa. (2014). *South African higher education in the 20th year of democracy: Context, achievements and key challenges*. HESA presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training. Cape Town, South Africa. http://www.universitiessa.ac.za/sites/www.universitiessa.ac.za/files/South%20African%20Higher%20Education%20in%20the%2020th%20Year%20of%20Democracy_5%20March%202014_0.pdf

Hodges-Payne, T. (2006). *Perceptions of first-generation college students: Factors that influence graduate school enrolment and perceived barriers to attendance* [Doctoral dissertation]. Pro-Quest Dissertations and Theses database (UMI No. 3223320).

Hoffman, J. C., & Julie, H. (2012). The academic transitional experiences of Master's students at the University of the Western Cape. *Curationis*, *35*(1), 1–8.

Holter, J. (2018). *Development of professional identity in social work education*. St Catherine University.

Hornby, G. (2011). *Parental involvement in childhood education: Building effective school-family partnerships*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Howie, S. J., Venter, E., Van Staden, S, Zimmerman, L., Scherman, V., & Archer, E. (2007). *PIRLS 2006 Summary report: South African children's reading literacy achievement*. Centre for Evaluation and Assessment.

Hovdhaugen, E., & Wiers-Jenssen, J. (2021). Motivation for full degree mobility: Analysing sociodemographic factors, mobility capital and field of study. *Educational Review*, pre-print, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1912712

Huerta, J., Watt, K. M., & Reyes, P. (2013). An examination of AVID graduates' college preparation and postsecondary progress: Community college versus four-year university students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *12*(1), 86–101.

Huss, E., & Magos, M. (2014). Relationship between self-actualization and employment for at risk unemployed women. *Education and Work*, *27*(3), 306–322.

Hyde, M. S., & Gess-Newsome, J. (2000). Adjusting educational practice to increase female persistence in the sciences. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *1*(4), 335–355.

Irlbeck, E., Adams, S., Akers, C., Burris, S., & Jones, S. (2014). First generation college students: Motivations and support systems. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, *55*(2), 154–166. https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2014.02154

Ishitani, T. T. (2006). Studying attrition and degree completion behavior among first-generation college students in the United States. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *77*(5), 861–885.

Ishitani, T. T. (2016). First-generation students' persistence at four-year institutions. *College & University*, *91*(3), 22–32.

Ivemark, B., & Ambrose, A. (2021). Habitus adaptation and first-generation university students' adjustment to higher education: A life course perspective. *Sociology of Education*, *94*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177%2F00380407211017060

Janse van Rensburg, V., & Kapp, R. (2014). "So I have to be positive, no matter how difficult it is": A longitudinal case study of a first-generation occupational therapy student. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *44*(3), 29–33. http://hdl.handle.net/11427/29923

Jansen, J. D. (2001). *Implementing education policies: The South African experience*. UCT Press.

Jenkins, J. J., Sánchez, L. A., Schraedley, M. A., Hannans, J., Navick, N., & Young, J. (2020). Textbook broke: Textbook affordability as a social justice issue. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, *1*(3), 1.

Jenkins, S. R., Belanger, A., Connally, M. L., Boals, A., & Durón, K. M. (2013). First-generation undergraduate students' social support, depression, and life satisfaction. *Journal of College Counseling*, *16*(2), 129–142.

Johnston, A. C., Warkentin, M., McBride, M., & Carter, L. (2016). Dispositional and situational factors: Influences on information security policy violations. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *25*(3), 231–251.

Jones, S. M., Brown, J. L., & Aber, J. (2008). Classroom settings as targets of intervention and research. In M. Shinn & H. Yoshikawa (Eds.), *Toward positive youth development: Transforming schools and community programs* (pp. 58–77). Oxford University Press.

Jury, M., Smeding, A., Stephens, N., Nelson, J., Aelenei, C., & Darnon, C. (2017). The experience of low-SES students in higher education: Psychological barriers to success and interventions to reduce social-class inequality. *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(1), 23–41.

Kagee, A. (2014). South African psychology after 20 years of democracy: Criticality, social development, and relevance. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *44*(3), 350–363.

Kangos, K. A., Ellis, M. V., Berger, L., Corp, D. A., Hutman, H., Gibson, A., & Nicolas, A. I. (2018). American Psychological Association Guidelines for Clinical Supervision: Competency-Based Implications for Supervisees. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *46*(7), 821–845.

Kapp, R., Badenhorst, E., Bangeni, B., Craig, T., Janse van Rensburg, V., Le Roux, K., Prince, R., Pym, J., & van Pletzen, E. (2014). Successful students' negotiation of township schooling in contemporary South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, *32*(3), 50–61.

