

Researcher Experiences of a Long-term Higher Education Partnership with Rural Schools

Alicia Adams

2017

**RESEARCHER EXPERIENCES OF A LONG-TERM HIGHER
EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP WITH RURAL SCHOOLS**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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(Educational Psychology)**

in the

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Faculty of Education

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Supervisor:

Prof. Liesel Ebersöhn

PRETORIA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to all higher education researchers in the field. I have great respect and admiration for these researchers who not only generate knowledge but who also strive to achieve social justice for the greater good of our beloved country, South Africa.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

- First and foremost, to my Heavenly Father, who has carried me through this journey.
- Prof. Liesel Ebersöhn, research supervisor, for her invaluable advice, guidance, exceptional enthusiasm and motivation throughout this research process.
- My participants, for their willingness to participate in this study.
- Mrs. Wilna Swart, for her outstanding language editing of my dissertation.
- Ms. Mardeleen Ford, for her technical editing.
- Last, but not least, my family. Thank you for your unconditional support and understanding, your patience and motivation. This journey has been long and difficult but your unfailing presence and support has made this process manageable for me.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Alicia Adams

31 March 2017

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ABSTRACT

Researcher experiences of a long-term higher education partnership with rural schools

by

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Supervisor: Prof. Liesel Ebersöhn

Degree: Magister Educationis (Educational Psychology)

The purpose of the study was to explore researcher experiences of community engagement as part of a long-term higher education community engagement (HECE) partnership with rural schools. The theoretical framework that guided the study was grounded in the construct global citizenship.

The instrumental case design followed the qualitative approach from a constructivist epistemology. Semi-structured questionnaires were used for data collection with purposively sampled researchers (n=16), comprising male (n=3) and female (n=13) researchers, including local (n=14) and international (n=2) researchers, who completed their research in the conveniently sampled HECE project.

Following thematic analysis, two main themes emerged, namely: researcher perspectives on capacity development in higher education community engagement, and researcher perspectives on higher education community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions.

Findings indicated, from researchers' perspectives, that HECE benefits from collaborative partnerships, and that researchers have opportunities for personal and professional development. Researchers felt that such capacity development was necessary to ensure project sustainability. According to researchers, HECE

project challenges or barriers need to be addressed to ensure project sustainability. Higher education requires a community engagement policy that guides the establishment of platforms for knowledge generation, human capacity development and collaborative partnerships in order that the core functions of higher education institutions could be performed.

Key Terms: Inequality, globalisation, postcolonialism, higher education community engagement, researcher experiences, global citizenship, research capacity development

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DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

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01 February 2013

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This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HECE	Higher education community engagement
HEI	Higher education institutions
CE	Community engagement
FLY	Flourishing learning youth
ASL	Academic service learning

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

In an emerging and transforming society, higher education institutions are required to think in terms of social justice as a result of the social division and inequality that society is experiencing. This is especially the case in a young, democratic South Africa. The battle to overcome inequality and social injustice is one that requires community engagement at all levels, namely politically, socially and academically. From an academic perspective, the Education White Paper 3 A programme for higher education transformation (1997) provides a platform for higher education institutions to address inequality and social injustice and emphasises the significance of community engagement. In addition to this, the Department of Higher Education and Training's White paper for post-school education and training (2013) articulates community engagement and global citizenship as its vision and mission, which further support the efforts to decrease inequality and social injustice.

Higher education community engagement is typically achieved by promoting global citizenship and social justice through this partnership. Higher education community engagement requires that higher education institutions partner with communities in order to achieve social justice. Community engagement moreover contributes to social justice and plays an essential role in research (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Netshandama, 2010; O'Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh & Giles, 2011). Community engagement in research not only gives the community an opportunity to enhance social cohesion, but also attempts to eradicate social injustice and increase social emancipation and transformation. Rural schools are at the epicentre of those experiencing inequality and social injustice. Having said that, rural schools are often targeted as research participants who would benefit from higher education community engagement.

A higher education community engagement research project at the Centre for the Study of Resilience, under the auspices of the University of Pretoria, is the Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY) project. The FLY project focuses on generating knowledge on resilience in rural schools. In the 2013-2015 phase of the FLY project the aim was to determine the multiple perspectives of the experiences of partners in a higher education community engagement partnership with rural schools. The research foci include retrospective experiences of different partners (Machimana, 2016), namely of Grade 9 clients at a rural school; Grade 9 clients' parents (Grobler, 2016); of teachers (Edwards, 2016); of academic service learning students (Du Toit, 2016), as well as the experiences of researchers involved in the FLY project, who were the focus of my study. Table 1.1 below provides an overview of my study.

