

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Title: The perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff.

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
PLAGIARISM DECLARATION.....	5
.....	5
ABSTRACT.....	6
CHAPTER ONE	7
INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Problem Statement	9
1.3 Rationale	10
1.4 Research Aim.....	11
1.5 Objectives	11
1.6 Research questions:.....	11
1.7 Theoretical framework:.....	12
CHAPTER TWO	15
LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1 History of psychometric testing in South Africa.	16
2.2 Professional training in psychometric assessment.....	18
2.3 Professional degree programme in Psychology.....	20
2.4 Core competencies for clinical psychologists and Psychological Assessment.....	22
2.5 Regulatory and statutory Higher Education bodies in south Africa	23
2.6 Health professions council of SA	25
2.7 Attitudes and perceptions of Psychometric Assessment.....	25
2.8 Covid-19 Pandemic.....	26
CHAPTER THREE	28
METHODOLOGY	28
3.1. Research Aim.....	28
3.2. Objectives	28
3.3. Research Design:	28
3.4. Research Setting:	29
3.5. Target group:.....	30
3.6. Sampling:	30
3.7. Data Collection:	31
3.8. Data Analysis:	32
3.9. Reflexivity & trustworthiness:.....	35
3.10. Ethics considerations:	36
CHAPTER 4	38

RESULTS	38
4.1 Category 1: Reasons for enrolment.....	38
4.2 Category 2: Expectation of the programme	43
4.3 Category 3: Psychometric assessment	47
CHAPTER 5	57
DISCUSSION	57
5.1 Summary overview	57
5.2 Discussion	57
5.3. Conclusion	70
5.4 Limitations	71
5.5. Recommendations.....	72
5.6 Significance of the study.....	72
5.7 Reference List	73
Appendix A.....	82
Appendix B	83
Appendix C	84
Appendix D.....	87
Appendix E	88
Appendix F.....	91



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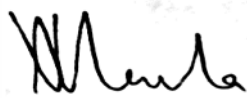
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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

Name: Vunene Mabunda

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to explore the perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff. Clinical training for Psychologists has competence in psychological assessment as an outcome. As such, first year clinical psychology (M1) students are required to complete practical training in psychological assessment. It has been consistently reported though that upon reaching their clinical internship, students do not have adequate experience in psychological assessment with many not possessing the basic skills required to conduct the necessary types of assessment at their internship sites. The present study was conducted in the Psychology department at the University of the Western Cape. The sample included four members of the training staff and three first year clinical masters' students. A Semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The data was analysed using a thematic analysis. Ethics clearance and project registration was given by the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape. Permission to conduct the study at UWC was given by the Registrar. Participation was voluntary and could be terminated at any time without fear of negative consequence or loss of perceived benefits. All relevant ethical principles were applied.

The findings highlighted several factors that influenced the students' experience and perception of psychological assessment training. The results illustrated that there is a complex set of experiences prior to enrolment that impact the stance towards the content and process of training. Students were found to have negative attitude toward the psychometric module which then influences their engagement to the programme. Particularly, the students had to adjust and manage their experience of the programme. The department of Psychology had developed systems for mentorship and additional support, as well as formalized psychometric supervision for the psychology students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: Psychological assessment is defined by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as a process-oriented activity aimed at gathering a wide array of information by using assessment measures (tests) and information from many other sources such as, interviews, a person's history, and collateral sources (HPCSA, 2014). According to Weiner (2012) preparation in assessment was not an issue in the formative years of clinical psychology and was largely what defined the field. During the 20th century, however, psychologists began moving away from assessment into new roles as therapists or consultants which led to a decrease in the role assessment played in the services provided by clinical psychologists (Reisman, 1991).

Psychological assessment in South Africa cannot be separated from the political, economic, or social history of the country (Claasen, 1997). Psychological assessment in present-day South Africa remains highly controversial due to the biased and indiscriminate manner in which tests were used during apartheid (Laher & Cockroft, 2014). The earliest documented usage of psychological assessment in South Africa is 1915 and from this date until approximately 1952, was used mainly to justify the oppression of black South Africans (Seedat & Mackenzie, 2008). In 1974 the Professional Board for Psychology was established and served to regulate minimum training requirements and standards for registration as a professional psychologist, according to the Health Professions Act (Seedat & Mackenzie, 2008). The final development that influenced psychological assessment during the apartheid years was the formation of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) which provided a unified organisation for the promotion of psychology as a discipline and included a division on psychometrics (Laher & Cockroft, 2014).

Internationally, since the early 1990's, there has been a steady production of research pertaining to the training of students in psychological assessment (Callahan, 2015; Childs & Eyde, 2002; Clemence & Handler, 2001; Kinder, 1994; Krishnamurthy et al., 2004; Ready & Heather, 2014; Weiner, 2012). While knowledge can be gained from international studies, Bartram (2001) asserted that psychological assessment competencies should be understood as contextually specific as these tests are used within specific cultural and social contexts.

Research on psychological assessment in South Africa, slowed down somewhat following the end of apartheid and then saw a resurgence again from 2004 as evidenced by the publication of textbooks (e.g., Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013; Kalisky, 2006; Moerdyk, 2009). Similarly, Laher and Cockcroft (2014) reported that local research started featuring more prominently in local and international journals. Limited research was conducted on training of M1 students in psychological assessment in South Africa (Grieve & Smith, 2006; Zygmunt & Smith, 2005). The focus on research in psychometrics shifted to test construction rather than training post 2006 (Zygmunt. & Smith, 2014).

The HPCSA states that, in terms of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974), they are mandated to set the minimum standards of education and training to ensure that the interests of the public are protected. Clinical training for Psychologists has competence in psychological assessment as an outcome (HPCSA, 2008). As such, first year clinical psychology (M1) students are required to complete practical training in psychological assessment (HPCSA, 2008). The HPCSA provides guidelines regarding the types of psychological assessment in which an M1 student should be trained, but decisions regarding the precise nature of the cases given to students is to be determined by the relevant university or training institution (HPCSA, 2008). As mentioned before, students do not have adequate experience in psychological assessment upon reaching their clinical internship (Clemence & Handler, 2001). Literature indicated that many interns did not possess the basic skills required

to conduct the necessary types of assessment at their internship sites (Krishnamurthy et al., 2004; Ready & Heather, 2014; Stedman, Hatch & Schoenfeld, 2001). Findings suggest that there may be a disconnect between what clinical psychology students learn about assessment and what they need to know to engage in the clinical practice thereof (Hunsley, 2007).

1.2 Problem Statement: In South Africa any form of psychological assessment is controlled within an extensive regulatory-legal framework. The Health Professions Act (Health Professions Act, No. 56 of 1974) regulates the conduct of all health professionals through the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The Board for Psychology on its part prescribes general rules and ethical guidelines that are binding upon all psychologists (Health Professions Act, No. 56 of 1974, Notice R717 of 2006). These general rules and guidelines refer to overarching ethic principles, such as respect for human rights and the notion of ‘creating no harm’. Although the use of psychological assessment activities is addressed in considerable detail, competencies in psychometric assessment and training therein have been identified as a concern. In South Africa, there is literature on various aspects of M1 training such as post-apartheid transformation of clinical master’s Courses (Pillay, Ahmed & Bawa, 2013), challenges in clinical training (Kamaloodien et al, 2012; Smith et al, 2012), thesis completion (Senekal, 2014) and self-termination (Offord, 2016). There is, however, limited research regarding training in psychological assessment. There was a need, therefore, to examine various aspects of psychological assessment training in clinical master’s programmes in South Africa.

In today’s ever-changing and highly competitive world of work, the success or failure of any business strongly depends on the caliber of its personnel (Aguinis, Joo & Gottfredson, 2011) The downfall of an organization is often caused by employee incompetence (Elias, 2013). Therefore, practitioners need to be adequately trained beyond the imperative to comply

with regulations and laws, from a professional and ethical point of view. The nature of M1 assessment training and the extent to which these prepare students for internship and practice also remain a focus of further research. Similarly, attitudes and perceptions towards psychological assessment amongst student psychologists must be explored. Therefore, the proposed study aimed to explore the perceptions towards psychological assessment in a historically disadvantaged institution in South Africa. Training contexts differ across institutions and the perceptions of psychometric assessment training is informed by the context of the institution and the training programme. Therefore, this type of research is recommended to be undertaken at an institutional level, as a result the study mainly explored on assessment training conducted at University of Western Cape.

1.3 Rationale: Psychological assessment is a clinical competence that is unique to the scope of practice for psychologists (HPCSA, 2017). Many registered psychologists or independent practitioners avoid psychometric assessment or have negative attitudes towards it (Department of Health, 2013). Similarly, competencies in psychometric assessment and training therein have been identified as a concern as some students are not adequately prepared for internship resulting in extensions or terminations (Department of Health, 2013). Senekal and Smith (2021) reported that alumni from clinical programmes identified psychometric training as a skill in which they required further training. The study will attempt to address the lack of research in psychological assessment. Gaining insight into the perceptions of psychometric assessment and the adequacy of training will assist with identifying attitudinal barriers of students and staff involved with psychometric training. This in turn could inform planning and intervention at a curricular level that can enhance the training provided. This study was aligned with the spirit of the National Development Plan 2030 that advocates the provisioning of highly trained professional staff (Ministry of Education, 2001). An exploration of possible attitudinal barriers to psychological assessment could prevent reputational harm for

the institution as it will assist in ensuring that graduates have less biased attitudes to psychological assessment that is a core competency of the profession (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004).

1.4 Research Aim: The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff at the Department of Psychology at the University of Western Cape.

1.5 Objectives

- To explore the students' perceptions of the
 - Role of psychometric assessment in clinical services.
 - Relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum.
 - Perceived relevance of psychometric assessment.
 - Extent to which the course prepares them for the professional realities.
- To explore students' perceptions of the
 - Taught modules.
 - Supervision.
 - Service-learning requirements.
- To explore staff perceptions of
 - Students' attitude towards psychometric assessment.
 - Student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment.
 - Students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment.
 - Student's preparedness for the module.

1.6 Research questions:

- Student perceptions

- What were your reasons for enrolling in M1 programme in Psychology?
- What were your expectations of the programme?
- To what extent were your expectations met?
- What was your experience of this programme?
- What is the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services?
- What is the relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum?
- What is the perceived relevance of psychometric assessment?
- To what extent did course prepare you for the professional realities?
- What were your perception in terms of the taught modules, supervision and service-learning requirements?
- Staff perceptions
 - What are the students' attitudes towards psychometric assessment?
 - What are your perceptions about student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment?
 - What are your perceptions about students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment?
 - How prepared are students for the module?

1.7 Theoretical framework:

The theoretical framework adopted for this study was social constructivism. Social constructivism theory expresses that language and culture are the structures through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality (Akpan, Igwe, Mpamah, Okoro, 2020). Meaning that learning concepts are communicated by means of language, interpreted

and understood by experience and interactions within a cultural setting. The student participants indicated several factors from prior enrolment and during enrolment that influenced their experiences and attitude towards the programme. The students' subjective experiences were guided by their social, cultural, and historical context. According to Holstein & Miller (2007) people's understandings are historically and culturally specific. This suggests that our perceptions are established in specific situations and this setting is in every case socially and generally affected. We are completely impacted by our current circumstance or society. Social constructivism emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning under the guidance of a facilitator or in collaboration with other students (Akpan, Igwe, Mpamah, Okoro, 2020). Teaching methods are a basic art and science guiding the management and strategies used for lesson delivery in the classroom. Dorgu (2015) defines teaching method as a strategy by which a teacher delivers his/her subject matter to the learner based on predetermined instructional objectives to promote learning in the students. The present study attempts to gain insight into the perceptions of psychometric assessment and the adequacy of training and identifying attitudinal barriers of students and staff involved with psychometric training.

Social Constructivism acknowledges the social aspect of learning and the use of conversation, interaction with others, and the application of knowledge as an essential aspect of learning and a means to achieving learning objectives (Akpan, Igwe, Mpamah, Okoro, 2020). The researcher used these principles whilst conducting and analysing the interviews transcriptions. Students experience about their assessment and awareness of different values and attitudes towards assessment was observed during interaction through supervision and during training. Social constructionism was appropriate for this study since the study was to explore the participants subjective experiences towards psychometric assessment. This theory was ideal in framing and exploring the perception of master's students and training staff and their experiences of psychometric assessment. It offered a unique approach in seeking to attain

reflexivity (which is necessary in any research study), students and staff experience can only be understood through research and assessment. Social constructionism emphasises meaning attached to an individual's perspective of reality. This theoretical framework allowed the researcher to gain subjective insight into the participants perspective and experience of psychometric assessment. Through this framework the researcher become aware of all the processes involved when working with people and their individual experiences.