Kaslow, N. J. (2004). Competencies in professional psychology. *American Psychologist*, *59*(8), 774–781.

Kaya, H. O., & Seleti, Y. N. (2013). African indigenous knowledge systems and relevance of higher education in South Africa. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, *12*(1), 30–44.

Kish, A. (2003). Managing culture shock: Supporting first-generation transitions to higher education. *The Vermont Connection*, *24*(2). https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol24/iss1/2

Klasen, S., & Woolard, I. (2009). Surviving unemployment without state support: Unemployment and household formation in South Africa. *Journal of African Economies*, *18*(1), 1–51.

Koen, C., Cele, M., & Libhaber, A. (2006). Student activism and student exclusions in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *26*(4), 404–414.

Korsmo, J. (2014). When schooling doesn't matter at home. *Educational Leadership*, *71*(9), 46–50.

Kottler, A., & Swartz, S. (2004). Rites of passage: Identity and the training of clinical psychologists in the current South African context. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *34*(1), 55–71.

Kroenig, M. (2020). *The return of great power rivalry: Democracy versus autocracy from the ancient world to the US and China*. Oxford University Press.

Kromydas, T. (2017). Rethinking higher education and its relationship with social inequalities: Past knowledge, present state and future potential. *Palgrave Communications*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-017-0001-8

Kuyken, W., Peters, E., Power, M. J., & Lavender, T. (2003). Trainee clinical psychologists' adaptation and professional functioning: A longitudinal study. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy: An International Journal of Theory & Practice*, *10*(1), 41–54.

LeDoux, J., Brown, R., Pine, D., & Hofmann, S. (2018, January). Know thyself: Well-being and subjective experience. *Cerebrum: The Dana forum on brain science*, cer-01-18. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30746034/

Leibowitz, B. (2005). Learning in an additional language in a multilingual society: A South African case study on university-level writing. *Tesol Quarterly*, *39*(4), 661–681.

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). *Social media and mobile Internet use among teens and young adults*. Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next. Pew Internet & American Life Project. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED525056.pdf

Letseka, M., & Maile, S. (2008). *High university drop-out rates: A threat to South Africa's future*. Human Sciences Research Council.

Leyva, V. L. (2011). First-generation Latina graduate students: Balancing professional identity development with traditional family roles. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *127*, 21–31.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1982). *Establishing dependability and confirmability in naturalistic inquiry through an audit*. Paper presented at the 66th annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, 19–23 March 1982. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED216019.pdf

Lindner, S., & Peters, E. (2014). How does unemployment affect family arrangements for children? *Urban Institute. Low Income Working Families Paper 29*. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/33816/413214-How-Does-Unemployment-Affect-Family-Arrangements-for-Children-.PDF

Liversage, L., Naudé, L., & Botha, A. (2018). Vectors of identity development during the first year: Black first-generation students' reflections. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *23*(1), 63–83.

Liu, L. (2021). *Adult learning theory*. https://opentext.wsu.edu/theoretical model for teaching and research/chapter/adult-learning-theory/

Lourens, A., &. Smit, I. P. J. (2003). Retention: Predicting first-year success. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *17*(2), 169–176.

Lombardi, A. R., Murray, C., & Gerdes, H. (2012). Academic performance of first-generation college students with disabilities. *Journal of College Student Development*, *53*(6), 811–826.

Lovitts, B. E., & Nelson, C. (2000). The hidden crisis in graduate education: Attrition from PhD programs. *Academe*, *86*(6), 44–50.

Lozano-Partida, A. (2018). *Barriers and successes first-generation students face in their path to higher education* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of California, San Diego. https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/7s75dc81s

MacKeracher, D., Suart, T., & Potter, J. (2006). *State of the field report: Barriers to participation in adult learning*. University of New Brunswick: Canadian Council of Learning.

Macleod, C. (2004). South African psychology and 'relevance': Continuing challenges. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *34*(4), 613–629. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F008124630403400407

Madadzhe, R. N. (2019). Using African languages at universities in South Africa: The struggle continues. *Stellenbosch papers in linguistics plus*, 58, 205–218.

Makola, S. (2014). Sense of meaning and study perseverance and completion: A brief report. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *24*(3), 285–287.

Makoni, S. B., & Severo, C. G. (2017). An integrationist perspective on African philosophy. In A. Pablé (ed.), *Critical humanist perspectives: The integrational turn in philosophy of language and communication* (pp. 63–76). Routledge.

Malau-Aduli, B. S., Roche, P., Adu, M., Jones, K., Alele, F., & Drovandi, A. (2020). Perceptions and processes influencing the transition of medical students from pre-clinical to clinical training. *BMC Medical Education*, *20*(1), 1–13.