Table 1.1 Overview of study

TITLE	
Researcher experiences of a long-term higher education partnership with rural schools	
RATIONALE	
To contribute to insight into existing and/or emerging knowledge of higher education community engagement	
PURPOSE	
To explore the researchers' experiences of community engagement as part of a long-term higher education institution partnership with rural schools	
RESEARCH QUESTION	
How can insight into the researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement inform future higher education community engagement?	
PARADIGMATIC LENSES	
Methodological Paradigm	Qualitative approach
Meta-theoretical Paradigm	Constructivism
Theoretical Framework	Global citizenship
KEY CONCEPTS	
Inequality, globalisation, post-colonialism, higher education community engagement, global citizenship, researchers	

Researchers in higher education are key role-players in social reconstruction and in addressing developmental issues (Ramaley, 2014; Zeichner, 1993) as they have the ability to cultivate and drive a culture of global citizenship. In order to evaluate the impact of such community engagement, we would have to explore each participant's

experience of the long-term higher education community engagement partnership. By exploring and describing researchers' perspectives of community engagement in a long-term higher education partnership, I aim to address the gap in research that was identified by Malekane (2009); Mahlomaholo, Francis and Nkoane (2010); O'Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh and Giles (2011); and Mbongwe, (2012).

1.2 RESEARCH SCOPE

The FLY project is an ongoing higher education community engagement partnership with rural schools in Mpumalanga with whom the FLY team has partnered since 2006. Rural areas in Mpumalanga are characterised by scarce resources, rurality, poverty and HIV/AIDS (Makiwane, Makoae, Botsis & Vawda, 2012). Image 1.1 is a map demonstrating the local research area where the secondary school relevant to the current study is situated. This isolated area is situated near the Swaziland border and is surrounded by a vast mountain range, as captured in Photograph 1.1. The resource-constrained site of the school is evident from the minimal infrastructure depicted in Photograph 1.2.

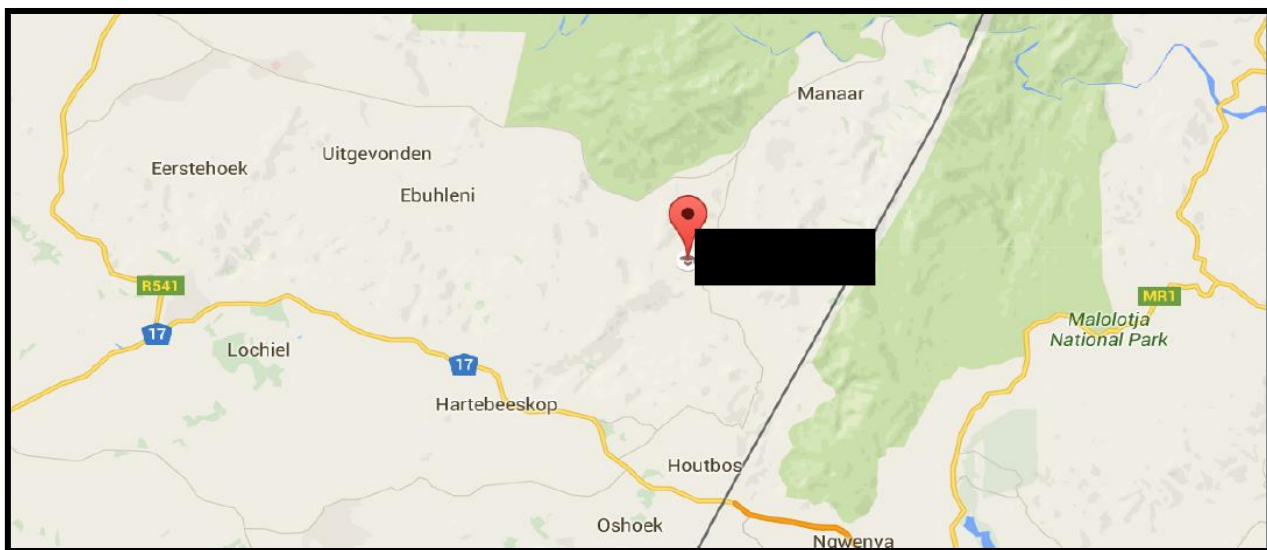


Image 1.1 Google map of the local research area



Photograph 1.1 Mountain ranges



Photograph 1.2 School building

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this explorative study is to explore researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement as part of a long-term partnership with rural schools.

The explorative objective of this study is to reveal new insights (Durrheim, 2006) into researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement. Explorative studies attempt to provide new insight into a specific phenomenon (Durrheim, 2006), and therefore aligns well with this study, especially since a gap in research has been identified. Hanington and Martin (2012) stated that explorative case studies produce comprehensive and rich understanding of a specific phenomenon. In addition to this, explorative case study investigations are flexible and adaptable in nature, which serves as an added advantage (Hanington & Martin, 2012).

A disadvantage of an explorative case study is that it generates speculative insight as opposed to accurate descriptions of a phenomenon that are engendered by the descriptive case study (Durrheim, 2006). This is typically associated with a lack of rigour (Yin, 1984), a limitation that has been addressed through various strategies to achieve rigour such as member checking.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Primary research questions

The *primary research question* guiding this study is:

- How can insight into researcher experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnership with rural schools inform future higher education community engagement?

1.4.2 Subquestions

In addressing the above-mentioned primary question, the *subquestions* listed below were explored, namely: How can insight into the researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools:

- Determine what they know about higher education community engagement?
- Identify strengths within higher education community engagement partnerships?
- Identify limitations within higher education community engagement partnerships?
- Determine what is required for future planning in higher education community engagement projects?