1.8 Thesis layout

This master's thesis consists of five distinct chapters. Each chapter has a specific focus and objective. The titles of the five chapters are: (1) Introduction; Chapter One introduced the topic of the thesis to the reader and critically established the statement of the problem and research questions, (2) Literature review; Chapter Two introduced the reader to the research literature related to the topic and identifies the most relevant and significant research, (3) Methodology; Chapter Three explained the research methods and design that were used to conduct the study,(4) Results; Chapter Four reported the results of the study and presented the findings from the data collection process, and (5) Discussion; Chapter Five, discussed the results from Chapter Four and drew conclusions about the study's findings. The style form developed by the American Psychological Association 6th edition (referred to as APA 6 style) was selected for this master's thesis as it is the University of Western Cape Psychology department style form requirement. The page margins used in this thesis was 3cm margins top and bottom and on the right-hand side, and (about) a 4cm margin on the left-hand side (to allow space for binding). Double line spacing was applied. The Font used was 12-point Times Roman is the norm for the text. Every new paragraph was ½ inches indented. I also made use of different font sizes to indicate a hierarchy of headings, with a bigger font for chapter headings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review identified the body of literature reporting on professional training with a specific emphasis on psychometric assessment. According to HPCSA (2019) “South Africa’s complex and controversial political history has resulted in trends in psychometric testing and training which is imbued with discriminatory practices” (p.2). Based on this reality, there is a need to train students on psychological tests that are applicable to the South African population. Part of the answer for this, is to return to test determination and manners by which psychometrics are being instructed at universities. This comes considering the fact that due to the limited number of South African measures, university departments that offer training in psychology and psychometrics select to train students on international measures (HPCSA ,2019). While these measures may have sound reliability and validity, it is important to be sensitive and conscious of the cultural appropriateness and contextual realities of the individual. According to HPCSA (2019) The training of psychometric assessment ought to go past administrating and scoring of tests, yet ought to envelop strong psychometric and context-oriented information to give an evaluation practice that is liberated from bias. Student should be empowered to administer tests that are appropriate for a given population, this can be achieved through fostering a sense of cultural competence alongside a strong psychometric knowledge base (HPCSA, 2019). The following study only covered a small body of literature on psychometric assessment. The study only examined the perceptions of the psychological assessment component of the course.

2.1 History of psychometric testing in South Africa.

Psychological assessment in South Africa, has a long and troubled history. Claassen (1997) as cited in Laher & Cockcroft (2013) argues that it was through Britain that psychological testing came to South Africa through, and these tests were developed in a context of unequal distribution of resources because of apartheid policies. Similarly, Nzimande (1995) reported that, the practice of assessment was merely used to justify the exploitation of the South African black labour and to deny them access to education and economic resources.

During apartheid, job reservation policy that ensured employment for whites was put in place, and psychometric assessment was misused to support this policy, promoting the superiority of the white intellect over the black intellect (Laher & Cockcroft, 2013). Nzimande (1995) mentioned that this practice resulted in a general mistrust of psychometric testing amongst the black population in South Africa.

According to Laher & Cockcroft (2013) Fick conducted research on black children using the Army Beta Test, which was standardised for use on white children. Fick (1929) published the results of his ethnic study of intelligence and discovered that there was a significant discrepancy between Black and White students. Black children tended to perform poorly on intelligence assessments than their White children. Fick (1929) proposed environmental, cultural, educational, and social reasons for this discrepancy (he did not, as Brigham did, attribute it to inherent racial differences). the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education (1936) reported on the irregular assessment practice of using a test normed on white people to assess black individuals.

Laher & Cockcroft (2013) reflected that aptitude measures were developed to place individuals in occupations during World War II (1939–1945), resulting in the rise of psychometric institutions such as the Personnel Research Section (PRS) of the Leather Industries Research Institute (LIRI) at Rhodes University (1941) lead by Isobel White and the

Aptitude Test Section (ATS) of the South African Air Force (SAAF) (1941) commanded by Simon Biesheuvel. These two institutions developed test batteries and added immensely to the professionalisation of psychology in South Africa (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2008). In 1943, Simon Biesheuvel entered the debate on 'African intelligence'. He found that environmental variables such as education, poverty, culture, and language play a large role in the score differences between Black and White South Africans (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2008). His view directly opposed that of Fick and Brigham. During the 1940s, the National Institute of Personnel Research (NIPR) was formed within the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in the 1940s (Laher & Cockcroft 2014). The NIPR was acknowledged for its pioneering work in organizational assessment with a specific focus on the African worker's aptitude for industrial work (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014). According Foxcroft & Roodt (2013) Simon Biesheuvel led the NIPR, and he was recognized for introducing the idea of adaptability testing to South Africa with the development of the General Adaptability Test Battery (GATB). The GATB was "innovative in developing procedures such as the silent-film technique that used mime to convey test instructions" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2004).

Laher and Cockcroft (2013) noted that the NIPR and the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research developed and adapted numerous assessments between the 1960's and 1990's. This included the South African Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (SAWAIS), General Scholastic Aptitude Test (GSAT), the Ability, Processing of Information, and Learning Battery (APIL-B) and the Senior South African Individual Scale – Revised (SSAIS-R) (Laher & Cockcroft, 2013). Laher and Cockcroft (2014) argue that the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research were incorporated into the new Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1984. They mentioned that the HSRC became the only psychological test provider/distributor in South Africa until the 1990s.

The mandate of the HSRC started to change in 1994, the organisation became more focused on redressing equity issues in South African society Africans (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2008). In 2003, the HSRC handed over their role as test distributor and set up a tender process for private organisations to distribute their psychological tests Africans ((Foxcroft & Roodt, 2008). Abrahams (2001) argues that “the changing socio-political climate of the 1980s, beginning with the repeal of discriminatory ‘petty apartheid’ laws, forced the HSRC to change previous assessment and testing practices”.

According to Laher and Cockcroft (2014) after 2003, several new assessments emerged, and were introduced into the market by various test publishers, this included the Locus of Control Inventory (Scheppers, 1999), Learning Potential Computerised Adaptive Test (De Beer, 2005), Cognitive Process Profile (Prinsloo, 1995), Career Interest Profile (Maree, 2010), and the Basic Traits Inventory (Taylor & De Bruin, 2006). All these assessments were locally developed and acknowledged the South African context in their development (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014)

The use of psychological testing is still controversial in South Africa (Foxcroft, 2011). Its critics believe that it has restricted value for culturally diverse population (Foxcroft, 1997; Nzimande, 1995; Sehlapelo & Terre Blanche, 1996). In the contrary others believe that regardless of its flaws, testing is still more reliable and effective. Foxcroft (1997) suggests that since testing plays a crucial role within assessment internationally, the focus should be on valid and reliable tests used within multicultural and multilingual societies.

2.2 Professional training in psychometric assessment

According to HPCSA (2019) the guidelines for training of psychometrics states that “all psychology professionals should be trained in all the modes of test administration appropriate to their scope of practice” (p,4). Professionals in training should manage conducting

assessments with and without supporting technology, as suitable to the assessment being used and the respondents being assessed. The students ought to be appropriately critical when it comes to prediction of models and should critically evaluate competency models (HPCSA, 2019).

According to Groth-Marrot (1999) training in psychological assessment requires more than simply learning to administer and score psychological tests; it also involves “an awareness and appreciation of multiple causation, interactional influences, and multiple relationships” and the ability to “identify, sift through, and evaluate a series of hypotheses” (p. 5). The challenge of developing competency in psychological assessment in masters’ students is a complex, intensive, and multi-faceted process that presents numerous responsibilities and difficulties for university educators (Krishnamurthy et al., 2004).

Based on a survey of 382 internship sites, Clemence and Handler (2001) found that 56% of graduate students do not possess the requisite skills to conduct the types of assessment required at their internship sites. They suggested, therefore, that university educators should re-examine the content and focus of their psychological assessment training courses. Krishnamurthy et al. (2004) however, noted that educators emphasize that there are real constraints around expanding course offerings and feel that internship sites should assume responsibility for the more practical aspects of training in psychological assessment. Callahan (2015) adds that university educators have a very small timeframe in which to determine the specific skills they will aim to selectively develop. This responsibility falls to universities as the guidelines used for the accreditation of these programmes do not specify the content to be taught or the methods to be used in providing assessment training (Childs & Eyde, 2002).

Within the small body of existing literature, it was found that the most common method of assessing competency in psychological assessment is to examine the type and prevalence of scoring errors (Callahan, 2015). It was also reported that the connections between theory and

practice were not always explicit and that supervised practice opportunities with specific instruments were not linked consistently with the coursework on those tests (Childs & Eyde, 2002). Studies have also found that errors in the administration, recording and scoring of psychological tests is very common and that repetitious practice does not reduce these errors (Alfonso, Johnson, Patinella, & Rader, 1998; Belk, LoBello, Ray & Zachar, 2002; Loe, Kadlubek & Marks, 2007; Ryan & Schnakenberg-Ott, 2003). Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer (1993) suggest that regarding the acquisition of expertise, practice that deliberately focusses on improving specific aspects with increasing difficulty while obtaining immediate substantive feedback may be more effective than simple repetitive practice.

2.3 Professional degree programme in Psychology.

University of Glasgo (2016) refers to a professional degree as a type of academic degree designed to prepare the holder for a particular profession by emphasizing practical skills over theory and analysis. These professions are typically licensed or otherwise regulated by a governmental or government-approved body (Glasgo, 2016). professional degrees are awarded as undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. According to Universitat de València. (2021) a degree in psychology trains professionals with the clinical expertise required to understand, examine, provide explanation for human behaviour with the aim of promoting and improving health and quality of life. This incorporates knowledge of psychological processes, stages in evolutionary development the biological establishments of human conduct and mental capacities, just as its psychosocial principles (Universitat de València, 2021). Moreover, students are taught about the different research methods and techniques involved in data analysis, as well as the main psychological methods involved in psychological assessment, diagnosis and intervention that are used in diverse fields (Universitat de València, 2021).

South African professional psychologist must be registered with the Professional board for Psychology in any of the professional categories, with a completed formal academic requirements and relevant internship (HPCSA, 2010). Registration requires a fully certified documentation. According to HPCSA (2010) Intern psychologists are required to be registered with the Professional Board for Psychology prior to the commencement of the internship. The supervising university, the intern institution, the supervising psychologist, and the intern psychologist are jointly responsible for the intern registration (HPCSA, 2010). Professional psychologist registration is only possible after both; a) a completed academic requirement for the direct master's degree is awarded or a written confirmation by the registrar of the university stating that this degree is to be awarded and b) a completed internship with appropriate documentations confirmed by the professional board (HPCSA, 2010). Prior to their registration as psychologist, all persons are required to pass the National Examination of the Professional Board for Psychology (HPCSA, 2010). The HPCSA require for professional psychologists' registration to be completed within 2 years of date of registration as an intern psychologist.

Academic courses in professional degrees should be relevant to a broad range of assessment models that provide instruction in the core competencies (Krishnamurthy et al., 2004). Coursework should include foundational instruction on the theoretical and empirical bases of assessment including psychological theory, psychometrics, and courses relevant to specific assessment methods. Practicum training in psychological assessment should be coherent and consistent with the graduate programme's model and philosophy of training and should be provided in individual and small group modalities, be intensive in nature, and be organised around a supervisory relationship with an experienced mentor (Wiener 2012). Wiener adds that there should be an integration of coursework and practicum and that assessment skill should be developed in a cumulative manner, involving a framework of learning progressively and increasing in complexity.

2.4 Core competencies for clinical psychologists and Psychological Assessment.

Clinical psychologists should be able to demonstrate core competencies that include communicating clearly, establishing, and maintaining effective relationships with clients and peers, and managing potentially stressful or uncomfortable situations with compassion and diplomacy (Harton, 2019). A competency is described as a mix of skills, related knowledge, and attributes to produce a task to a set standard. A competency standard is described as a generally accepted standard or specification of performance which sets out the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to operate effectively (dpsa.gov.za, 2008). The two levels of competency include foundational competencies, functional competencies (Kaslow, 2004). According to Kaslow (2004) as cited in Offord (2006) foundational competencies represent core knowledge areas such as ethical and legal issues, cultural diversity, and professional identification, while Functional competencies include common practice activities like assessment and intervention.

According to Kaslow (2004) the foundational competencies include firstly Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment: this entails practices within the boundaries of competencies such as demonstrating commitment to lifelong learning, critical thinking and the development of the profession. The second one is Scientific method: which demonstrates respect for scientifically derived knowledge, understanding research and research methodology, cognitive-affective bases of behaviour, and lifespan of human development. The third involves Relationships: this demonstrates the capacity to relate effectively and meaningfully with individuals, groups, and/or communities. The fourth speaks of Relationships Individual/Cultural diversity: this involves awareness and sensitivity in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent various cultural and personal background and characteristics. The fifth consist of Ethical/Legal Standards: it includes application of ethical concepts and awareness of legal issues regarding professional activities individuals, groups, and

organizations and advocating for the profession. And lastly, Interdisciplinary Systems: this entails professional and competent cooperation with colleagues and peers in related disciplines.

The functional competencies as reflected by Kaslow (2004) consist of Psychological Evaluation: this includes assessment, diagnosis and conceptualization of problems and issues of individuals, groups, and/or organization. Secondly Psychological Interventions: it involves interventions designed to alleviate suffering and to promote health and well-being. The third one speaks of Consultation: The ability to provide expert guidance or professional assistance in response to a client's needs or goal. The fourth one is Research/evaluation: this includes the generation of research that contributes to the scientific knowledge base and/or evaluates the effectiveness of various professional activities. The fifth competency is Supervision: it involves the supervision and training of professionals, and lastly Teaching: which demonstrates rudimentary understanding of teaching theories and has gained some relevant experience in teaching.