Malikiosi-Loizos, M. (2013). Personal therapy for future therapists: Reflections on a still debated issue. *The European Journal of Counselling Psychology*, *2*, 33–50. http://dx.doi.org/10.5964/ejcop.v2i1.4

Mangayi, N. C. (2013). On becoming a psychologist in apartheid South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *43*(3), 278–288. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0081246313493597

Markle, G. (2015). Factors influencing persistence among nontraditional university students. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *65*(3), 267–285. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0741713615583085

Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, *13*, 522–525. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522

Maslow, A. H. (1965). Some basic propositions of a growth and self-actualization psychology. In G. Lindzey & L. Hall (eds.), *Theories of personality: Primary sources and research* (pp. 307–316). Wiley.

Massey, D. L., Charles, C., Lundy, Z., Garvey, F., & Fisher, M. J. (2003). *The source of the river: The social origin of freshmen at America's selective colleges and universities*. Princeton University Press.

Matshabane, O. P. (2016). *Exploring the influence of role models on the career development process of school-going adolescents from a low-income community in South Africa* [Doctoral dissertation]. Stellenbosch University.

Matthews, G. (2020). A grand challenge for personality and social psychology: Competition, cooperation, or co-existence? *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 1570. https://dx.doi.org/10.3389%2Ffpsyg.2020.01570

Mazer, J., & Thompson, B. (2017). The validity of the parental academic support scale: Associations among relational and family involvement outcomes. *International Journal of Quantitative Research in Education*, *4*(1/2), 120–132.

McKay, E., Ryan, S., & Sumsion, T. (2003). Three journeys towards reflexivity. In L. Finlay & B. Gough (eds), *Reflexivity: A practical guide for researchers in health and social sciences* (pp. 52–65). Blackwell.

McDonough, P. M. (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*. Suny Press.

Mdepa, W., & Tshiwula, L. (2012). Student diversity in South African higher education. *Widening Participation and Life Learning*, *13*, 19–33.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1991). *Learning in adulthood*. Jossey-Bass.

Mhambi, R., & Thobejane, K. R. (2012). *An exploration into the subjective emotional experiences of the Msc1-clinical psychology trainees at the University of Limpopo (Medunsa Campus) during their first block of training* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Limpopo (Medunsa Campus).

Mgqwashu, E. M. (2009). Re-visiting, re-thinking, and re-naming educational disadvantages in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *23*(4), 722–738.

Merritt, C. R. (2008). First-generation college students: Then and now. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, *6*(1), 45–51.

Mehta, S. S., Newbold, J. J., & O'Rourke, M. A. (2011). Why do first-generation students fail? *College Student Journal*, *45*(1), 20–36.

Meredith, E., & Baker, M. (2007). Factors associated with choosing a career in clinical psychology—undergraduate minority ethnic perspectives. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy: An International Journal of Theory & Practice*, *14*(6), 475–487.

Meyer, W., Moore, C., & Viljoen, H. G. (2013). *Personology from individual to ecosystem.* Heinemann.

Morrow, W. (2009). *Bounds of democracy: Epistemological access in higher education*. HSRC Press.

Mudaly, V., & Singh, K. (2018). Language: A barrier when teaching and learning business studies. *International Journal*, *74*(9/1), 56–71.

Mudhovozi, P. (2011). Analysis of perceived stress, coping resources and life satisfaction among students at a newly established institution of higher learning. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *25*(3), 510–522.

Munyoro, A. T., & Dube, N. (2021). Perceived factors that contribute to Black social work students' failure of courses at university level: A case study of 3rd year social work students at a South African university. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *31*(5), 564–581.

Offord, Y. (2016). *The subjective experiences of students who withdraw from a directed Master's programme in Psychology at a historically disadvantaged university: A case study* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of the Western Cape.

Potter, D., Jayne, D., & Britt, D. (2017). Financial anxiety of first-generation college students. *Consumer Interests Annual*, *63*. https://www.consumerinterests.org/assets/docs/CIA/CIA2017/cia%202017%20potter%20jayne%20britt%20op.pdf

Nagel, T. (2016). *The possibility of altruism*. Princeton University Press.

Nguyen, D. T., Wright, E. P., Dedding, C., Pham, T. T., & Bunders, J. (2019). Low self-esteem and its association with anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation in Vietnamese secondary school students: a cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *10*, 698. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2019.00698

Nichols, J. D., & Miller, R. B. (1994). Cooperative learning and student motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *19*(2), 167–178.

Nomdo, G. (2006). Identity, power and discourse: The socio-political self-representations of successful "black" students. In L. van Pletzen & E. Thesen (eds), *Academic literacy and the languages of change* (pp. 180–206). Continuum International Publishing.