1.5 PARADIGMATIC LENSES

1.5.1 Methodological paradigm

A qualitative methodological approach was selected for this study to understand the subjective meanings and personal experiences of the researchers. According to Creswell (2007) qualitative research is not easily defined, nevertheless, Merriam (2009, p.5) defines qualitative research as “interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences”. Bahari (2010) states that qualitative research, often associated with views and ideas of social realities, are constructed through social interactions. These social realities are subjective and multiple, as seen through the eyes of the participant. With that in mind, a qualitative research approach would support and strengthen the knowledge generated by the subjective experiences of the participants. In addition,

since this was an explorative study, the qualitative approach would best serve the purpose of this study as qualitative research serves to provide rich, in-depth insight in social contexts (Bahari, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Ploeg, 1999). According to Creswell (2003), knowledge generation grounded in constructivism dovetails well with knowledge generated by qualitative research. Furthermore, qualitative methods, for example interviews, were used in this study, which further supports the qualitative methodology.

Creswell (2007) mentions a few characteristics that are associated with qualitative research which can be perceived as advantages in this study. Qualitative research, as posited by Creswell (2007), often employs rigorous data collection procedures. Another characteristic of qualitative research, according to Creswell (2007), is that it applies inductive data analysis. In this study, all the collected data were thoroughly analysed. Data went to and fro between the participants and the research investigator. This allowed me to identify and explore various themes and patterns that emerged.

Qualitative research is also a form of inquiry in itself. This aligns with the purpose of the study since it aims to explore the participants' experiences. This characteristic provides the study with a platform for making the interpretations which were necessary to generate new and rich insight to inform future partnerships.

Creswell (2007) also elaborates on the shortcomings of the qualitative approach, which I addressed during the course of the study. Qualitative research is generally very time-consuming as extensive periods of time are spent in the field. In addition to this, the data collection procedures are also very complex and time-consuming. On the one hand, the latter was a challenge in this study since data went to and fro between the participants and the research investigator many times. On the other hand, the comprehensive data collection procedures enabled quality interpretations. According to Carr (1994) research findings may be distorted by the relationship between the participant and the research investigator in qualitative research. Since I myself was involved in the FLY project as an Academic Service Learning (ASL) student, I had to

practice reflexivity in this study to ensure that my personal experience and prior assumptions were contained throughout the study (Mays & Pope, 2000).

1.5.2 Meta-theoretical paradigm

A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs, interrelated philosophical assumptions or epistemologies broadly conceived as research methodologies (Creswell, 2007). A paradigm informs research and shapes the practice of research. Furthermore, a paradigm can be viewed as a lens through which reality is interpreted (Creswell, 2007). I selected constructivism as the meta-theoretical lens in this study. According to Bahari (2010) constructivism focuses on what people think, their views and ideas, and how they feel about a particular phenomenon. Ültanir (2012) states that constructivism is a learning or meaning-making epistemology which provides an explanation of the nature of knowledge. One of the central principles of constructivism is that people can construct new understandings and knowledge through interaction with existing knowledge. Knowledge is constructed by assigning meaning to different experiences, which is yet another principle of constructivism, as recorded by Ültanir (2012).

In accordance with the underlying aims of this study, the constructivist paradigm serves to provide rich insight into the way that higher education researchers experienced the long-term community engagement partnership with rural schools. According to Heron and Reason (1997) realities are mentally constructed through different ways of knowing. There are different types of knowing, namely propositional, practical and experiential. Experiential knowing is knowing through participation and interaction. The constructivist lens therefore makes provision for interaction between existing and new insights so that meaning is made of it and knowledge is generated to inform future partnerships. Detailed accounts of the researchers' experiences of the long-term partnership were used to construct new knowledge that could be useful to inform future partnerships better.

Constructivism is closely connected with this study as it seeks to generate knowledge through the experiences of the researchers. It also ties in appropriately with the methodological paradigm as they share similar principles. One of the challenges this

approach presents to a research investigator is subjectivity. This was addressed through reflexivity, which is evident in my research journal (Appendix H). According to Baxter Magolda (2001) research investigators are required to interact with the participants to access knowledge. The knowledge that is constructed is solicited and refined through interaction and dialogue until consensus is reached on the construction. I addressed the challenge of subjectivity by means of dialogical inter-subjectivity by engaging with the participants to ensure that consensus was reached with regard to the knowledge that was generated. Subjectivity was therefore managed by means of member checking.

1.5.3 Theoretical framework

The main theory that guides my research is global citizenship (Schattle, 2009). As a result of globalisation in the past few decades, a renewed interest in cosmopolitan thinking has emerged, which is referred to as global citizenship (Schattle, 2009). According to Schattle (2009) global citizenship is encapsulated by constructs such as awareness, responsibility, participation and cross-cultural empathy. In addition to this, Schattle (2009) argues that global citizenship is a key strategic principle in higher education for addressing inequality and social injustice. The construct global citizenship is the golden thread that links higher education community engagement and social justice. Global citizenship will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Table 1.2 provides an overview of the research design and methodology of this study. Firstly, Table 1.2 introduces the instrumental case study research design that was employed in this study to provide a holistic and in-depth understanding of the researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The table further indicates other methodological choices such as participant selection, data collection and documentation as well as data analysis and interpretation of data. These methodological choices will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Table 1.2 Outline of methodological choices