The Psychological Assessment Work Group of the Competencies Conference (as cited in Krishnamurthy et al., 2004) outlined eight core competencies for psychological assessment. This included knowledge of psychometric theory; bases of psychological assessment (e.g. theoretical, empirical); assessment techniques; outcomes assessment; functional assessment; collaborative professional relationships in assessment; associations between assessment and intervention; technical skills; training of Students in psychological assessment; and international training.

2.5 Regulatory and statutory Higher Education bodies in south Africa

Accreditation with an Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) body under the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is necessary for all providers of education and training (South African Government, n.d). Providers offering full qualifications must be

registered with the Department of Education and has to offer unit standards and/or qualifications that fall within the primary focus area of the ETQA body of the relevant Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) or professional body (South African Government, n.d).The South African Council of Higher Education is responsible for quality assurance in higher education as assigned by the Higher Education Act of 1997 (CHE,2004). The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) which is the permanent sub-committee fulfil these responsibilities (CHE,2004). The responsibilities include quality promotion, institutional audit programme accreditation, capacity development and training as a critical component of its programme of activities (CHE, 2004).

The HEQC's quality assurance mandate is "carried out within the framework of the Regulations for Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQAs) of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which has overall responsibility for overseeing standard setting and quality assurance in support of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)" (CHE,2004, p.6). According to CHE (2004) programme accreditation is a form of quality assurance practised with a purpose of accountability and improvement in programme quality. The HEQC's way to dealing with program accreditation is molded by the complex challenges faced by higher education institutions periodically (CHE, 2004). The programme accreditation framework is receptive to the objectives of higher education transformation as reflected in different policy and legislation documents that have been distributed since 1994 (CHE, 2004).

According to South African Government the requirements for accreditation include that the programmes (and/or assessments) offered by the education and training provider be culminate in unit standards and/or qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the curriculum (design, content and learning materials) be aligned to the unit standards and/or qualifications, insure suitably qualified staff (facilitators and registered assessors), the learners to have access to adequate learning support services and the assessment

methods and tools used to measure the requirements for the unit standard and/or qualification be fair, valid and reliable, and are used to enhance learning.

2.6 Health professions council of SA

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) is a statutory regulator of healthcare professions in South Africa. The HPCSA, together with the 12 Professional Boards under its ambit, is established to provide for control over the education, training, and registration for practicing of health professions registered under the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974 (HPCSA, 2017). This Act governs all activities and defines the scope of each profession which it mandates to register with HPCSA and sets clear processes to be followed by HPCSA in achieving the statutory mandate.

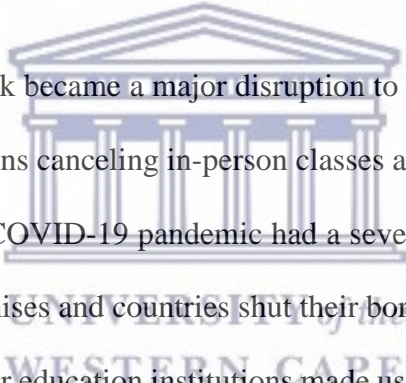
2.7 Attitudes and perceptions of Psychometric Assessment

Psychological assessment is a compulsory part of the professional master's level programmes in South African universities covering the theory and practice of intellectual and neuropsychological assessment (UWC, 2009; UKZN, 2015) as well as scholastic assessment (UWC, 2009), projective, and personality assessment (UKZN, 2015). Focus is placed on acquiring skills in terms of test administration, scoring, interpretation, and writing of a comprehensive report for families and referral agents (UCT, 2015; UKZN, 2015; UWC, 2009). The University of KwaZulu-Natal also states their intention to aid students in gaining critical awareness of the epistemological bases of the assessment tools used (UKZN, 2015). Furthermore, focus is placed on assessment in the South African context, highlighting some of the ethical issues pertaining to assessment in a multicultural context, and emphasizing the importance of using culturally appropriate tools (UCT, 2015; UKZN, 2015; UWC, 2009).

The body of literature reporting on training in psychological assessment or psychometrics focus on technical aspects and preparedness for practice, as well as historical

biases and test construction. The research identifies that registered psychologists have negative attitudes towards psychometric assessment and actively avoid psychometric assessments. The extent to which these attitudinal biases are present during training in student psychologist, or the training team have not been explored systematically. Similarly, the impact of such biases or attitudes on the acquisition of assessment competencies have not been explored. Thus, there is a need to explore the attitudes and perceptions of psychological assessment. There are noted variations at institutional level on the emphasis placed on psychometric assessment and thus systematic explorations must also be tailored to institutions. Thus, the study aimed to examine the attitudes and perceptions towards psychometric assessment in a professional degree programme at a historically disadvantaged institution.

2.8 Covid-19 Pandemic



The coronavirus outbreak became a major disruption to educational institutions across the country, with most institutions canceling in-person classes and moving to online learning. The lockdowns in response to COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on higher education as universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders (Schleicher, 2020). Despite the lockdown, the higher education institutions made use of technology to offer online classes and learning experiences as a substitute for in-class time to ensure the continuity of education. However, these closures affected learning and examinations as well as the safety and legal status of international students in their host country (Schleicher, 2020). Numerous universities came up short on the experience and time they needed to conceive better approaches to convey guidance and tasks.

The South African higher education sector made plans to secure the learning and teaching mandates and reinforce support services for students (Munnik, Smith., Adams-Tucker & Human, 2021). Institutions developed academic continuity plans to save the 2020 academic

year after the higher education sector appealed to the South African government. According to Lawack (2020) an emergency remote learning and teaching plan to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the 2020 academic year was launched at the University of the Western Cape. The university staff worked remotely using several digital platforms to continue learning and teaching (Munnik, Smith., Adams-Tucker & Human, 2021).

Due to a limited in-person activities in higher education institutions, researcher, research, and training were affected. Many graduate students had to face a new barrier as a result (Chenneville and Schwartz-Mette, 2020). Before the lockdowns, I had begun with data collection for my study and a clear schedule for all the interviews was complete and communicated with the participants. Three in-person interview sessions were completed, unfortunately the rest of the interviews had to be postponed. However, due to the emergency shift to remote learning at my university, I was encouraged to make use of digital platforms to collect the rest of the data. My research was significantly stalled due to COVID-19 and instead of completing my academics in year 2020 I had to register again in 2021.

The research methodology played a large role in the degree of impact individuals experienced in their research due to COVID-19. Some researchers adapt more readily to pandemic-related challenges than others. Even among those who could continue their research, the generalizability of data obtained during these unprecedented times may have been an issue (Lourenco & Tasimi, 2020). A few academia had to transitioned to working from home. For some, notwithstanding, having to balance these multiple roles between work and home was a challenge. I personally faced the increased stressor of balancing home and work-related demands simultaneously. Despite these challenges, I have been able to adapt during these trying times.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Aim: The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologists and clinical training staff in the Department of Psychology at the University of Western Cape.

3.2. Objectives

- To explore the students' perceptions of the
 - Role of psychometric assessment in clinical services
 - Relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum
 - Perceived relevance of psychometric assessment
 - Extent to which the course prepares them for the professional realities
- To explore students' perceptions of the
 - Taught modules
 - Supervision
 - Service-learning requirements
- To explore staff perceptions of
 - Students' attitude towards psychometric assessment
 - Student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment
 - Students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment
 - Student's preparedness for the module

3.3. Research Design: Exploratory research was employed as the research design. Exploratory research as the name infers, intends only to investigate the exploration question and does not

expect to offer definitive answers for existing problems instead it increases understanding by giving explanation to what and why something is happening. This allows researchers to have better conclusion of matters investigated and allowing further research questions to be posted for future investigation (Sandhursen, 2000). This study focused specifically on the manifest content only.

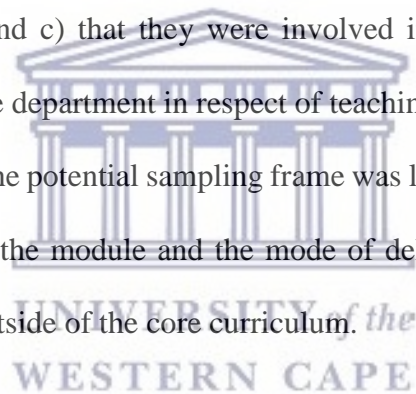
Researchers who conduct exploratory research should be willing to change their direction as it may provide richer quality information that can lead to the discovery of new initiatives or problems that should be addressed (Darlostion-Jones, 2007). According to Brown (2006), exploratory research tackles problems on which little previous research was conducted. Exploratory research was deemed appropriate for the present study, because this is an area that has not been studied a lot. And it will attempt to connect different ideas and understand reasons, causes and effects based on the participant's subjective views.

3.4. Research Setting: The study was conducted in the Psychology department at the University of the Western Cape. The university is committed to optimizing opportunities to improve new skills, knowledge, behaviors, and quality at all levels in the institution.

The department offers a professional master's programme in Clinical Psychology. The MPsych programme was established at UWC in 1986 and has an average annual intake of six students. The programme is accredited to train students in the clinical category of registration. Students perform service-learning requirements including referrals for psychometric assessment. Students complete coursework and a thesis in fulfilment of the degree requirements. The clinical internship is a registration requirement that is separate from the degree requirements. The cohort consisted of 7 students in the M1 year. 8 students were completing the internship requirement. 15 students were registered in the degree programme post completion of the M1 year. Due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the crisis it posed, the University of the Western Cape launched an emergency remote learning and

teaching interventions in the framework of ethics and professional requirement, and the learning outcomes articulated within the scope of practice for clinical psychologists (Munnik, Smith, Adams-Tucker & Human, 2021).

3.5. Target group: The target group included M1 students registered in the psychology department at the University of Western Cape and staff involved with the training in psychometry. The inclusion criteria for student participants included a) that they be registered for the M1 year during the 2020 academic year and b) had completed at least their first semester of training and c) that they had some exposure to psychometric assessment at a practical level. The inclusion criteria for staff participants was that a) they were employed as full time staff at the university, b) that they were involved in teaching or supervising psychometric assessment on the M.Psych programme and c) that they were involved in formulating the emergency remote teaching response of the department in respect of teaching psychometric assessment in the professional programme. The potential sampling frame was limited as students in 2020 had a very different experience of the module and the mode of delivery than interns and senior students who had exposures outside of the core curriculum.



3.6. Sampling: The study made use of total population sampling. Total population sampling entails the researcher examining the entire population that fits the specified inclusion criteria (Ilker, Sulaiman, Rukayya, 2016). Total population sampling is more often used where the quantity of cases being researched is relatively small. It is a “non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience” (Fianto, Maulida, & Laila, 2019. p. 3). The advantage of using total population sampling in a study is that it can produce results that are available in real-time (Ilker, Sulaiman, Rukayya, 2016). The sampling frame for the target population

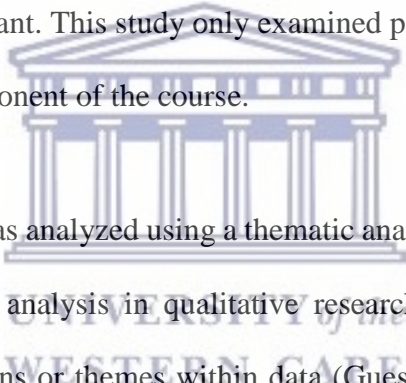
included 4 members of the training staff and 7 first year masters students. The invitation to participate in the study was extended to all eligible staff and student. Upon closer inspection, only three (3) of the seven (7) students registered for the M1 year in 2020 had sufficient practical exposure as stipulated in the inclusion criteria. The three eligible students agreed to participate in the study. The research team decided to assess after the data collection was completed whether sufficient data was generated before considering to include the fourth student for additional information that might have been missed. Four staff members were eligible for inclusion in the study as they were employed permanently, taught and or supervised psychometric assessment and were involved in the formulation of the emergency remote teaching strategy. All four eligible staff members participated in the study. The final sample thus consisted of seven (7) participants of whom three (3) were M1 students and (4) were staff members.

Sample characteristics

Minimal demographic information was disclosed here to protect the participants' identities. Given the small sample, it will be possible to figure out identities by means of the demographic signifiers. The sample included 2 males and 5 females. The staff experience in teaching psychometry ranged from five years to 25 years.

3.7. Data Collection: A Semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a predetermined set of open questions, with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore themes or responses further (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). It allows respondent to discuss and raises issues that one may not have considered. Interviews are a preferred data collection method for exploratory studies (Byrne, Brugha, Clark, Lavelle & McGarvey, 2015). Byrne et al. (2015) noted that semi-structured interviews give researchers access to information that would be difficult or

impossible to acquire by other means. A total of 7 interviews were conducted. 3 interviews were conducted by the researcher at a secured location negotiated with the participants and this was prior to the pandemic- covid 19. Due to a pandemic- covid 19 and lockdown in the country that occurred during the data collection process, the researcher made use of social platforms to collect the rest of the remaining data. Google meet, Zoom and WhatsApp were used to collect the remaining data. An interview schedule consisting of broad themes and open questions was used to guide the interview (Appendix A). Questions were also included at the end of the interview to allow the participants to reflect on the interview and to share any information not elicited in the interview that they deemed pertinent. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The interviews were conducted in English as it is one of the official provincial languages in Western Cape. The interviews lasted for at least 30-45 minutes per participant. This study only examined perceptions of the psychological assessment component of the course.