O'Connell, B. (2011). *Celebrating 50 years of excellence*. Mail & Guardian. http://mg.co.za/article/2011-02-18-celebrating-50-years-of-excellence

Okeke, C. I. (2014). Effective home-school partnership: Some strategies to help strengthen parental involvement. *South African Journal of Education*, *34*(3), 1–9.

O'Shea, S. (2015). Arriving, surviving, and succeeding: First-in-family women and their experiences of transitioning into the first year of university. *Journal of College Student Development*, *56*(5), 499–517.

O'Shea, S. (2016). Avoiding the manufacture of 'sameness': First-in-family students, cultural capital and the higher education environment. *Higher Education*, *72*, 59–78.

Otu, M., & Mkhize, Z. (2018). Understanding Black African student attrition in the context of transformation in South African higher education institutions. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs, 5*(1), 149–171. https://doi.org/10.2307/26664056

Owen-Smith, M. (2010). The language challenge in the classroom: A serious shift in thinking and action is needed. *Focus*, *56*, 31–37.

Padgett, R. D., Johnson, M. P., & Pascarella, E. T. (2012). First-generation undergraduate students and the impacts of the first year of college: Additional evidence. *Journal of College Student Development*, *53*(2), 243–266.

Palloni, A., Massey, D. S., Ceballos, M., Espinosa, K., & Spittel, M. (2003). Social capital and international migration: A test using information on family networks. *American Journal of Sociology*, *106*(5), 1262–1298.

Panther, L., Allee-Herndon, K. A., Perrotta, K., & Cannon, S. (2021). I can tell you stories: Teacher education during educational disruption. *The Teacher Educator*, *56*(3), 327–345.

Pascarella, E., Pierson, C., Wolniak, G., & Terenzini, P. (2004). First-generation college students: Additional evidence on college experiences and outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *75*(3), 249–284.

Petty, T. (2014). Motivating first-generation students to academic success and college completion. *College Student Journal*, *48*(1), 133–140.

Pike, G. R., & Kuh, G. D. (2005). First- and second-generation college students: A comparison of their engagement and intellectual development. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *76*(3), 276–300.

Pillay, A. L. (2009). Apartheid and post-apartheid intern clinical psychology training in South Africa. *Psychological Reports*, *105*(3), 697–700. https://doi.org/10.2466%2FPR0.105.3.697-700

.Pillay, A. L., Ahmed, R., & Bawa, U. (2013). Clinical psychology training in South Africa: A call to action. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *43*, 46–58.

Pillay, A. L., & Kritzinger, A. M. (2007). The dissertation as a component in the training of clinical psychologists. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *37*(3), 638–655.

Pinxten, R. (2015). Worldview. In J. D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2nd edition). Elsevier.

Pitt, V., Powis, D., Levett-Jones, J. T., & Hunter, S. (2012). Factors influencing nursing students' academic and clinical performance and attrition: An integrative literature review. *Nurse Education Today*, *32*, 903–913. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2012.04.011

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2010). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice*. 7th edition. Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Polit, D., & Beck, C. T. (2014). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice*. 8th edition. Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Reay, D. (1996). Contextualising choice: Social power and parental involvement. *British Educational Research Journal*, *22*(5), 581–596.

Reed, A. J. (2016). *Community-based psychological first aid for emergency medical service providers: Mental health stigma, resilience, and social support* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of South Dakota.

Reed, M., Taruvinga, M. M., Ndofirepi, E., & Moosa, R. (2019). Insights gained from a comparison of South African and Canadian first-generation students: The impact of resilience and resourcefulness on higher education success. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *49*(6), 964–982.

Republic of South Africa. (1950). *Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950*. https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/pdf_files/leg19500707.028.020.030.pdf

Republic of South Africa. (2013). *Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013*. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/3706726-11act4of2013protectionofpersonalinforcorrect.pdf

Reynolds, M. M. (1986). *The self-direction and motivational orientations of adult part-time students at a community college* [Doctoral dissertation]. Syracuse University.

Rodrigues, T. (2002). *An exploration of students experiences during the selection process for the M.Psych degree (clinical, counselling and educational) at the University of the Western Cape* [Master's dissertation]. University of the Western Cape. http://hdl.handle.net/11394/2080

Rogers, C. R. (1965). The therapeutic relationship: Recent theory and research. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *17*(2), 95–108.

Rosner, K., Frazier, K., & Kennedy, A. (2015). Conceptualizing brotherhood and sisterhood: Does first-generation and or being the first Greek affiliating family member matter? *Research Methods in Student Affairs* (CNS 594). Paper 1. Western Kentucky University. https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=res_method_cns

Ruane, I. (2010). Obstacles to the utilisation of psychological resources in a South African township community. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *40*(2), 214–225.