RESEARCH DESIGN	
Instrumental case study Convenient sample of case: consists of researchers' experiences of HECE	
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	
Purposive sampling of participants (n=16, female=13, male=3; postgraduate students, and postdoctoral fellows=8, local co-researchers employed in higher education=6; international co-researchers employed in higher education=2) from the above instrumental case Purposive sampling criteria: The researchers' sampling criteria consisted of: (1) Former postgraduate students or postdoctoral fellows who have completed their research in the FLY project. (2) Local and international co-researchers employed in higher education institutions who have conducted research in the FLY project	
DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION	
Data generation techniques	Questionnaires (n=16), informed consent forms and demographic questionnaires were e-mailed to participants following an e-mailed invitation to the participants Questionnaires were processed either electronically, via e-mail (=14), telephonically (=1) or face-to-face (=1)
Data documentation techniques	Completed questionnaires were captured electronically Verbatim transcriptions of 2 audio-recorded interviews were made
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	
QUALITATIVE CRITERIA	
Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability	
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and protection from harm	

1.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

The framework for methodological rigour used in this study was based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic enquiry model of trustworthiness as well as Shenton's (2004) strategies of rigour to accomplish trustworthiness. Table 1.2 introduces the key criteria for trustworthiness, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The qualitative criteria will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the research process of this study, certain ethical guidelines were adhered to. These guidelines are introduced in Table 1.2, namely: informed consent; privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; and protection from harm (Maree, 2007). These ethical research guidelines will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

1.9 CONCEPTUALISATION

It is furthermore necessary to clarify certain key concepts that are repeatedly referred to in this study on my research. Below I briefly define the key concepts that I used in my research.

1.9.1 Researcher

According to Richter and Tyeku (2006) a researcher is someone who enjoys doing research for the sake of research. A researcher is practical and resourceful. Most importantly, researchers generate knowledge (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010). The role and the experiences of researchers in higher education community engagement will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

In this study researchers are the research participants. To avoid confusion, I identify my role as researcher in this study as “research investigator”.

1.9.2 Experience

Clandini and Connelly (1994) define experience as a flow of thoughts and meaning attached to immediate situations. Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) define experience as a meaningful encounter that entails observing and engaging with the environment. They go on to say that making meaning is an essential part of experience.

When researchers reflect on their experiences of long-term higher education partnerships with rural schools they can gain insight into higher education community engagement. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.9.3 Long-term

According to Merriam-Webster.com (2017) long-term is defined as “occurring over or involving a relatively long period of time”. According to Lindenmayer and Likens (2009), long-term research can provide crucial insight in addition to improving the management of projects. This study seeks to explore and describe the researchers’ experiences of a long-term higher education partnership with rural schools.

1.9.4 Higher education

According to Merriam-Webster.com (2016), higher education is simply defined as “education at higher level” or “tertiary-level education”. There will be further elaboration on higher education in Chapter 2, where the aim of higher education as well as the role it plays in community engagement amongst other aspects related to higher education will be discussed in detail. Community engagement will be deliberated in Chapter 2.

1.9.5 Community engagement

Community engagement plays a vital role in social justice and global citizenship and is increasingly becoming mandatory in higher education institutions while at the same time being a core function (Mugabi, 2015). A further discussion on community engagement is presented in Chapter 2.

1.9.6 Higher education community engagement

According to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2010) higher education community engagement represents a collaborative partnership between higher education institutions and the community, where an exchange of knowledge and resources are of mutual benefit to the parties that are involved. A further discussion on higher education community engagement is reflected in Chapter 2.

1.9.7 Rural schools

According to Teach.com (2017) rural schools are characterised by geographic isolation and by their size. Rural schools are increasingly faced with diversity and adversity,

accompanied by an increase in the state's responsibilities (Arnold, Newman, Gabby & Dean, 2005). Higher education institutions therefore partner with marginalised groups such as rural schools in an effort to address social inequality in education with the aim of achieving social justice (De Lange, 2012).

1.9.8 Partnership

Keene and Colligan (2004) describe a partnership as a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit and respect. Higher education institutions form partnerships for community engagement purposes. According to Vasconcellos and Vasconcellos (2009) community engagement partnerships facilitate and promote empowerment of the powerless, in so doing enabling the powerless to contribute to knowledge generation. A further discussion on partnerships will be undertaken in paragraph 2.4 of Chapter 2.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework of the study. This includes consulting relevant and authoritative literature relating to higher education community engagement.

Chapter 3: Research process

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodological decisions made during the study. The proposed methods of data collection, data analysis and interpretation as well as the ethical considerations of this study are outlined.