3.8. Data Analysis: The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is one of the most common form of analysis in qualitative research, it emphasizes pinpointing, examining and recording patterns or themes within data (Guest, 2012). Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of the phenomenon and associated to a specific research question (Guest, 2012). Thematic analysis is flexible, it allows researchers in that multiple theories can be applied. It is well suited for a large set of data; it allows researchers to expand a range study of past individual experiences. Cresswell (2011) noted that thematic analysis is particularly relevant in research on people's subjective experiences and the social construction of phenomena in particular contexts. Thematic analysis allows researchers to explore intersectionality by examining whether themes are consistent across the various classes being studied or along demographic lines such as race or gender (Fertuck, 2007). To achieve

this, semantic and latent theme levels were used. Semantic themes attempt to identify explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written (Boyatzis, 1998). In contrast, the latent level looks beyond what has been said and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Different versions of thematic analysis are underpinned by different philosophical and conceptual assumptions and are divergent in terms of procedure. Leading thematic analysis proponents, psychologists Braun and Clarke (2006) described their own widely used approach in the *Qualitative Research in Psychology* journal as reflexive thematic analysis.

Braun and Clark (2006) reflexive approach to thematic analysis include six phases. This six-phase cyclical process involves going back and forth between phases of data analysis as required until one is satisfied with the final themes. These phases were applied in the study to analyse the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the first phase requires the researcher to read and re-read data to become familiar with what the data entails, paying specific attention to patterns that occur. After completing data collection, the researcher transcribed their recorded data into written form using an independent transcriber vetted for their excellent listening, grammar, and transcription skills. The researcher assessed and revised the transcription and identified patterns. Phase two involved generating the initial codes by documenting where and how patterns occur. This happens through data reduction where the researcher collapses data into labels to create categories for more efficient analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher recorded the patterns identified in a reflexivity journal and were used during data coding. It was important for the researcher to engage interpretatively with data exploring both semantic and latent content and marking meaningful parts of data that addressed the research questions.

Searching for themes through examining how codes combine to form over-reaching themes in the data was the third phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this point, the researcher focused on broader patterns in the data and used visual models to sort combined coded data into potential themes. The researcher used mind maps and tables to identify category and theme. Three categories were identified with related themes. In Phase four Braun and Clarke (2006) requires the researchers to check their initial themes against the coded data and the entire dataset this is to ensure the analysis hasn't drifted too far from the data and provides a compelling account of the data relevant to the research question. This phase involves two levels of refining and reviewing themes. On the first level the researcher reviewed coded data extracts to identify if themes formed a coherent pattern. This resulted in a reduction of categories to three from an Initially five categories due to a significant amount of overlap between themes. The second level considered the coherence of categories and themes and how they connect to the entire data set. The data set was again re-read to determine whether the themes were relevant to the data set and to recode the themes that the researcher missed earlier in the initial coding stage.

In phase five the researcher needed to define and name each category, theme, and sub-theme. Analysis at this stage was characterized by identifying which aspects of data are being captured and what is interesting about the themes, and how the themes fit together to tell a coherent and compelling story about the data. The researcher was cautious while developing sub-themes and had to continuously refine them as interviews were conducted, transcribed, and analysed. The last phase involved the process of compiling a final report, with the researcher having decided which themes were meaningful contributions to the understanding of what is going on within the data and answering the research questions. Relevant extracts were tabulated and used as examples to illustrate categories, themes, and sub-themes.

3.9. Reflexivity & trustworthiness: Reflexivity refers to a state where researchers are aware of their role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, allowing the researcher to concede the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes (Haynes, 2012). Prior volunteering experience at Vera school of autism assisted the researcher understand the extensive and complex treatment the children needed. In the process, I learnt that psychological testing allowed psychologists seek out proper treatment for psychological disorders. This experience developed a drive in me to want to investigate the student psychologist s' perceptions of their psychometric training, with those of the clinical training staff. Reflexivity is important in qualitative research because this field relies upon information that participants provide. I am a black, female Psychology Masters student. I believe it was my responsibility to make sure that my subjective experiences did not interfere with how I related or rather conducted myself around the participants during the study. I acknowledged the sensitivity of the study and how it was important for me to remain respectful, honesty while keeping an open mind during the study. For me being open-minded meant admitting that I am not all-knowing, always ready to receive the participants with outmost respect and sensitivity. To achieve and maintain awareness, I had to do self- reflection as often during and after interviews to track the potential impact of the above factors.

Trustworthiness consists of the following components: credibility, transferability, and dependability (Silverman, 2011). Credibility means the concept of internal consistency, where the core issues is how we make sure rigor enhances the credibility of the study (Shenton, 2004). In the study credibility was accomplished through prolonged engagement in semi-structured interviewing, this involves spending adequate time observing various aspects of a setting, speaking in order to gain a better understanding of behaviour, value and phenomenon of interest. Transferability is the generalization of the study findings (Shenton, 2004). In the study transferability was achieved through a thick description of phenomenon in sufficient detail so

that one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Creswell, 2011). Dependability relates to the primary challenge that the way in which research is carried out needs to be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques (Shenton, 2004). Dependability of this study was facilitated through monitoring the emerging research design and through keeping an audit trail, which is an in-depth chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes, classification, or models; and analytic memos (Shenton, 2004).

3.10. Ethics considerations: Ethics clearance (BM19/8/8) was obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape (Appendix B). Permission to conduct the study at UWC was obtained from the Registrar. The study title was registered with the Senate Higher Degree Committee. Potential participants received information sheets and an invitation to participate (Appendix C). The information sheet included the rights and responsibilities of researchers and participants, what participation entails and recourse in the result of dissatisfaction. Participation was voluntary and participants signed a consent form (Appendix D). Participation could be terminated at any time without fear of loss of perceived benefit or negative consequence. Participation in the study was not linked to any evaluation to competencies in the programme. Access to the data collected from participants was closely controlled and limited strictly to the researcher and the supervisor. Participants were also informed how the information learned from the study will be disseminated. Transcripts were anonymized and assigned alpha-numeric codes in order to protect the identity of the participants. The interviews conducted on social media, were audio recorded and not video recorded to ensure anonymity. The supervisor only had access to the transcripts and not audios as voices were identifiable.

The study was reported with minimal demographic information to avoid accidental identification of the participants was recorded. The transcripts were de-identified so that the supervisor who is in the Department of Psychology did not have access to the identities of participants to link it to specific transcripts. Any science communication including the thesis was submitted to the Registrar to ensure that there is no third party or reputational harm as a result. The final thesis will only be uploaded onto the university portal after approval from the registrar. The researcher received a funding from the NRF for this study. The material assistance is acknowledged in the thesis and will be acknowledged in any subsequent science communications. A contract that outlines the conditions of the grant and subsequent reporting requirements was signed and undertake to fulfill all those requirements (Appendix E). Three categories with themes and sub-themes were identified in the analyses of the data and were tabled (Appendix F).



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Categories with themes and sub-themes were identified in the analyses of the data (Appendix D). The categories include a) Reasons for Enrolment; b) Expectations; c) Psychometric assessment. Table 1 below give a schematic that illustrates the categories and themes.

Table 1: Categories and Themes identified in the Data Analysis

Category	Themes
1. Reasons for Enrolment	Interest in clinical psychology Practical knowledge/ experience in the field
2. Expectations of the programme	Mpsych programme Nature of the course
3. Psychometric assessment	Psychometric assessment Preparedness for the programme Internship

4.1 Category 1: Reasons for enrolment

The first category included themes that demonstrated the motivate behind the students participate pursuing a professional training in clinical psychology. It became apparent that their personal experiences and passion for discovery influenced their desire to pursue a professional training in psychology. The student participants enrolled in Mpsych program with a goal of obtaining a degree and becoming a psychologist. Their immediate motives were to gain understanding of human behavior, factors influencing human behavior, learning about different pathologies and theories that supports the concept. And lastly, identifying effective intervention that will help treat or rather comfort patients diagnosed with mental disorders.

Two themes were identified reflecting their respective motives for enrolling in professional training. The themes include a) Interest in clinical psychological work; b) Practical knowledge or experience in the field.

Table 2 below indicates the themes and sub-themes in the first category that illustrate the personal motivation for enrolling in the Mpsych programme.

Table 2 Category 1: Reasons for enrolment

Theme	Sub theme
Theme 1.1 Interest in clinical psychology	Self-equipment Care for others Passion for discovery Professional goal
Theme 1.2 Practical knowledge/ experience in the field	Community work

Theme 1.1: Interest in psychological work. All the psychology student's participants (PSP) showed interest in clinical work, as a result, some already acquired practical experience in the field prior enrolment at the University. Table 3 below indicate the four major sub-themes that emerged; a) Self equipment; b) Care for others; c) Passion for discovery; and d) Professional goal. Below they are reported with illustrative quotes.

Table 3 Theme 1.1: Interest in psychological work

Sub theme	quotes
Self-equipment	<p><i>"I think I enrolled for my Mpsych to sort of fulfill that childhood curiosity."</i> PSP-1</p> <p><i>"I wanted to be able to offer this and be a part of those who can offer this care to these individuals so that they can receive the treatment that they need."</i> PSP-2</p>

<p>Care for others</p>	<p><i>“What became quite apparent to me was that a vast amount of these children actually required more sophisticated care and I needed to be able to offer that care.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-2</i></p> <p><i>“and just getting a better understanding of what’s going on in their lives and how to help them.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>
<p>Passion for discovery</p>	<p><i>“growing up experiencing such people, it informed my interest in not only people but how they think and how they process things that happened to them and how certain events can influence their lives in a certain way and how some people are resilience and how others are not able to cope as well.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-1</i></p> <p><i>“What I wanted from it was just to gain more in-depth understanding with regards to understanding human behaviour in terms of the various theoretical approaches”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-2</i></p> <p><i>“...understanding what makes a person behave in a certain way and what influences some pathologies and all of that.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>
<p>Professional goal</p>	<p><i>“My reason for enrolling in Psychology masters is because the moment I did enter varsity, I knew that I wanted to be a clinical psychology.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-1</i></p> <p><i>“Obviously, in my undergraduate, and going into varsity I knew that the end goal was to become a psychologist.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>

	<p><i>“So I wanted to be able to also just gain some practical knowledge and experience with patients.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>
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Self-Equipment: Passion and interest in psychological work has been the main drive for the participants. They indicated why it become necessary for them to develop themselves by attaining skills relevant, increasing their fund of knowledge about human behaviour and pathology and how they can be of great influence in the field.

Care for others: The participants described a growing awareness of the need for psychological services in the respected fields and communities that they were involved in. They felt that by empowering themselves through increasing their knowledge and skills in psychology would better equip them to serve the needs of these communities.

Passion for discovery: The perceived possibilities offered by the discipline, clinical training, sustained a personal interest that was further kept alive through their studies. As illustrated above, participants highlighted their personal interest in understanding the human psyche and indicated how they could explore those interests through clinical psychology.

Professional goal: All the student participants desired ultimate professional career goal was to become a qualified and well-equipped psychologist. This is a desire that some of them had even before they enrolled at the university, their life experiences, interpersonal skills and the eager to learning and understanding human behaviour, contributed to their burning desire of becoming clinical psychologists.

Theme 1.2 Practical knowledge/ experience in the field: All the student participants had

prior work and volunteering experiences that contained some aspects of psychology/psychological work. The most notable aspect was interpersonal, people-oriented work. The psychological work sparked interest in the broader field of study of psychology, and the subsequent exposure to psychology provided further opportunities that resonated with their interests. one key experience was identified as sub-themes of exposure or experience, namely: a) community work.

Table 4 below presents the sub-themes that emerged in relation to the types of prior experiences reported with illustrative quotes.

Table 4: Theme 1.2 Practical knowledge/ experience in the field

Sub theme	quotes
Community work	<p><i>“I was actually working in the community as a school counsellor before this year. And working as a counsellor, you have to work within your scope. And I saw children with various psychological problems, and I could always provide what they needed.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-2</i></p>
	<p><i>“I job shadowed at a psychiatric hospital and was part of many psychology associations.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-1</i></p>
	<p><i>“I was a registered counsellor, so I got a job as a Victim assistant officer in a rape centre. My job entailed helping rape or assault survivors and keeping them informed regarding their cases and also referring them to long term counselling or to any service they needed. Then I worked as a school counsellor where I provided therapeutic support for learners and also support for the staff.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>

Community work: All of the student participants have been involved in community work on both a volunteer and salaried basis, which included working for non-profit and non-

governmental community organisations and schools. Community work suggests that the participants were working or engaged in developmental work that was focused on individual and group interventions with adolescents, providing leadership within communities, and providing psychoeducation.

4.2 Category 2: Expectation of the programme

The second thematic category included themes that described the expectation and highlights some of the students and staff experience of the programme. Two themes emerged from this category namely: a) Mpsych Programme; b) Nature of the course. Table 5 below summarises the themes and sub-themes on the participants’ expectations of the programme

Table 5: Category 2 Expectation of the programme

Theme	Sub-theme
Theme 2.1 Mpsych programme	Progression from honours to master’s Programme Training
Theme 2.2 Nature of the programme	Structure of the programme Students experience of the programme Management strategies between programme and personal life

Theme 2.1: Mpsych Programme: The student participants indicated that their initial expectation of the programme was unfulfilled. This was because of lack of accurate references for what the programme entailed and required of them. Two sub-themes were identified namely: a) progression from Honours to Masters; and b) Training.