Rubin, N. J., Leigh, I. W., Nelson, P. D., Leon Smith, I., Bebeau, M., Lichtenberg, J. W., Portnoy, S., & Kaslow, N. J. (2007). The competency movement within psychology: An historical perspective. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *38*(5), 452–462.

Ryan, R. M. (1995) Psychological needs and the facilitation of integrative processes. *Journal of Personality, 63*, 397–427.

Saenz, V. B., Hurtado, S., Barrera, D., Wolf, D., & Yeung, F. (2007). *First in my family: A profile of first-generation college students at four-year institutions since 1971*. Los Angeles, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

Salgado, H., Castañeda, S. F., Talavera, G. A., & Lindsay, S. P. (2012). The role of social support and acculturative stress in health-related quality of life among day laborers in Northern San Diego. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority health, 14*(3), 379–385.

Sanchez-Famoso, V., Maseda, A., & Iturralde, T. (2017). Family involvement in top management teams: Impact on relationships between internal social capital and innovation. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *23*(1), 136–162.

Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social research*. 4th edition. Palgrave MacMillan.

Schargel, F., & Smink, J. (2013). *Helping students graduate: A strategic approach to dropout prevention*. Routledge.

Schelbe, L., Becker, M. S., Spinelli, C., & McCray, D. (2019). First-generation college students' perceptions of an academic retention program. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *19*(5), 61–76.

Schwarz, N., Bless, H., Strack, F., Klumpp, G., Rittenauer-Schatka, H., & Simons, A. (1991). Ease of retrieval as information: Another look at the availability heuristic. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *61*(2), 195.

Scott, T. L., Pachana, N. A., & Sofronoff, K. (2011). Survey of current curriculum practices within Australian postgraduate clinical training programmes: Students' and programme directors' perspectives. *Australian Psychologist*, *46*(2), 77–89.

Sedumedi, S. D. (2002). Students' perceptions and expectations of a first-year psychology course at the University of the North. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *16*(3), 167–176.

Senekal, J. (2018). *Employment and employability profiles of postgraduate psychology alumni from a historically disadvantaged university* [Master's dissertation]. University of the Western Cape.

Sennett, J., Finchilescu, G., Gibson, K., & Strauss, R. (2003). Adjustment of black students at a historically white South African university. *Educational Psychology*, *23*(1), 107–116.

Simon, F., Pauline, M., & José-Luis, Á. G. (2014). *OECD reviews of vocational education and training: A skills beyond school review of South Africa*. OECD Publishing.

Slavich, G. M., & Irwin, M. R. (2014). From stress to inflammation and major depressive disorder: A social signal transduction theory of depression. *Psychological Bulletin*, *140*(3), 774.

Sofaer, S. (1999). Qualitative methods: What are they and why? *Health Services Research*, *34*, 1101–1118.

Soria, K. M., & Stebleton, M. J. (2012). First-generation students' academic engagement and retention. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *17*(6), 673–685.

South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE). (2010). *Focusing the student experience on success through student engagement*. Council on Higher Education.

https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider42/sasse-documents/publications-documents/focusing-the-student-experience-on-success-through-student-engagement-92-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=8a60c921_0

Spengen, A. E. (2013). The experiences of first-generation university students. *Sociological Imagination: Western's Undergraduate Sociology Student Journal, 32*. https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/sociologypub/32?utm_source=ir.lib.uwo.ca%2Fsociologypub%2F32&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

Stedmon, J., & Dallos, R. (2009). *Reflective practice in psychotherapy and counselling*. McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

Streubert, H. J., & Carpenter, D. R. (2011). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative*. Wolters Kluwer.

Stebbins, R. A. (2001). *Exploratory research in the social sciences*. Sage.

Stebleton, M. J., Soria, K. M., & Huesman Jr, R. L. (2014). First-generation students' sense of belonging, mental health, and use of counseling services at public research universities. *Journal of College Counseling*, *17*(1), 6–20.

Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. (2014). Closing the social-class achievement gap: A difference-education intervention improves first-generation students' academic performance and all students' college transition. *Psychological Science*, *25*(4), 943–953.

Stevens, G. (2003). Academic representations of 'race' and racism in psychology: Knowledge production, historical context and dialectics in transitional South Africa. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *27*(2), 189–207.

Strydom, F. (Ed.). (2017). *Engaging students: Using evidence to promote student success*. African Sun Media.

Strydom, F., Kuh, G., & Mentz, M. (2010). Enhancing success in South Africa's higher education: Measuring student engagement. *Acta Academica*, *42*(1), 259–278.