Chapter 4: Results and interpretations

Chapter 4 includes the presentation and discussion of the data obtained during the study. The data are analysed and the research results discussed in detail. The findings of this study are also linked to the relevant literature that was reviewed. I identified literature that supports and even contradicts the interpretations of my findings in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter, which links the findings of this study with the research question and purpose of the study. The contributions and the challenges presented in this study will be discussed as well as recommendations for future research, practice and policy-making, which are made.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter served as an introduction to the chapters that follow. The rationale and purpose for this study were discussed as well as its conceptual parameters. An overview of content to be discussed in the chapters that follow was also provided.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a transforming society in a young phase of democracy (Marais, 2011). It nevertheless exhibits cumulative inequality, social division and injustice, where certain groups tend to be marginalised and oppressed in society (May, 2000). Rural schools form part of this marginalised group and is described as dysfunctional due to legacies of apartheid education (Mahlomaholo, Francis, & Nkoane, 2010). As a result of the inequality and social division experienced in society, South African higher education institutions have been restructured with the aim of addressing ongoing social inequality issues (Barnes, Baijnath, & Sattar as cited in Botha & Lemmer, 2012) to bring about social transformation. In the effort to address these prevailing societal issues, knowledge generation in isolation is not nearly enough to bring about social transformation as this is only achieved through knowledge-sharing, which takes place through collaboration (Ghaye, Melander-Wikman, Kisare, Chambers, Bergmarke, Kostenuis, & Lillyman, 2008). One way in which to achieve social cohesion and address injustice in society is through higher education community engagement (Green & Preston, 2001; Bond & Preston, 2005; Moiseyenko, 2005). Higher education community engagement necessitates a community-university partnership in which the researcher also plays a vital, participatory role in the success of community engagement research initiatives (Strier, 2011). Higher education community engagement as a result forms part of the broader body of knowledge, which will be elaborated upon in the literature review that follows.

In Chapter 2, I will provide an overview of literature with regard to inequality and higher education community engagement. In addition to this, I will elucidate subthemes interconnected with inequality, such as globalisation and postcolonialism, and higher education community engagement, such as social cohesion, social justice, social responsibility and global citizenship, which are not only key concepts of community

engagement, but are also affiliated with the core functions of higher education. Furthermore, I will explore in particular the extent to which researcher perspectives on higher education community engagement have been investigated. In this way, I will be able to illustrate where my study may potentially inform higher education community engagement.

2.2 INEQUALITY

2.2.1 Introduction

Research was conducted by Ukpere and Slabbert (2009) as well as Ukpere (2011), who suggest in their findings that there is a connection between current globalisation and inequality. Furthermore, Ukpere and Slabbert (2009) argue that there is a direct link between levels of unemployment and increased levels of inequality and poverty within a society. This is further supported by Khoapa (2014), who links inequality to unequal access to education, which consequently produces less skilled workers, thus increasing unemployment as well as negatively influencing the general economy of developing countries. The corollary of this leads to increased poverty. As a result this cycle repeats itself from one generation to the next. According to Ramaley (2014), the latter is considered a wicked problem that society must deal with as a result of globalisation.

2.2.2 Inequality and globalisation

Irrespective of research suggesting the convincing connection between globalisation and inequality, it is imperative to understand each of these concepts in isolation as well as in relation to one another.

According to Dictionary.com (2016), inequality refers to “the state of being unequal”. In order to understand what inequality entails it is necessary to gain an understanding of equality first. Where equality represents equal access to resources and opportunity to all members of society, inequality represents unequal access to resources and opportunities (May, 2000). These resources and opportunities range from access to clean running water to quality education and job opportunities.

Ukpere and Slabbert (2009) attribute the increase in income inequality and poverty over the past decades to globalisation. In addition to this statement, they say that global inequality can be attributed to the global trend of increasing global unemployment.

According to Marginson (1999, p.19) globalisation is described as “the irreversible political and domestic class changes in a nation”. The effects of globalisation are far-reaching and tend to inhibit or transform various national government sectors - education being one of them (Marginson, 1999). Giddens (1990, p. 64) defines globalisation as “the intensification of worldwide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. The globalisation phenomenon has become very popular (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2009; Ukpere, 2011) in recent decades. According to Scholte (2000), globalisation is a phenomenon that is experienced differently in different societies. Globalisation is generally perceived as a solution to poverty and inequality. It is perceived as a positive change for a country and economy, although this is in actual fact just the face value of globalisation. If globalisation in its entirety is closely examined, it will reveal that with globalisation comes renewed problems that have their own ripple effects. This in turn accelerates unemployment, which is believed to be the root cause of inequality and poverty. In essence, globalisation can be beneficial to the growth and development of a country and economy but at the same time it can also exacerbate existing inequality problems (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2009; Ukpere, 2011; Ramaley, 2014).

2.2.3 Postcolonial South Africa: inequality and globalisation

Postcolonialism is described as a political ideology (Chapman, 2008). It is a transition from colonialism to independence from metropolitan power (Chapman, 2008). In the South African context postcolonialism denotes the collapse of the apartheid regime and transformation into a democratic country (Popescu, 2005). The term inequality has great significance, especially in the South African context, as South Africa experiences

inequality in abundance (Bhorat, Van der Westhuizen, & Jacobs, 2009), not only as regards the social and educational aspects, but also the economic aspect.

It is safe to say that the original cause of inequality can be traced back to the historical context of every country. Ahluwalia and Nursey-Bay (1997) describe the history of Africa as a place where the people were oppressed, and this was accompanied by colonialism. From about the early 1950s South Africans were in the midst of combating the oppression that was exercised by the apartheid rule (Ahluwalia & Nursey-Bay, 1997). In the early 1990s, the apartheid rule began to unravel, which marked the beginning of a liberated, postcolonial South Africa (Ward, 1997).