Table 6 below shows the themes and sub-themes and illustrative quotes of the participants’ expectations of the Mpsych programme

Table 6: Theme 2.1 Mpsych programme

Sub themes	quotes
Progression from Honours to master's Programme	<p data-bbox="810 344 1374 524"><i>“Well, I think my first expectation was that what we are doing in masters is, we build on what we did on undergrad and honours, so that was my main expectation, and I don't think it is necessarily fulfilled.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1305 528 1385 562">PSP-1</p> <p data-bbox="810 602 1382 819"><i>“I didn't really have any expectations, though I was sure that we will be picking up where we left off in honours, we have been provided with enough support throughout the process, and I was amazed by how supportive they have given us so far.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1305 824 1385 857">PSP-3</p>
Training	<p data-bbox="810 934 1342 1039"><i>“to be trained on various psychometric assessment tools and was also something that I am looking for in the course.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1305 1043 1385 1077">PSP-2</p> <p data-bbox="810 1120 1386 1296"><i>“The sense that they are teaching us how to be psychologists and learn about ourselves through the things that we do, and through the way in which we react to things, it exceeded my expectation”.</i></p> <p data-bbox="1305 1301 1385 1335">PSP-3</p>

Progression from honours to masters: The participants indicated that their expectations about the structure of the master's programme were not accurate. Prior to enrolment on the master's programme, the participants were convinced that in masters you build up to what have been learnt in undergraduate and honours programme that they completed.

Training: Due to Prior academic experience the participants concluded that their masters training would mostly be about various theories on psychometric assessment. However, they

discovered that you learn more about self and becoming a psychologist than focusing on theories.

Theme 2.2 Nature of the programme: The second theme that emerged from this category is related to the nature of programme. The participants experienced the program to be demanding and intensively overwhelming, with limited time left for other activities of personal interest beyond the academic experience because of the combination of course work and a research component in the academic programme. Three sub-themes emerged. These sub-themes are a) Structure of the programme; b) Students experience of the programme and c) Management strategies between programme and personal life

Table 7 below illustrate sub-themes and quotes on the participants’ experience of the course

Table 7: Theme 2.2 Nature of the programme

Subthemes	quotes
Structure of the programme	<p><i>“The Mpsych is a two-year programme combined of theory and practical.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-1</i></p>
Students experience of the programme	<p><i>“My experience of the programme thus far is one which is extremely challenging, I’ve been in situations where a lot was required of me and I’ve been under a whole lot of pressure before , because I intentionally am a kind of person who enjoys a lot of work, but this year, I didn’t know you could have this much work as a human being , ...its very taxing physically its very taxing emotionally in a sense of what it is expected of me and also constantly having to speak about your feelings, reflecting all the time and also being able to hand in academic work and be on the board writing tests... it’s all been a whole lot, it’s been quite overwhelming a lot of the times.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-1</i></p>

	<p><i>“There are constant challenges, and you need to adapt to these constant challenges that come up, which can be quite overwhelming.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-2</i></p> <p><i>“It's very challenging. It's a lot of work. I feel it was overwhelming at times because you'd be looking at one thing and then you need to apply yourself to something else.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>
<p>Management strategies between programme and personal life</p>	<p><i>“I'm not the kind of person who becomes fixated and wants to consult. But with me, I believe that with everything that I do, I need to pace myself. And there will be times I will probably need to consult a bit more. But for now, I have a golden rule and I think I'll try even towards the end of the year when it gets very, very hectic to constantly take a break on Fridays, because that's the only time where i will get to make it me time. So, if I crack my skull and push extra hard on a Friday, I'll probably end up in a coma.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-1</i></p> <p><i>“The department is extremely supportive, and help exists for those who need it. And this is quite a comfort for us. We get a sense that the department has high hopes for us, and they are also very eager for us to succeed.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-2</i></p> <p><i>“I think what helped like I mentioned before was the classmates. It helps to have a group of people around you who are going through the same thing. So talking helps. And then you just bounce ideas off each other.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>PSP-3</i></p>

Structure of the course: The student participants found the course to be time-consuming, especially with the directed master's programmes in psychology being offered over one year at the identified institution whereas some other institutions offer it over two years. A student participant noted that a more in-depth understanding of concepts could be gained if there was less of a time constraint, and another indicated that the requirements of the course filled most of their day. Student participants further expressed their struggle to integrating course content within the time available to do so.

Students experience of the programme: The student participants expressed that they experienced the course as challenging and overwhelming. What rises is whether the department is intentional about what they include on the course outline. They wondered if the department is well informed of the burden experienced by the students due to the intensity of the programme, or whether there is a need to re-evaluate the ability of the students to master the course requirements.

Management strategy between programme and personal life: Even though the student participants found the programme to be challenging and overwhelming. They did their best to find a balance between the course requirements and personal life by taking time off the course work, making use of consultation/supervision, and also consulting classmates.

4.3 Category 3: Psychometric assessment

The third category comprises of themes that included thematic content that illustrated the staff perception on the student's attitude and preparedness and their readiness for their academic integration. Three themes emerged in this category namely: a) Psychometric assessment; b) Preparedness for the programme; and c) Internship. Table 8 below presents an outline of the themes and sub-themes that comprise this thematic category.

Table 8: *Category 3: psychometric assessment*

Theme	Sub-theme
Theme 3.1 Psychometric assessment	Role of psychometric assessment in clinical services Relative place for psychometry in the curriculum Perceived relevance of psychometry
Theme 3.2 Preparedness for the programme	Students' preparedness for the Mpsych programme. Students' preparedness for the module. Attitude of the students towards psychometry. Student engagement in the course content Supervision
Theme 3.3 Internship	Feedback from Internship sites

Theme 3.1 Psychometric assessment

Psychometric assessment is a very important part of the student's training. This theme clarifies the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services. The students are expected to facilitate monumental psychometric tests, so understanding how to communicate information effectively is very important. Three sub-themes emerged: a) Role of psychometric assessment in clinical services.; b) Relative place for psychometry in the curriculum and c) Perceived relevance of psychometry. Table 9 below illustrative the sub-themes with quotations from the staff participants (SP) and psychology student participants (PSP).

Table 9: Theme 3.1 psychometric assessment

Sub-theme	Quotes
<p>Role of psychometric assessment in clinical services.</p>	<p><i>“one of the functions of psychological assessment is for diagnosing purposes.”</i> SP-1</p> <p><i>“ to determine what psychological storm individuals are suffering from, and not just for adults, but also in adolescence and children who may be experiencing difficulties.”</i> SP-2</p> <p><i>“identify what are the particular cognitive deficits that they may have or the particular issues that they're struggling with.”</i> SP-3</p> <p><i>“Psychometric assessment is one mode of gathering information. And it's a very, very easy mode because it is a scientific way of gathering information. Instruments have been scientifically researched and reliable in a specific context.”</i> SP-1</p> <p><i>“And then once you've done the assessment and used the psychology tool, you have a clear sense of what areas need to be targeted. And then you can apply for mediations to other service providers or schools or parents.”</i> SP-3</p> <p><i>“it's very important in clarifying diagnoses and providing specific anchors to support your intervention plan.”</i> SP-4</p>
<p>Relative place for psychometry in the curriculum</p>	<p><i>“ It's one of the core modules in our training program and it is very hard for students to be aware of how to use.”</i> SP-1</p>

	<p><i>“So, we've got an assessment program. it is a very integral part of our training; students need to know how to use assessment measures.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-2</i></p> <p><i>“there's quite a lot of space that is allocated for it in the program. I can't speak too much historically of how it has grown, but certainly it runs throughout the year.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-4</i></p>
<p>Perceived relevance of psychometry</p>	<p><i>“I think it can be perceived as a bit too technical and a bit removed from, you know, the human aspects of psychology.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-2</i></p> <p><i>“You have to know the math and the statistics noted to use. You must understand the theory in order to understand.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-3</i></p> <p><i>Psychometry is a lot of work, and there are very technical skills and conceptual skills and I think it really challenges students. So sometimes I find that students are very negative towards it.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-1</i></p> <p><i>“Psychometric testing is based on statistical research, which has been proven and has been replicated multiple times and I think within psychology, that is the one thing that relates most closely to science in the sense that it must be a replica.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-4</i></p>

Role of psychometric assessment in clinical services- Psychometric assessment basically play a role in the evaluation of a patients in the clinical service. All participants confirmed that psychometric assessment provides another lens of understanding and that it paints a more

detailed picture of the person you are trying to assess. You have a clear sense of what areas need to be targeted through diagnosis.

Relative place for psychometry in the curriculum- Psychometry is one of the core modules in the training program and it runs throughout the year. With so much time allocated for the module in the curriculum, students are well prepared for their internship. However, if the student is not prepared when they get to internship, it would be because of their lack of engagement.

Perceived relevance of psychometry- All the participant understood the fact that psychometric assessment is a huge part of psychology. Psychometry is a lot of work, and there are very technical skills and conceptual skills that should be acquired and that can be really challenging. However, there are systems in place for mentorship and additional support, as well as formalized psychometric supervision to assist students who struggles with the content.

Theme 3.2 Preparedness for the programme

This theme included thematic content that illustrated the staff perception about the preparedness, attitude of the students and their readiness for their academic's integration. The theme included five subthemes in relation to the preparedness for a directed master's programme in: a) Student's preparedness for the Mpsych programme; b) Students preparedness for the module; c) Attitude of the students towards psychometry; d) Student engagement in the course content; e) Supervision. Table 10 below indicates the sub themes and substantiates them with illustrative quotes.

Table 10: Theme 3.2 preparedness for the programme

Sub-theme	Quotes
Students' preparedness for the Mpsych programme	<p data-bbox="810 237 1374 600"><i>“So students who do our honours would be fairly prepaid because we actually do a lot of the technical stuff. And we kind of prepare them for how we do master’s in psychology. The students who come from other programs. The worst-case scenario would be that they know nothing about it, and they must play catch up. But we would know that they need to do it and we would entirely help them catch up.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1326 602 1385 633">SP-1</p> <p data-bbox="810 712 1374 891"><i>“When we select students from the master’s program, we do look at what subjects they have done previously, and it's more beneficial to accept students who have been exposed the modules focus on.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1326 893 1385 925">SP-2</p>
Students' preparedness for the module	<p data-bbox="810 1010 1374 1440"><i>“We at our university, we teach psychology, and we include some practical stuff. The students really struggle with it. So, they come in with negative experiences, even from the honours. So that's a challenge. Once they are in the program. I find that their effort in preparation for class is different for psychometry than it is for other modules. Again, because with the psychometry, these aspects of it, it's very technical. I find that students often don't read in.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1326 1442 1385 1473">SP-1</p> <p data-bbox="810 1518 1374 1585"><i>“There is a little bit of phobia and a little bit of anxiety around this.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1326 1588 1385 1619">SP-4</p>
Attitude of the students towards psychometry	<p data-bbox="810 1671 1374 1738"><i>“The attitude is really negative. I think the students often tolerate having to do it.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="1326 1783 1385 1814">SP-1</p> <p data-bbox="810 1854 1374 2027"><i>“I think they don't understand the importance that psychometric assessment holds in the discipline of psychology and in the practice of clinical psychology or counselling, psychology or professional</i></p>

	<p><i>psychology, So I think that negative attitude extends into to how much preparation they put in.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-3</i></p> <p><i>“Based on the feedback of the course evaluations the practical side, the two terms in the occupation, it is quite intensive. They tend to struggle.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-4</i></p>
<p>Student engagement in the course content</p>	<p><i>“I would say that there are either content area that they find more engaged in, like therapy, So the things that are more kind of therapeutic in nature, that would be more engaged in psychology, so there's definitely a difference in terms of how and what they engage with.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-1</i></p> <p><i>“When it comes through to working with the specific tests and translating that into the outputs of reports and providing really full feedback, that the students are engaged and they do see the value of it and the skills that they gain, especially when they go through to internship.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-3</i></p>
<p>Supervision</p>	<p><i>“We have psychometry supervision sessions with students, which focuses specifically on identifying with psychometry tools to use on particular patients and how to apply the tool, and also in terms of answering any questions that they may have or any challenges that they may experience.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-2</i></p> <p><i>“So if a student is struggling, we always encourage, the student to reach out.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-1</i></p> <p><i>“We have systems in place for mentorship and additional support, as well as our formalized psychometric supervision. So if a student does or has already come into the</i></p>

	<p><i>program being a bit on the back foot because of the opportunities they have in hand or because they studied the material so long ago, we would provide more opportunities for increased supervision.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-4</i></p>
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Students’ preparedness for the clinical Mpsych programme- The staff participant felt that students were not prepared for the programme, The student participants had a very limited understanding about how M.Psych programme runs, and they did not know what to expect. They were convinced that master’s is basically a continuation of what was done in their honors programme. However, they discovered that it was much more than just progression but a journey of self -discovery and more about becoming a psychologist.

Students’ preparedness for the module- A staff participants reflected that there is a little bit of phobia and a little bit of anxiety around this preparedness. All the student participants confirmed that they were overwhelmed by the module and the intensity of work it required from them. However, the department is well prepared and ready to provide students with all the necessary study materials and resources that would better the student’s experience of the module, for instance, with psychometric assessment, they have an opportunity to practically apply the knowledge gained during their time in class.