Suffla, S., & Seedat, M. (2004). How has psychology fared over ten years of democracy? Achievements, challenges and questions. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *34*(4), 513–519. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630403400401

Suhre, C. J., Jansen, E. P., & Harskamp, E. G. (2007). Impact of degree program satisfaction on the persistence of college students. *Higher Education*, *54*(2), 207–226.

Supiano, B. (2014, October 9). When is a student 'first-generation'? Words fail us. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/when-is-a-student-first-generation-words-fail-us/

Tate, K. A., Caperton, W., & Kaiser, D. (2015). An exploration of first-generation college students' career development beliefs and experiences. *Journal of Career Development*, *42*(4), 294–310. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0894845314565025

Theron, L. C., & Theron, A. M. C. (2010). A critical review of studies of South African youth resilience, 1990–2008. *South African Journal of Science*, *106*(7–8), 1–8. http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0038-23532010000400007&lng=en&tlng=e

Thorpe, K. (2004). Reflective learning journals: From concept to practice. *Reflective Practice*, *5*, 328–343. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1462394042000270655

Timmey, M., & Chapman, V. (2012). *Career counselling first-generation students at a South African university: Reflections on challenges and successes*. Career Convergence Web Magazine. https://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/67158/_PARENT/CC_layout_details/falsehttps://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/67158/_PARENT/CC_layout_details/false

Tinto, V. (1997). Classrooms as communities: Exploring the educational character of student persistence. *Journal of Higher Education*, *68*(6), 599–623.

Tinto, V. (2000). Taking retention seriously: Rethinking the first year of college. *NACADA Journal*, 19(2), 5–10.

Tinto, V. (2006). Research and practice of student retention: What next? *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *8*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.2190%2F4YNU-4TMB-22DJ-AN4W

Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2015). Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *19*(3), 254–269. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1521025115621917

Tinto, V. (2017). Reflections on student persistence. *Student Success*, *8*(2), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.v8i2.376

Tracey, M. D. (2005). Enhancing diversity in APA. *APA Monitor*, *56*(10), 66-67.

Tran, N. A., Behseta, S., Ellis, M., Martinez-Cruz, A., & Contreras, J. (2015). The Effects of Spanish English Dual Language Immersion on Student Achievement in Science and

Mathematics. *EJEP: EJournal of Education Policy*. 2015 special issue. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1158168.pdf

Trevino, N. N., & DeFreitas, S. C. (2014). The relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement for first-generation Latino college students. *Social Psychology of Education*, *17*(2), 293–306.

Tshotsho, B. P. (2013). Mother tongue debate and language policy in South Africa. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *3*(13), 39–44.

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work, 11*(1), 80–96.

Quinn, J., Thomas, L., Slack, K., Casey, L., Thexton, W., & Noble, J. (2005). From life crisis to lifelong learning. *Re-thinking working class 'drop out' from higher education*.

UKEssays. (November 2018). *Barriers to adult learners*. https://www.ukessays.com/essays/education/barriers-to-adult-learners.php?vref=1

University of the Western Cape [UWC]. (2004) *Policy on research ethics*. UWC. https://www.uwc.ac.za/Research/Documents/UWC

University of the Western Cape [UWC]. (2009). *Research policy of the University of the Western Cape*. UWC. https://www.tto.uwc.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/UWC-Research-Policy.pdf

University of the Western Cape [UWC]. (2013a). *Welcome to UWC History*. UWC. https://www.uwc.ac.za/Pages/History.aspx

University of the Western Cape [UWC]. (2013b). *UWC Faculties*. UWC. https://www.uwc.ac.za/Faculties/Pages/default.aspx

University of the Western Cape [UWC]. (2015). *Research policy of the University of Western Cape*. UWC. http://www.tto.uwc.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/UWC-Research-Policy.pdf

University of the Western Cape [UWC]. (2018). *Annual Report*. UWC. https://www.uwc.ac.za/files/files/UWC-2018-Annual-Report.pdf

Vincent, L., & Hlatshwayo, M. (2018). Ties that bind: The ambiguous role played by social capital in black working class first-generation South African students' negotiation of university life. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(3), 118–138.

Volsky Jr, T., Magoon, T. M., Norman, W. T., & Hoyt, D. P. (1965). *The outcomes of counseling and psychotherapy*. University of Minnesota Press.

Vuyiseka, L. (2019). *Factors contributing to poor academic performance faced by students, at a selected department rural university, Limpopo province* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Venda.

Wahass, S. (2005). The role of psychologists in health care delivery. *Journal of Family and Community Medicine*, *12*(2), 63–70.

Ward, L., Siegel, M. J., & Davenport, Z. (2012). *First generation college students: Understanding and improving the experience from recruitment to commencement*. Jossey-Bass.