According to May (2000) South Africa has been a victim of institutional discrimination and colonial government. South Africa was governed by colonial, apartheid legislation, which operated with a view to producing poverty and resulted in severe inequality. Unfortunately, inequality and poverty were inherited from the apartheid era and continue to linger in the new democratic South Africa (Seekings, 2011). May (2000) supports this notion by stating that although South Africa has undergone, and is still undergoing a dramatic transition, the aftermath of the apartheid regime and colonial rule has continued to perpetuate poverty and inequality in South Africa. Seekings (2011) boldly states that the inequality currently experienced in South Africa can be directly attributed to apartheid. Furthermore, Seekings (2011) and Khoapa (2014) argue that in the postapartheid era certain factors have exacerbated inequality especially with regard to employment. Khoapa (2014) states that affirmative action legislation only created a minor elite group of black South Africans, leaving the majority of black South Africans to retain their poverty status.

In addition to the effect of the transition of postcolonial democratic South Africa, Ukpere (2011) also notes the impact that globalisation had on South Africa. According to Ukpere (2011) Africa as a whole has been disregarded and negatively affected by globalisation. More specifically, globalisation has contributed to the growth in income inequality and poverty in the past few decades in South Africa (Ukpere & Slabbert, 2009).

2.2.4 South Africa and inequality

South African society has historically been characterised by high levels of income inequality (Bhorat, Van der Westhuizen, & Jacobs, 2009). According to research conducted by Bhorat et al. (2009), South Africa is considered the most unequal society in the world and although there has been some growth since 1994, meaning during the postapartheid period, it is not nearly enough to exert a positive influence with regard to limiting poverty and inequality. In fact, according to Bhorat et al. (2009) there has actually been an increase in income inequality. This implies that the rich have become richer and the poor have become increasingly poorer over the years. Keeton (2014) supports this statement by adding that many economists believe inequality is an unavoidable part of economic development and that increasing levels of inequality are often most apparent in developing countries. He, however, also points out that inequality is usually observed in the initial stages of economic growth, and that eventually inequalities in countries decrease. South Africa is a newly democratic country that is transforming socially and economically (Shapiro & Tebeau, 2011).

Keeton (2014) mentioned it is stated in a 2012 World Bank report that the difference between life opportunities for various groups of South African youth was extremely large, based on gender, race and household income. Seekings (2003) also supports the concept that South Africa is still demonstrating high levels of inequality, even in this postapartheid era. Seekings submitted in his work that much research has been done about who is affected, why there is inequality and the effect of changes in the economy that affect equality, but added that there has been very little research about the social dimensions of inequality, such as the reproduction of inequality across generations. So, it is possible that inequality is a vicious cycle as affluent households have the assets and resources to improve the life opportunities of their offspring. To the contrary, the poor households are poor because they come out of poor households with very few resources and assets, neither do they have the resources and assets to improve the life opportunities of their offspring (Seekings, 2003). This could therefore play an integral part in the persistent and increasing levels of inequality.

The causes and consequences of inequality and poverty are one and the same and are understood to have a reciprocal effect on one another. Inequality and poverty are manifested in unemployment, high mortality rates, disease, malnutrition, prostitution, child labour, and child-headed households (Bhorat et al. 2009). The latter can be viewed as a cause and/or consequence of inequality and poverty. Even though South Africa is a transforming country, poverty, inequality, rurality and adversity remain pressing issues that need to be addressed as they contribute to the social injustice that South Africa is experiencing. One of the ways through which inequality and social injustice can be addressed is higher education community engagement.

2.3 HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.3.1 Introduction

It is evident that society is living in a time of globalisation (Ledwith, 2007), but more specifically South Africa is an emerging and transforming society owing to the establishment of democracy and the eradication of apartheid (Botha & Lemmer, 2012; Hlalele, 2012). Since the introduction of democracy in 1994 South African higher education institutions have been under reconstruction to address the ongoing difficulties associated with social cohesion that are experienced in society (Barnes, Baijnath, & Sattar as cited in Botha & Lemmer, 2012). Higher education community engagement is therefore used successfully to address social issues (Bond & Paterson, 2005; Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, Mackeigan & Farrar, 2011) such as social cohesion, social justice and responsibility, and social emancipation.

Social cohesion has been reiterated as being a vital function of higher education (Green & Preston, 2001; Bond & Preston, 2005; HEQC, 2006; Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Netshandama, 2010; Botha & Lemmer, 2012; De Lange, 2012), which became evident from the large body of literature that I consulted. Higher education institutions provide faculty members as well as students with opportunities and resources to meet the growing demand for social cohesion. Social cohesion is the broader focus of higher education institutions. However, this is closely linked to social justice and responsibility. Social cohesion is the key element in eradicating past injustices. In higher education

institutions, students are socialised to “acquire the core values that underpin social cohesion” (Moiseyenko, 2005, p. 89.), and this includes trustworthiness, connectedness and relatedness. These aspects could in turn foster a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the greater society through community-engaged activities, which could subsequently address social injustice and inequality as community engagement is the catalyst for bringing about social change. Since social justice and responsibility are inherent and not something that can be governed by legislation, higher education institutions employ community engagement in order to practice and promote social justice and responsibility, which may ultimately cultivate a culture of global citizenship.