Attitude of the students towards psychometry- Psychometric assessment plays a big role in the discipline of psychology, it provides another lens of understanding and paint a more detailed picture of the person you are trying to assess. With the information acquired from assessment you can make much more sound diagnosis. However, a stuff participant reflected that students do not always understand the value that psychometric assessment holds, so they turn to have a negative attitude towards it, resulting in poor preparation for the module.

Student engagement in the course content- all students are expected to attend classes and engage in the course content. A staff participant observed that *“there are either content area that they find more engaged in, when it comes through to working with the specific tests and translating that into the outputs of reports and providing really full feedback”*.

Supervision- The department of Psychology have developed systems in place for mentorship and additional support, as well as formalized psychometric supervision for the students. The student participants who made use of these, found it very useful and they were very grateful for the continuous support.

Theme 3.3 Internship

This theme included feedback that the staff received from internship sites and how the program positively impact the students while preparing them for professional and clinical reality. Two sub-themes emerged: a) Feedback from Internship sites; b) Clinical competence Table 11 below supported with illustrative quotations

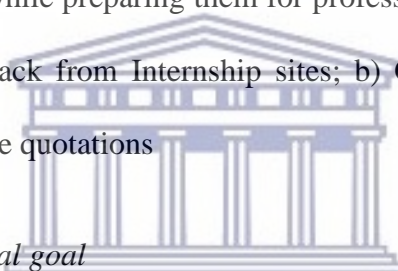
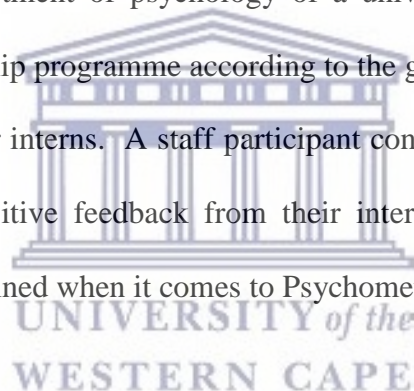


Table 11: Theme 3.3 professional goal

Sub-theme	Quotes
<p>Feedback from Internship sites</p>	<p><i>“The feedback that we get from the internship sites was that our students are among the best trained in terms of their exposure to supplementary. We cover the broadest range of assessment. And because of that, our students are very well prepared. When they reach the internship site and they do their community service and we get very positive feedback about.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-2</i></p> <p><i>“The cause is a good preparation for internship. However, if the student is not prepared when they get to internship, it would be because of a lack of engagement.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>SP-4</i></p>

Feedback from the Internship site– Apart from the training requirements, students must complete an approved internship that is undertaken at an accredited institution. The term internship refers to the “prescribed minimum period of 12 months of full-time training” (HPCSA, 2010, p.10). According to HPCSA, (2010), training must take place in an approved institution on a full-time basis (40 hours per week) over a minimum period of 12 months for it to be recognised.

The internship might include either “full time employment as an intern psychologist at an institution(s) accredited by the Professional Board for Psychology following a specified programme of training; or undertaking of a specially tailored internship programme, which has been endorsed by the Professional Board for Psychology before commencing” (HPCSA,2010,p.10).The department of psychology of a university is responsible when it comes to compiling an internship programme according to the guidelines and requirements of the professional board for their interns. A staff participant confirmed that UWC psychology department have received positive feedback from their internship sites, saying that their students are among the best trained when it comes to Psychometry.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary overview

The present study was conducted in the Psychology department at the University of the Western Cape. The study was exploratory and aimed to explore the perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff. The objectives of the study included a) exploring the students' perceptions of the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services, relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum, perceived relevance of psychometric assessment, extent to which the course prepares them for the professional realities. Then b) exploring student's perceptions of the taught modules, supervision, and service-learning requirements. And c) exploring the staff perceptions of students' attitude towards psychometric assessment, student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment, students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment and student's preparedness for the module. The sample included four members of the training staff involved in teaching or supervising psychometric assessment on the MPsych programme and three first year clinical masters students with some exposure to psychometric assessment at a practical level. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

5.2 Discussion

Category One: The first thematic category related to student participants' interest in psychological work. All the student's participants showed interest in clinical work, as a result, some already acquired practical experience in the field prior enrolment at the University. Participants reflected that their motivation for enrolment into the Mpsych programme at the University of Western Cape was attributed by their interest in psychological work, early

childhood curiosity, prior work experience, need for skills capacitation and develop insight into mental illness. The findings illustrate that the participants expressed the need for psychological services in communities that they were associated with empowering themselves through expanding their insight and skill in psychology. They felt that they would be better prepared to serve the needs of communities of interest.

What became evident from this thematic category is that students' perceptions about psychological work was skewed towards psychoeducation, diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of the profession. This may have been intuitive as the students applied to and were selected for a Clinical Masters programme. The lack of reference to psychometric assessment in this build up to entry into the programme was interesting to note. It reflects the shifts in training to more therapeutic stances and stereotypical portrayal of the profession in popular media. These preconceived ideas and motivations that underpinned interest is likely to impact the subsequent attitude to training in psychometrics. Kamaloodien et al (2012) reflected on the impact of stereotyped preconceptions in training. These authors identified that students were more interested in therapeutic aspects of the training and less interested in psychometric assessment. Similarly, Munnik et al (2021) reflected that the focus on psychometric training in professional programmes has waned relative to the focus on therapeutic intervention even though psychometric assessment is a skill that is unique to the profession of psychology.

In the formative years of clinical psychology, preparation in assessment was not an issue. However, practicing psychologists began moving into new roles as therapists and consultants, also taking advantage of expanded professional opportunities in private practice and a variety of new employment settings (Wiener, 2012). Based on Reisman (1991) These historical developments led to assessment playing a lesser part than before in what clinical psychologists do and the services they provide.

Norcross and Karpiak (2012) Surveys over the years have confirmed that, the relative decline in psychological assessment in clinical psychology practice fostered in some quarters an impression that assessment was no longer important at all. According to Butcher (2006) this mistaken belief have compromised the calibre of assessment training in many clinical psychology graduate programs in which limited appreciation for the utility of psychological assessment. In addition, insufficient attention to the value of assessment skills has led to reduced course offerings in assessment, minimal requirements for assessment competency, and little opportunity or encouragement for students to become involved in assessment.

Category Two: The second thematic category related to the findings suggest that the student participants expected the programme to be a continuation of Honours. Thus, they expected the programme to be very theoretical. They discovered that you learn more about self and becoming a psychologist. The student participants did not appear to have realistic expectations of what the training would entail. This could be attributed to the fact that they did not have appropriate references for this. The resultant impact was two-fold. On the one hand, student participants could be disappointed and feel that their expectations were not met as suggested by the PSP-1. On the other hand, their expectations could be exceeded because the bar was set so low and so unrealistically as reflected by PSP-3. The participants recommended that the university may consider providing a scope or outline of what to expect in the professional training programme prior to enrolment. This was felt to increase the preparation of prospective students and the formation of realistic expectations.

This finding resonated with the literature. For example, Offord (2016) explored self-terminations and reported that unrealistic and unmet expectations were an important reason for student to terminate voluntarily from professional programmes. Smith and Offord (2017) similarly made a distinction between interest in psychological work and interest to become a

psychologist. These authors argued that students gradually became aware of this distinction and then considered self-termination as the training to become a psychologist in its encompassing scope of practice was not what they anticipated or desired from the training. Preparation for a Clinical Psychology Masters programme extends beyond mere academic preparedness, knowledge, and skills (Dysthe, 2007). Students might be academically prepared for a master's course, having the capability to write and conduct research, but they might not necessarily be prepared for the unique requirements of a directed programme in psychology, such as practical skill requirements (Hoffman & Julie, 2012).

The personal interest and aspects of calling reflected in the findings resonate with literature. Heimann (1989) as cited in Booysen and Naidoo (2016) suggests that the process of becoming a psychologist has been framed as being “summoned by an inner voice” to help others help themselves. However, as philosophically attractive as the calling may sound, the training is filled with academic, professional, and personal difficulties. These aspects of the training are far removed from the naive perceptions that students have upon entering the programme and influences how the unfolding nature of the programme is experienced.

The second category related to subjective experiences of the programme. Student participants found the course to be time-consuming, especially with the directed master's programme being offered over one year at the identified institution whereas some other institutions offer it over two years. Participants expressed a struggle in integrating course content and experienced the course as challenging and overwhelming. The experience of training as challenging and intense is well documented in the literature. For example, Kottler and Swartz (2004) described becoming a psychologist as a “rite of passage”. Similarly, Manganyi (2013) stated that the challenging nature of the training is a global phenomenon. The training process includes acquiring new skills, attitudes, and identity in the context of psychology (Kottler & Swartz, 2004). Smith et al (2012) identified that there was a tension in

professional training programmes that required balancing clinical and community training alongside personal development. These authors reflected on the intensity of training and the importance of a containing frame within which to provide clinical training.

Category 3. This category related to the perceptions of the placement and relative importance of psychometric assessment in the professional programme. This category included both staff and student perceptions. The findings in this category were more directly aligned with the objectives of the study and build on the findings in the first two categories. The discussion of this category was structured around the objectives.

Objective 1A: Students' perceptions of the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services

Based on the present study the researcher found that students perceived the role of psychometric assessment in the clinical environment as one that helps determine the extent to which someone is affected by a condition. Student participants perceived psychometric assessment to play the role of establishing a baseline of functioning and pathology for therapeutic intervention. Thus, students assigned a peripheral and functional role to psychometric assessment as an adjunct to therapeutic services. The student participants had a very limited understanding of the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services which can have an important impact on their attitude towards the content and their commitment to achieving mastery and clinical competency. Fagan (2002) noted that assessment remains, fundamental in the professional practice with psychologists consistently spending approximately half their time conducting psychological evaluations. Knauss, (2001) observed that most psychology training programs do not always provide sufficient education for certain test measures in the coursework, and not all school psychology interns, nor all graduates enter the field prepared to conduct certain component of psychological testing.

It is very common for students in training programs to find that upon graduation their knowledge and skills regarding certain assessment instruments are already outdated due to the publication of a new version of the test (Fagan, 2002). Munnik et al (2021) reflected that providing epistemological access to the complex nature of psychometric assessment remains a key challenge when teaching. The requirement of high level of technical and interpretive skills is challenging to all students regardless of the prior learning experiences and individual differences in ability.

Objective 1B: Students' perceptions of the relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum.

Training psychometrics at higher institutions of learning for clinical psychology is a requirement by the HPCSA. At UWC psychological assessment module is one of three core modules in the clinical programme. It is a year-long module with a minimum of 2 hours of formal teaching a week. The psychological assessment module incorporates, but is not limited to, training in test construction or psychometric theory, the administration, scoring and interpretation of psychological tests in adult and child practice, neuropsychology, and intellectual disability. It has a strong focus on the attainment of clinical skills and competency as per HPCSA recommendation (HPCSA, 2019). Based on the study findings a staff participant (SP-1) reflected that *“It's one of the core modules in our training program, and it is a very integral part of our training, students need to know how to use assessment measures.”*. the student participant observed that *“there's quite a lot of space that is allocated for it in the programme and it certainly runs throughout the year.”* With so much time allocated for the module the training staff confirmed that students are well prepared for internship. However, if a student is not prepared when they get to internship, it would be because of their lack of engagement.

Objective 1C: Students' perceptions of perceived relevance of psychometric assessment.

The findings illustrated that student perceived psychometry “as a bit too technical” and felt that it “make psychology more scientific”. The training staff also reflected that psychometry requires “technical skills and conceptual skills which really challenges students”. The requirement of high level of technical and interpretive skills is challenging to all students regardless of the prior learning experiences and individual differences in ability hence students are very negative towards it. The student’s view was that psychometrics required skills that were outside of that which they expected or anticipated. The very technical nature of the content further is experienced as a barrier as it increases their workload. The findings reflect the underlying tenets that psychometric assessment provides the student with a grounding in psychometric test theory and requires the practical application of knowledge of psychological testing in clinical settings (Psychological Assessment - PYC4807, 2021). This combination of technical, interpretive, and writing skills constitutes the clinical reasoning when using psychometrics and requires a high level of exposure before mastery can be achieved. Similarly, Munnik et al. (2021) reflected that the psychological assessment at UWC includes “various components of such as psychometric theory, test administration and report writing” (p.3) that must be mastered by the student psychologist.

Objective 1D: Students' perceptions of the extent to which the course prepares them for the professional realities

The findings reflected that the module also includes practical exposure to face-to-face assessments at a UWC-based community clinic and exposure to hospital-based placements from the second term onwards. In the study, the staff participant noted that with psychometric assessment, the students have an opportunity to practically apply the knowledge gain during their time in class. These exposures added on the student work experience preparing them for

professional realities. The PSP-3 reflected that I quote *“the sense that they are teaching us how to be psychologists and learn about ourselves through the things that we do, and through the way in which we react to things, it exceeded my expectation”*.

The mentoring and teaching relationship with students include being honest and direct along with permitting freedom of discussion. The department of Psychology has developed systems for mentorship and additional support, as well as formalized psychometric supervision for the students. The student participants found it very useful, and they are very grateful for the continuous support.