Waxman, H. C, Gray, J. P, & Padron, Y. N. (2003). *Review of research on educational resilience*. UC Berkeley: Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7x695885

Weimer, M. (2012). *Five characteristics of learner-centered teaching*. Faculty Focus.

Weiner, B. (1986). *An attributional theory of motivation and emotion*. Springer.

West, A. (2012). Formative evaluation of the transition to postgraduate study for counselling and psychotherapy training: Students' perceptions of assignments and academic writing. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 12*(2), 128–135.

Wilbur, T. G., & Roscigno, V. J. (2016). First-generation disadvantage and college enrollment/completion. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, *2*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023116664351

Wilkins, A. C. (2014). Race, age, and identity transformations in the transition from high school to college for Black and first-generation White men. *Sociology of Education*, *87*(3), 171–187.

Willcoxson, L., Cotter, J., & Joy, S. (2011). Beyond the first-year experience: The impact on attrition of student experiences throughout undergraduate degree studies in six diverse universities. *Studies in Higher Education*, *36*(3), 331–352.

Wohn, D. Y., Ellison, N. B., Khan, M. L., Fewins-Bliss, R., & Gray, R. (2013). The role of social media in shaping first-generation high school students' college aspirations: A social capital lens. *Computers & Education*, *63*, 424–436.

Zulu, C. (2008). An exploratory study of first year students at historically black university campus in South Africa: Their academic experiences, success and failure. *Africa Education Review*, *5*(1), 30–47.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

60 YEARS of hope, action & knowledge

17 August 2020

Ms C Sipika
Psychology
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Ethics Reference Number: HS19/4/1

Project Title: A qualitative study of the barriers and facilitators to academic success among first-generation students.

Approval Period: 30 July 2020 – 30 July 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

Director: Research Development
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X 17
Bellville 7535
Republic of South Africa
Tel: +27 21 959 4111
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

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

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

Name of Researcher
CLEOPATRA SIPIKA

Research topic
A qualitative study on barriers and facilitators of success among first-generation student

Period permission is valid for
20 August 2020 – 30 July 2023
(or as determined by the validity of your ethics approval)

Reference code
UWCRP200820CS

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

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

Yours sincerely

DR AHMED SHAIKJEE
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

UWC
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION
20 AUGUST 2020
This document contains a qualified electronic signature and date stamp. To verify this document contact the University of the Western Cape at **researchperm@uwc.ac.za**.

ANNEXURE

CONDITIONS TO GUIDE RESEARCH CONDUCTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

The onus rests on the researcher/investigator to observe and comply with the conditions set out below with the aim to conduct responsibly ethical research. Clarity must be sought from the authorising office should the interpretation of the conditions be unclear.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. GOVERNANCE

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

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

3. ACQUIRING CONSENT & RIGHTS OF PARTICIPANTS

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

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

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

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

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

ANNEXURE AGREEMENT

Conditions to guide research conducted at the University of the Western Cape

4. DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
4.1. Due diligence must be afforded by the researcher/investigator to: 4.1.1. Mitigate any risks that could compromise the privacy of participants before 4.1.2. during and after the research is conducted; 4.1.3. Collect only information that is relevant to the aim of the research; 4.1.4. Verify all personal information collected about a participant if the information is supplied by a source other than the participant; 4.1.5. Refrain from sharing participant information with a third party; 4.1.6. Apply for an exemption if the identity of participants should be revealed in the interest of the research aims. 4.2. The researcher/investigator must employ appropriate, reasonable and technical measures to protect, prevent loss of and unlawful or unauthorised access of research information.

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

ashaikjee@uwc.ac.za, or researchperm@uwc.ac.za

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET

Date: 02 August 2020

Subject: Invitation to participate in a qualitative study relating to your experiences as a first-generation MPsych (clinical) student.

Dear MPsych (clinical) Graduate / Student

You are hereby kindly invited to participate in an individual online qualitative interview which forms part of my thesis for my MPsych (clinical) degree course. The research will be conducted by myself, Cleopatra Sipika (MPsych (clinical) student), under supervision of Mariska Pienaar and Dr Leigh Adams- Tucker. The study seeks to understand more about your experiences as a first-generation student in the MPsych (clinical) programme. As such, I am looking to interview both recent MPsych (clinical) graduates and current MPsych (clinical) students. The interview will focus on your experiences in terms of both the challenges and the factors which you believe facilitated your success in the programme as well as your success in your prior studies which brought you to the point of being able to enter the MPsych (clinical) programme.