In the past few decades it has become evident that higher education is devoting an increasing amount of attention to globalisation. In addition to this, concepts such as community engagement have also advanced from a national interest to a global interest, in so doing expanding the concepts of social responsibility and global citizenship (Green, 2012). According to Gaventa (2001) global citizenship is the ability freely to participate in social, economic, cultural and political life.

Schattle (2009) furthermore posits that global citizenship is a key strategic principle in higher education with the aim of addressing inequality and social injustice. Schattle (2009) also states that although it has evolved, the term global citizenship has been around for decades. Renewed interest in global citizenship was sparked recently and received attention globally, especially in higher education. Recent trends in citing global citizenship in vision and mission statements have also become evident (Green, 2012).

Both Green (2012) and Schattle (2009) argue that global citizenship is a choice and a way of thinking. Therefore, even if higher education institutions make community engagement a compulsory aspect in their curriculum, the personal commitment to social justice, social responsibility and ultimately global citizenship is voluntary. With that said, it is vital that higher education institutions promote and cultivate a sense of social justice and responsibility beyond tertiary level to ensure continued participation in community engagement to address issues such as social injustice and inequality. Schattle (2009) describes the latter as social awareness, where individuals become aware of

responsibilities that are beyond their immediate needs. Global citizenship is therefore awareness of one's responsibility beyond one's community. Braskamp (2008) points out that the goal of most higher education institutions of today is to develop global citizens. Apart from community engagement, Braskamp (2008) argues, education abroad is another pathway for students to develop global perspectives, which may in turn contribute to cultivating global citizens. However, this pathway is not always accessible to all students and is especially limited in the South African context.

2.3.2 Global higher education community engagement

Literature reveals that higher education institutions play an important role in facilitating community engagement (Bond & Paterson, 2005; Caputo, 2005; Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Mahlomaholo, Francis, & Nkoane, 2010; Netshandama, 2010; Waghid, 2002, as cited in Mbongwe, 2012) as well as promoting social cohesion (Green & Preston, 2001; Moiseyenko, 2005; Hlalele, 2012). It is therefore vital to look at the role and functions of higher education institutions. Not only are higher education institutions responsible for training students, but they are also responsible for knowledge generation (Dufault, 1995; Ferman & Hill, 2004, as cited in Mbongwe, 2012).

Higher education institutions generate knowledge, however, through the community-engaged partnerships as these institutions are able to share the knowledge that has been generated. It is through knowledge-sharing that social change can be brought about in society (Dalal as cited in Mbongwe, 2012). Currie (as cited in Mbongwe, 2012) supports this statement and moreover states that if more emphasis is placed on advancing theoretical knowledge and not on knowledge-sharing, which is known as detached research according to Bond and Paterson (2005), then the impact of such research can be overestimated and/or undervalued, which in turn influences social change (Currie as cited in Mbongwe, 2012).

There are numerous definitions of community engagement that are used interchangeably, of which service-learning is one. However, for the purpose of this research I will refer to this as community engagement. Community engagement is defined by Ahmed and Palermo (2010, p. 4.) as the following:

... process of inclusive participation that supports mutual respect of values, strategies, and actions for authentic participation of people affiliated with or self-identified by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of the community of focus.

Bond and Paterson (2005, p. 338.) on the other hand define community engagement as “activities which individual academics undertake which in some way involve interaction or engagement with the non-academic community and are related to academic expertise”.

In the 1990s influential role-players in society called for “scholarship of application” as the needs of societies were to be addressed through university scholarships in order to address the issues arising from societal changes. As a consequence, there was a movement away from “detached research” towards community engagement (Bond & Paterson, 2005). In the past two decades, community engagement has become one of higher education institutions’ leading innovations (O’Meara et al. 2011) and is an outcome of the great demand for social cohesion and social justice. There has as a result been prodigious contemplation of whether community engagement should be subsumed into the core functions of higher education institutions (Netshandama, 2010).

Bender (as cited in Netshandama, 2010) states that the primary objective of community engagement is to add value to the community, especially rural communities, which are synonymous with social diversification and injustice. De Lange (2012) supports this statement and adds that community engagement programmes should inform local communities and decrease marginalisation. The value of community engagement includes respect between partners, mutual benefits for all partners, shared goals, power, responsibility and opportunities to build capacity, and ensure continuous communication and transparency in monitoring and evaluation practices (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010). Community engagement provides opportunities for sharing diverse knowledge, namely the local, practical knowledge and higher education’s theoretical, academic knowledge. Community engagement is the catalyst through which social cohesion, social justice and responsibility are achieved.

One of the rationales for higher education community engagement is to create sustainable empowering learning environments, and another is to try and rectify the dysfunctional schools in rural societies (Mahlomaholo et al. 2010). Eyler (as cited in Netshandama, 2010) confirmed that there is a lack of research that focuses on the impact of higher education community engagement on both the community and the institutions that conduct the research. This therefore indicates a gap in research and contributes to the rationale of my research.

2.3.3 Higher education community engagement in South Africa

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) states that the Council on Higher Education (CHE) should entrench community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions. This core function is grounded in the potential of community engagement to improve social issues as well as inform social transformation research agendas in higher education. Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna and Slamet (2008) concur and challenge higher education institutions to demonstrate social responsibility.