Showing enthusiasm for teaching and being flexible are examples of personal attributes that assist in preparing student psychologists. The psychometric supervision at UWC focuses specifically on selecting psychometric tests to develop an assessment battery for use with a particular patient. It also entails demonstrating how to apply the tool and answering any questions that students may have or and troubleshooting challenges that they may experience. The SP-1 confirmed that *“if a student is struggling, we always encourage, the student to reach out”*. *The participants in this study identified that these attributes and structured approach to teaching the content, facilitated learning and the achievement of clinical competence.*

The findings resonate with Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) who identified that the characteristics of clinical instructors were important in facilitating student development. The ability to demonstrate skills was important for encouraging and modelling for students how to achieve clinical competence. These authors argued that professional competence within the teaching staff was a prerequisite for teaching in professional programmes. They argued further that the capacity to establish professional and warm relationships with students and their own personal attributes (e.g., warmth, approachability) were key in developing student practitioners. The way in which the student participants described the attitude and stance in the training team reflected the tenor of Bergman and Gaitskill’s argument that professional

competence includes facilitating students' awareness of their professional responsibilities along with developing attitudes and values in students.

The student participants felt that they were prepared and were moving towards clinical competence. However, this finding must be interpreted cautiously as the student's ability to accurately reflect on this would be subject to their experiences on internship and community service placements in subsequent years.

Objective 2 A: Exploring student's perceptions of the taught modules

Based on the study finding, the student participants found the taught modules to be time-consuming, especially given a short period of time to complete the directed master's programme. They reflected that there is much in-depth understanding of concepts that should be gained per module in less time. They are concerned that sometimes a module requirement could cost take up almost the whole day, yet they were still expected to cover the rest of the modules. Participants further expressed a struggle in integrating course content within the time available to do so. Overall, the student participants felt that the module was more intense in relation to other modules.

The teaching staff also reflected that psychometric assessment is a high intensity module. As mentioned before, there are many aspects to the psychometric assessment that requires a high level of integration. These findings must be seen in the context of the theoretical programme being offered in one year and that the regular mode of delivery was revised in response to the pandemic which impacted even more on the intensity of the module.

Munnik et al. (2021) reflected that there were numerous pedagogic and philosophical considerations that underpin the delivery of the programme and the ability to adjust to emergency remote teaching. These authors who form part of the teaching team focused on the learning and teaching principles but did not engage with the attitudinal issues and how that impacts the engagement with training however well designed. Portnov-Neeman and Barak

(2013) asserted that educators must recognise that learning is strongly affected by social, cultural, and emotional factors such as the perception of the students about the value and placement of the content.

Objective 2 B: Students' perceptions of supervision and service-learning requirements.

The findings indicated that the programme at UWC has formalized psychometric supervision for the student psychologists. This supervision takes place in a group context and includes both clinical reasoning and technical aspects such report writing. Students reflected that this structured supervision was useful and containing. In addition, there was also systems in place for mentorship and additional support. The student participants who made use of mentoring found it beneficial. They reported that this structured support prepared them for achieving competence.

The students reflected that they also learn through practical exposure. This constituted service learning or work integrated learning. Through supervised practice, students acquire clinical skills and learn from each other in the context of the group supervision. The staff participants confirmed work-integrated learning forms part of the psychometry module and the programme at large. Munnik et al (2021) outlined that competency-based training in psychometric assessment include theory, practice, and integration. They also outlined that face-to-face lectures, work-integrated learning and supervision were the modes of delivery in the psychometric assessment module. Work-integrated learning or supervised work contributes to preparing student for clinical competency (Embo, Driessen, Valcke, & van der Vleuten, 2015)

Objective 3A: Exploring the staff perceptions of students' attitude towards psychometric assessment,

The findings suggest that staff perceive students to generally struggle with this course. Even though they may have done the introduction during their undergraduate and honours degree, they still find it difficult to make the connection. The staff participants mentioned that students usually have a negative attitude towards psychometry. They felt that students often tolerate having to do it. One of the staff participants (SP-3) felt that students do not understand the importance of psychometric assessment in the discipline of psychology and in the practice of clinical psychology. The staff participants expressed that student were unprepared for the intensity of the workload which they experienced as overwhelming.

Fagan (2002) reflected that the field of assessment is constantly changing and developing as more information about human behaviour is acquired. The HPCSA requires the clinical psychologists to have the ability to use psychological assessment to conceptualise, diagnose, plan, and monitor therapeutic processes. This mean that there is a need for continuous professional development throughout one's professional career.

Objective 3B: Staff perceptions of student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment

The findings suggest that staff observed patterns to student engagement. The staff observed that students were less engaged with the technical aspects related to administration, scoring and theory of test construction. Conversely, they were *“more engaged in working with the specific tests and translating that into the outputs of reports and providing really full feedback”* (SP-3). This aspect of the course is more interpretive in nature and has more direct links to clinical application.

Staff also observed that students approached the content with apprehension and anxiety because it was unfamiliar to them. This in turn impacted their engagement. The staff noted that when students are contained and there attempts to normalise their experiences, they become

more engaged. The literature resonates with this finding. Tinio (2009) stated that when students are placed in unfamiliar situations and are asked to use new skills, they often become nervous and disengage. Skinner, Kindermann and Furrer (2009) reflected that the extent of a student's active involvement in a learning activity constitutes engagement. These authors argued that the lack of familiarity with the content, new skills and the class environment all contribute to engagement.

The observations of the staff reflect three aspects that emerge in the literature. First, they recognised indicators of the student's engagement. For example, expressed interest in content. Second, they reflected on the impact of containment and normalisation which constitute facilitating conditions for engagement as described by Lam et al. (in press). Students' motivation, attitudes and values are other examples of engagement-fostering aspects of the classroom environment (Jang, Kim, & Reeve, 2012). Third, the staff participants identified engagement-related outcomes such as learning, achievement, and class-specific grades. Tinio (2009) stated that the ability to distinguish between facilitators, indicators and outcomes of engagement is key to creating an environment that promotes engagement. This ability is integral to conducting an effective assessment of engagement. Even though the participants did not use this formulation, it emerged that they were approaching their assessment and reflection on student engagement from such a perspective. Jang, Kim, and Reeve (2012) argued that it is important to be able to assess engagement, because the extent and quality of students' engagement is a strong predictor of students' learning, achievement, and academic progress. These authors further argued that assessing student engagement during lectures, supervision and work-integrated learning can assist the training team to come up with effective intervention. It is important for clinical educators to be able to evaluate and instruct students on skills without causing undue anxiety (Frontczak, 1999).

Objective 3C: Staff perceptions of students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment

The staff observed that students were more engaged in clinical competencies in particular interpretation of profiles and report writing. This could be attributed to their general interest in psychological work, and prior exposure to clinical work. The module includes practical exposure to face-to-face assessments that provides the clinical exposure students found more engaging. Munnik et al. (2021) confirmed that students have a practical exposure to assessment at the UWC-based community clinic and at hospital-based placements from the second term onwards. Kamaloodien et al. (2012) and Smith et al. (2012) argued that the psychological assessment module has a strong focus on the attainment of clinical skills and competency as per HPCSA recommendation which appeals to the focus of students in the clinical programme (HPCSA, 2019). Clinical training prepares students for their professional role, it is crucial that this training be as successful as possible (Frontczak, 1999).

Objective 3D: Staff perceptions of student's preparedness for the module.

The findings suggest that students were unprepared for the clinical training in general and psychometry. The observation that student participants had a very limited understanding of what to expect in the Mpsych programme contributed to unpreparedness and unrealistic expectations. Students were also unprepared for the physical and emotional energy required to complete and facilitate the course. Unpreparedness, in its various forms, contributed to students' attitude towards psychometry in the present study. A staff participant (-1) reflected that *“there is a little bit of phobia and a little bit of anxiety around this preparedness. “Staff made a distinction between unpreparedness that related to an understanding of what training entails and realistic expectations versus the fund of knowledge enabling the student to manage the academic content more readily.*

The findings resonate with the literature that students are generally unprepared for clinical training and may have unrealistic expectations of the programme (Kamaloodien et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2012). Preparedness is an important variable in a student's academic life because it strengthens student learning (Rischer, 2019). However, in the context of clinical training, students will never have a full and realistic understanding of what training entails. Nor will they be fully prepared. Thus, it is more important to assess the level of preparedness in terms of content and understanding of what training entails and to work towards facilitating an emerging sense of understanding. Student unpreparedness in terms of academic content and fund of knowledge requires additional work during an already intensive programme whereas unrealistic expectations can be rectified and shaped once it is made explicit.

5.3. Conclusion

The major element of becoming a Clinical Psychologist is captured in the above-described narratives of personal struggle, acceptance, and growth. It is crucial to acknowledge that being part of this profession basically emphasises personal insight, connectedness and understanding of others and oneself. The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of student psychologist and training staff towards psychometric assessment. The findings highlighted several factors that influenced the students' experience and perception and that there is a complex set of experiences prior to enrolment that impact the stance towards the content and process of training. The factors prior to enrolment include the participants' interest in psychological work, early childhood curiosity, prior work experience, need for skills capacitation and develop insight into mental illness. Once they were in the programme, they had to master content and practical skill while managing the attitudinal and perceptual challenges resting from earlier factors and course related factors such as, the nature of the programme, preparedness for the programme, and perceived competence.

Particularly, the students had to adjust and manage their experience of the programme. The training staff play an important role in ensuring students success. As highlighted in the study, some of these responsibilities that are expected to be delivered by the educators include understanding the scope of practice, what is it that HPCSA board requires of the student to know. Training staff must always know what the board expectations are, and they must know what the competency requirement are for student psychologists. A high level of mastery and skill in the content was an important factor in teaching psychometry and engendering confidence and engagement in the student psychologist cohort.

5.4 Limitations

- The exclusion of intern and community service psychologists from the sampling frame limited the insight gained into the developmental nature of competence and changes in perception over time. Training is not conceptualized as discrete, but as a cumulative process. The decision to focus on a particular cohort was well motivated and provided a stage view at the expense of a view over the course of training.
- The number of student psychologists recruited constituted 50% of the intake but was a small sample. Even though the design and methodology lent itself to smaller samples, a more robust view might have been developed if the sample were larger.
- The pandemic impacted the study most in that successive cohorts would have had completely different experiences and thus the decision to only recruit from a single cohort. This provided a more contextually relevant set of findings, but it was at the expense of a more general understanding of the programme in its entirety.

5.5. Recommendations

- Future research should be conducted with a sampling frame that include intern and community service psychologists to increase insight gained into the developmental nature of competence and changes in perception over time.
- A larger sample size may allow for more divergent and unique perspectives, which may permit a more comprehensive exploration of experiences pertaining to the aim of the study. Possibly a quantitative study could reveal whether the perceptions and experiences of participants are common to other master's degree students from different institutions.
- Higher Education institutions should provide prospective students with an outline that reflects the skill level required at outset of the course, as well as how their skills will be developed throughout the course to become a professional in psychology (Offord,2016).

5.6 Significance of the study

The study attempted to explore perceptions of psychometry and experiences of psychology masters' students from a historically disadvantaged institution. The information presented by the study may attempt to give directions for psychological assessment training in South Africa. It is desired that this exploration will further provide the reader with an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing psychological assessment training in South Africa, as well as promote awareness and encourage new initiatives to better assessment training.

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Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: (021) 959-2283, Fax : (021) 959-3515

E-mail: vunenemabunda@gmail.com

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Questions:

Student perception

5. What were your reasons for enrolling in M1 programme in Psychology?
6. What were your expectations of the programme?
7. To what extent were your expectations met?
8. What was your experience of this programme?
9. What is the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services?
10. What is the relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum?
11. What is the perceived relevance of psychometric assessment?
12. To what extent did course prepare you for the professional realities?
13. what were your perception in terms of the taught modules, supervision and service-learning requirements?

Staff perceptions

- What are the students' attitudes towards psychometric assessment?
- What are your perceptions about student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment?
- What are your perceptions about students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment?
- How prepared are students for the module?

Appendix B

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION DIVISION

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535
South Africa
T: +27 21 959 4111/2948
F: +27 21 959 3170
E: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za
www.uwc.ac.za

10 October 2019

Ms V Mabunda Psychology

Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Ethics Reference Number: BM19/8/8

Project Title: The attitudes to and perceptions of
psychometric assessment amongst student
psychologist and clinical training staff.

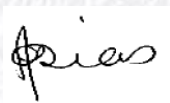
Approval Period: 09 October 2019 – 09 October 2020

I hereby certify that the Biomedical Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the scientific 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 in good time for annual renewal

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*

BMREC REGISTRATION NUMBER -130416-050



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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E-mail: vunenemabunda@gmail.com

Appendix C

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: The attitudes and perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Vunene Mabunda at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a Clinical student psychologist /clinical training staff at UWC. The purpose of this research project study is to explore the attitudes and perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff.

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

You will be asked to participate in an in-depth, semi-structured interview at a time most convenient for you. Interviews will be conducted at a place that is neutral and safe. The approximate duration of the interview will be 30-45minutes.

The semi-structured questions include:
Student perception

1. What were your reasons for enrolling in M1 programme in Psychology?
2. What were your expectations of the programme?
3. To what extent were your expectations met?
4. What was your experience of this programme?
5. What is the role of psychometric assessment in clinical services?
6. What is the relative place of psychometric assessment in the taught curriculum?
7. What is the perceived relevance of psychometric assessment?
8. To what extent did course prepare you for the professional realities?
9. What were your perception in terms of the taught modules, supervision and service-learning requirements?