Please note that to be the part of the study you should meet the following criteria. (i) Be registered or previously registered in the MPsych (clinical) programme at UWC. (ii) Meet first-generation status - a first-generation student is defined as a student who comes from a family or background where neither a parent nor guardian has a tertiary qualification from a college, university of technology or university. The interview will last approximately 40-50 minutes. The interview will be conducted online with camera and audio recording for transcription

purposes using an online meeting platform (eg Skype, Google Meet, MS Teams, etc.) that suits you and at a time that is convenient to you.

Your identifying information and any other names mentioned will be kept confidential and the data obtained will be stored securely Your lecturers will not see your specific responses. Only the major themes that emerge from the interview will be used to describe experiences and thoughts that come out of the interview.

The researcher anticipates that with your participation, you may help to inform the design of interventions that would promote success of first-generation students in advanced health professions training programmes.

I would truly appreciate your participation. If you are interested in participating, please send me an e-mail and from there we can arrange a day and time for the interview.

Attached is the letter of permission from the Office of the Registrar for this study to be conducted. The study has already received ethics clearance from HSSREC (ethics clearance letter is also attached), reference number: UWCRP200820CS

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa
Tel: +27 21-959 2838, Fax: 27 21-959 3515
E-mail: 9918028@myuwc.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: *A qualitative study on barriers and facilitators to academic success among M Psych first-generation students*.

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

Participant's name _____

Participant's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRO:

- Thank participant again for their willingness to participate
- Tell them a bit about myself
- Tell them how the interview will work
- Emphasize there are no right/wrong answers

---

1. Can you tell me what you understand about the term first-generation student? (depending on participant's answer, ensure that they understand what the terms means before continuing the interview).

2. Can you remember what first motivated you to go to university?

(I) PRE-MPSYCH (CLINICAL) UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

3. What was it like being the first person in your family to go to university?
   - What was challenging?
   - How would you describe the support you received?
   - How would you describe your family's understanding of what you were experiencing at university?
   - How would you describe your family's knowledge of what it is like being at university?

- Level of family responsibilities while studying

4. When you think back to the start of your studies, how did you experience university?
    - In terms of:
        - ✓ Academics
        - ✓ Social support
        - ✓ Understanding of the university system
        - ✓ Involvement in extra-curricular activities
        - ✓ Challenges?
        - ✓ Supportive factors

5. When you think back to the rest of your studies at university prior to doing MPsych (clinical), how did you experience university?
    - In terms of:
        - ✓ Academics
        - ✓ Social support
        - ✓ Understanding of the university system
        - ✓ Involvement in extra-curricular activities
        - ✓ Challenges?
        - ✓ Supportive factors

6. What was your financial situation like during your pre-MPsych (clinical) studies?
    - How did you experience this situation (whatever participant answered)
    - How did it affect your studies (if at all)?
    - Needed to work to earn an income during the studies?

- IF YES, how did this affect you and your studies?

7. As a first-generation student, do you think that your experience of university was/is different from non-first-generation students?
    - Can you describe what you think is/was different?
    - (If participant mentions challenges) – How do you think these challenges affect(ed) you and your studies?

8. Is there anything else you would like to mention in terms of your experience of your pre-MPsych (clinical) studies as a first-generation student?

(II) MPSYCH (CLINICAL) UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

9. When and how did you come to decide that you wanted to do advanced studies in Psychology and become a psychologist?

10. You are a first-generation student who has reached great success in your studies to have been able to be selected for the MPsych (clinical) programme. What factors do you think have contributed to this success?
    - E.g., social support factors (family, friends, mentors, therapy, lecturers, etc)
    - Motivation
    - Financial assistance
    - Any other factors

11. Were there any factors that you felt made it challenging to reach this stage of your studies?
    - If so, what were these factors eg. In terms of:
        - ✓ social support
        - ✓ finances
        - ✓ family responsibilities

12. What was/is your experience of the MPsych (clinical) course?
    - In terms of academics
    - In terms of clinical work
    - Challenges
    - Supportive factors
    - Social support
    - Family life
    - Finances

13. How would you describe your feeling of confidence in your own academic and clinical abilities during your MPsych (clinical) studies?

14. How – if at all – were your close relationships affected by your MPsych (clinical) studies?

15. What – if at all – was the nature of your involvement in extra-curricular campus activities during your MPsych (clinical) studies?

16. Being an MPsych (clinical) graduate / current student, how do you feel about your future career prospects?

17. If post-M1, where are you currently in terms of your MPsych (clinical) training?
    - Internship?
    - Community service year?
    - Thesis progress?

18. (If qualified psychologist), what are you currently doing in terms of work?

CLOSING:

- We have come to the end of the interview. Is there anything else whatsoever that you would like to mention or like to add before we conclude the interview?
- Is there anything that you would like to ask at this point?
- Would you like to receive an electronic copy of my thesis once it is completed?
- Thank you once again for your participation, I really appreciate your time and valuable input.