Staff perceptions

1. What are the students' attitudes towards psychometric assessment?
2. What are your perceptions about student's engagement in the course content for psychometric assessment?
3. What are your perceptions about students' engagement in clinical competencies for psychometric assessment?
4. How prepared are students for the module?

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

The researcher undertakes to protect your identity and the nature of your contribution. To ensure your anonymity, the researcher will create an identification key linked to your audio recording, notes and transcribed interview. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to this identification key.

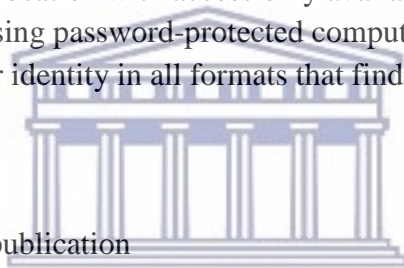
This research project involves making audio-recordings of you. The audio-recordings will be transcribed in order to look for common themes arising from various interviews. The audio recordings will be kept in a safe location with only the researcher having access to it.

To ensure your confidentiality, the audio-recordings, interview notes and transcribed interview will be kept in a safe location with access only available to the researcher.

Electronic data will be stored using password-protected computer files.

The researcher will protect your identity in all formats that findings will be distributed including

- An unpublished thesis
- A conference presentation
- A manuscript submitted for publication



What are the risks of this research?

Qualitative research frequently involves the use of narratives derived from the participants. This study requires interaction and talking about oneself and others. Human interaction may carry some amount of risks. Due to the very personal and relatively unstructured nature of the inquiry that can allow the detailed discussion in this study, there is a possibility that your reflection process might stir up emotions that could require containment. We will nevertheless attempt to minimise such risks and act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

What are the benefits of this research?

The benefits to you include the opportunity to engage in a reflective process and share your subjective perceptions of psychometry assessment as a student psychologist. The results may help provide richer quality information that can lead to the discovery of new initiatives or problems that should be addressed.

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

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

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Vunene Mabunda at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact:

Researcher:

Vunene Mabunda

Dept of Psychology, UWC

078 340 8020

vunenemabunda@gmail.com

Researcher supervisor:

Dr. Mario Smith

Dept of Psychology, UWC

021-9592283/ 0823309284

mrsmith@uwc.ac.za

Head of Department:

Dr. Michelle Andipatin

Dept of Psychology, UWC

021-9592283

mandipatin@uwc.ac.za

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

Prof José Frantz

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

chs-deansoffice@uwc.ac.za



This research has been approved by the Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape.



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E-mail: vunenemabunda@gmail.com

Appendix D

Consent form

Title of Research Project: The attitudes and perceptions of psychometric assessment amongst student psychologist and clinical training staff.

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 agree for this interview to be audio-taped.

I also agree to the dissemination protocol outlined in the information sheet

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....

Appendix E

AGREEMENT FOR GRANTHOLDER-LINKED STUDENT SUPPORT 2018



THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE INITIALED (by all signatories), SIGNED AND UPLOADED TO THE NRF ONLINE SYSTEMS, TOGETHER WITH THE STUDENT NOMINATION FORM AS WELL AS OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AS PRESCRIBED FOR NOMINATIONS. NO NOMINATION WILL BE PROCESSED IF SUCH DOCUMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE NRF.

I, Vunene Mabunda (full names and surname) (hereinafter referred to as the Bursar), hereby accepts the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement should the Grantholder-linked student assistantship/bursary/fellowships/staff development grant (hereinafter referred to as 'Bursary') be awarded to me. I acknowledge that the Grantholder's 'Conditions of Grant' attached to the Grantholder's Grant Award Letter, and the 'NRF Bursary, Scholarships Values Rules and Guidelines', or such other terms and conditions as may be imposed by the NRF and of which I shall be advised in writing, by the Grantholder, shall form an integral part of this Agreement. I acknowledge that the Bursary is subject to the following terms and conditions:

A. GRANTHOLDER-LINKED STUDENT SUPPORT CONDITIONS

1. The Bursary will be awarded for one year at a time only. It may, in the sole discretion of the NRF, be renewed on submission of annual nominations for the subsequent year(s), up to the allowable maximum period of support indicated below within the tenure of the Grant under which the Bursary is awarded, depending on the -
 - a. duration of the Grant awarded to the Grantholder;
 - b. availability of funds and/or change of priorities by the Government and/or other funders; and
 - c. academic progress by the Bursar.

i. Nothing herein contained shall, however, create an expectation that the bursary shall be renewed for subsequent years.

LEVEL	MAXIMUM PERIOD OF SUPPORT
Student Assistantships	
Final-year Undergraduate degree/diploma (only full-time)	1 year
BTech/Honours (only full-time)	1 year
Post-graduate Bursaries	
Masters full-time	2 years
Masters part-time	3 years
Doctoral full-time	3 years
Doctoral part-time	5 years
Masters degree upgraded to Doctoral study	4 years
Postdoctoral Fellowships	-
Staff Development Grants	
Masters level	3 years
Doctoral level	5 years

2. Concerning citizenship, the Bursar must comply with the conditions as applicable to each academic level as stated in the documents mentioned above.
3. The Bursar (SA or non-SA citizens) will be registered and based at the university as stipulated in the nomination form during the tenure of the Bursary. Foreign nationals, employed Full-time who have been awarded leave/sabbatical for the period of study and who receive a bursary from their employers do not qualify for full-time bursaries.
4. The Bursar may not hold any bursaries, awards, assistantships concurrently with the NRF bursary, which bind him/her to enter the service of any organisation upon completion of his/her studies. The Bursary may also not be held concurrently with any other NRF or South African Government funded bursary scheme or organisations like the CSIR, MRC, etc.
5. The Bursar registered on a full-time basis for the degree, may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the scholarship, but he/she will be allowed to undertake teaching, tutorials, assistance or demonstration duties and be remunerated for his/her services at the normal university tariff for services rendered.
6. The following conditions will apply with regard to supplementary funding (top-ups/supplementation):
 - a. The bursary may be supplemented by other sources to the Institution's maximum value at Masters and Doctoral levels
 - b. Where the university does not have a maximum allowable amount, the Bursary may be topped up with half of the NRF allowable maximum value per level.
 - c. The Bursary may be supplemented by the NRF Grantholder's running costs up to a maximum value of R20 000 p.a.
7. The Bursar must obtain the degree for which the Bursary was awarded within one (1) years after NRF funding has ceased and notify the NRF via the university authority, by that date, of the status of completion of the degree. Should the Bursar not obtain the degree for which the Bursary was awarded, relinquish his/her studies, or leave the university during the award, he/she will have to refund all payments of the Bursary already received for study towards the particular degree, plus interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers.

V.M
H.S.K.
A.F

Should he/she not complete the Doctoral degree, having been upgraded from a Masters degree during the period of funding, the NRF support awarded for both Masters and Doctoral studies will have to be refunded, in the same manner as specified in this Clause of the Agreement.

8. Should the Bursar fail to fulfil any of the aforesaid conditions or should it transpire that the Bursary was awarded on the basis of false information supplied to the NRF, the NRF is entitled to forthwith cancel the Bursary, in which event the Bursar will be liable to refund the scholarship plus interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers.
9. If a Bursar wishes to change the research project or field of study, supervisor or institution for which the bursary was awarded, details must be submitted to the NRF through the appropriate university authority for consideration prior to such a change.
10. Upgrading of a Bursary from Masters to a Doctoral level is not automatic and Grantholders must apply to the NRF to have the Bursary upgraded providing proof of upgrading from the Institution, and provided that sufficient funds are available.
11. The Bursar will acknowledge the financial assistance of the NRF on the title page of the (mini) thesis/dissertation as well as in all articles and publications that emanate from the study funded by the NRF as follows:

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

12. If statements concerning the research are made to the media, it should be stated explicitly that the Bursar initiated the research and that it should under no circumstances be regarded as research done on behalf of, or commissioned by, the NRF.
13. This Bursary must be used in compliance with all South African and international laws, where these do not contradict South African laws, and the research outputs must be used entirely and wholly for legal purposes.
14. All NRF awards are subject to the NRF Statement on Open Access to Research Publications. Please refer to the copy of this document on the NRF Website regarding terms and conditions around publications (<http://ir.nrf.ac.za/handle/10907/103>).
15. On having been awarded the degree to which this Bursary pertains, the Bursar must inform the institutional within 30 days after obtaining the qualification.
16. For postgraduate degrees (Masters and Doctoral) the Bursar is required to upload the final corrected version of the dissertation or thesis in an approved electronic format (single Adobe readable file (PDF)) to the NRF. The institutional office responsible for the award should ensure that the bursar submits the handle or link of the dissertation or thesis deposited in the University Library's digital repository to the NRF either before or latest one month after their graduation ceremony to the following address, http://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf_funded_thesis_dissertation_requirements. Failure to comply with the requirement, will lead to the bursar being liable to refund all support provided by the NRF for the degree under which the funding was awarded.
17. Notwithstanding the conditions referred to in the clauses of this Agreement, the NRF reserves the right to adjust or cancel the bursary, at any point of the award due to unavailability of funds and/or change of priorities by the Government and/or other funders.

B. REGULATORY CLAUSES

1. The Bursary will be cancelled if it is not claimed by the Grantholder, within the Grant Year of his/her Grant.
2. The Bursar will notify the NRF, via the institutional authorities, immediately of any change in the circumstances under which the Bursary was awarded that might affect the award. Should the Bursar fail to do this, the Bursary may be cancelled by the NRF with immediate effect.
3. The Bursar will notify the NRF, via the institutional authorities immediately of any change of residential address.
4. Should the Bursar not perform in terms of this Agreement, the NRF will be entitled to institute legal action for the recovery of any funds pertaining to this Bursary. The Bursar will be liable for all costs incurred on the scale of attorney and client and further agrees to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court in accordance with Section 45 of Act 32 of 1944, as amended, for any action that may arise from this Agreement.
5. By signing this Agreement, the Bursar gives permission to the NRF to use his/her information as required from time to time for statistical purposes, beyond the date of completion of the bursary requirements.
6. The Bursar must register for ORCID (www.orcid.org) for integration into RISA processes and systems. This is a requirement in an effort to create and maintain a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research activities and outputs to these identifiers. Linking the identifier to institutional systems minimises the effort from institutions and researchers and ensures integrity of system content.
7. A unique identifier, as provided by ORCID, which the Bursar can associate with their name variations and their research works, is a way to ensure that these links can be made accurately and reliably. This will help the Bursar to uniquely identify him/her as the author of his/her work across all systems integrated with the ORCID registry. The aforementioned identifier must be provided to the NRF by the bursar on acceptance of the Agreement.
8. The Bursar hereby gives the NRF permission, in terms of the POPI Act, to process personal information received from him/her for funding or ORCID. For purposes of this sub-clause and any other sub-clause, "process" and "processing" shall have the meaning assigned to it in section 1 of the POPI Act.
9. The Bursar hereby elects the following address as his/her *domicilium citandi et executandi* for the service of all notices or court processes in terms of this Agreement:

ASK V.M
A.F

15 Kremetart Street, Loevenstein
Bellville, 7530

NB: Please provide a residential address. PO Box numbers and university residence or departmental addresses are not acceptable.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGREEMENT

Accepted and signed at Bellville this 26 day of March 2018

Bursar's signature: Marela Date: 26 March 2018

WITNESSES

(1) ANNEMEKA FISHER
(Print name of Witness)

[Signature]
Signature

(2) HELEN KIEHIEDO
(Print name of Witness)

[Signature]
Signature

Bursar's ID Number:

9	4	0	8	0	9	0	6	3	4	0	8	6
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ORCID Unique Identifier: 0000 0002 2778 6029

Grantholder's signature: _____ Date: _____

ON BEHALF OF THE INSTITUTION:

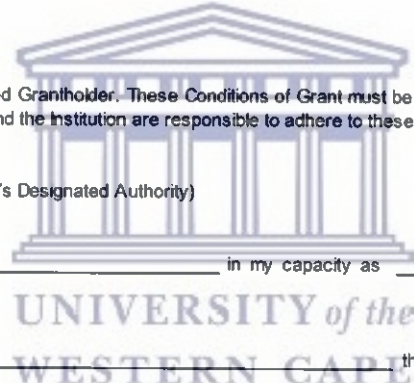
The above Conditions of Grant apply to the named Grantholder. These Conditions of Grant must be read in conjunction with the signed Master Funding Administration Agreement. Both the Grantholder and the Institution are responsible to adhere to these Conditions of Grant.

As authorised signatory, I (print name of Institution's Designated Authority)

_____ in my capacity as _____ (print description of position) accept on behalf of

Student studying institution _____ the responsibility associated with this grant.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____



ASK V.M
A.F

Appendix F

Category	Theme	Sub-theme
1. Reasons for Enrolment	Interest in clinical psychology	Self-equipment Care for others Passion for discovery Professional goal
	Practical knowledge/ experience in the field	Community work
2. Expectations of the programme	Mpsych programme	Progression from Honours to master's programme Training
	Nature of the course	Structure of the programme Students experience of the programme Management strategies between programme and personal life
3. Psychometric assessment	Psychometric assessment	Role of psychometric assessment Relative place for psychometry in the curriculum Perceived relevance of psychometry
	Preparedness for the programme	Students' preparedness for the Mpsych programme Students' preparedness for the module Attitude of the students towards psychometry Student engagement in the course content
	Internship	Supervision Feedback from Internships sites