According to a World Economic Forum (2012) survey, South Africa is rated amongst the top countries with the highest-rated business or management schools in the world. If this is the case, it suggests that higher education research is not contributing to social justice or even global citizenship as there is no utilising of the resources or focusing their research on solving the problems that are experienced in society (Callaghan, 2015).

Callaghan (2015) mentions that it is up to higher education institutions to offer students life-changing opportunities that would contribute to closing the inequality gap. He goes on to say that higher education also has the major to contribute to economic development. Making this contribution is certainly possible, especially as South Africa is rated as having among the top business or management schools in the world. It is therefore in this context, amongst many others, that research outputs are necessary to address societal issues. However, in order to produce research that meets societal needs, academics need to engage in some negotiation (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007). The reason for this is that academics are required to meet various institutional needs such

as generating knowledge and developing human capital, but at the same time they are expected to address social problems facing society. Various factors tend to inhibit higher education institutions' role in social responsibility seeing that time, money and human capital are required, not to mention the pressure that there is on them to produce journal articles that do not necessarily address these social issues (Callaghan, 2015).

In summary of what is reflected in literature on higher education community engagement in South Africa, training, knowledge-generation and meeting research agendas emerge as core functions of higher education institutions. Another valuable function of higher education institutions is to socialise the students so that they acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding, which underpin not only social cohesion, but also social responsibility (Moiseyenko, 2005). Higher education curriculum content, procedures and culture all influence and promote social cohesion.

2.4 STUDIES ON RESEARCHER PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Higher education community engagement necessitates partnerships. Community engagement partnerships include various entities, researchers being one of them. Keene and Colligan (2004) stated that a partnership should demonstrate a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefits and respect for higher education community engagement to be sustainable and empowering. Researchers should partner with higher education and communities for knowledge generation. In order to understand partnering for knowledge generation we first have to define community-engaged partnerships. According to Vasconcellos and Vasconcellos (2009) community engagement partnerships should facilitate and promote empowerment of the powerless, therefore enabling the powerless to contribute to knowledge generation through community engagement. UNESCO (2009) on the other hand defines it as a network that enables the capacity to create knowledge that informs policy and practice and ultimately improves social conditions. Lister (as cited in Mbongwe, 2012) describes community

engagement partnerships as a working relationship characterised by mutual purpose, respect and willingness to negotiate research values and principles.

Herbermas (as cited in Ghaye, Melander-Wikman, Kisare, Chambers, Bergmarke, Kostenius & Lillyman, 2008) states that isolated knowledge generation is insufficient to foster social change. Dalal (as cited in Mbongwe, 2012) agrees and strengthens this notion by declaring that shared knowledge is what brings about social change. Therefore, researchers partner with communities, especially oppressed and marginalised groups, where social cohesion will be greatly beneficial. The community-engaged partnership has clear benefits, which include project benefits, for example, human capital; free access to services, knowledge and expertise; opportunities for networking; creating and expanding opportunities for empowerment (social change); and improving programme effectiveness (Hill & Dougherty, 2004, as cited in Mbongwe, 2012). However, concomitant with benefits are certain barriers such as agenda and incentive conflict; lack of respect; cultural barriers; power-sharing issues; differences in academic and community needs and competing demands for time and attention (Perkins, Ferrari, Covey & Keith, 1994; Foster, Fisherman, Perkins & Davidson 1997; Ferman & Hill 2004, as cited in Mbongwe, 2012).

According to Ahmed and Palermo (2010), the role of the researcher in higher education community engagement partnerships is to achieve the following: constructing trust with research partners, to be co-researchers, to be reflective, to mobilise and share resources, to change relationships and being the catalyst for policy and programme change. Other roles also include collaborating with the research partners, which means power-sharing (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010). The researcher is also known to initiate and spearhead community engagement research. According to O'Sullivan (2012) researchers are also programme evaluators and at times act as consultants.

Based on the higher education community engagement literature that was consulted, the majority of studies seem to focus on the students' experiences of higher education community engagement (Petersen, 2007; Malekane, 2009; Ebersöhn, Bender, Carvalho-Malekane, 2010). Other studies focus on higher education

institutions' community engagement policies and practice (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013; Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamet, 2008; Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). Petersen, Dunbar-Krige and Fritz (2008) conducted a study that reported the community engagement journey of a specific faculty of a higher education institution. The focus of this study was on the development and support of structures in a faculty for community engagement. Research conducted by Strier (2011) reported this researcher's perspective on higher education community engagement partnerships as being non-hierarchical and more participative in nature. The researchers described this type of engagement as one with an egalitarian nature. Other researchers described higher education community engagement as a platform for professional development and realisation of their professional vocation.

Research conducted by Mugabi (2015) indicates that researchers perceive higher education community engagement as encouraged, expected and valued. They also regard community engagement as an important function of higher education since it provides an opportunity to disseminate knowledge to communities. According to Mugabi's (2015) findings, there is a lack of commitment and involvement of academic staff in community engagement. Mugabi (2015) linked a lack of commitment and involvement of academic staff with a lack of institutional support. Literature that focuses on the researcher's experience of higher education community engagement is scarce. Some literature that focuses on the researcher includes studies on the researcher's role in research and project evaluation (O' Sullivan, 2012). O'Sullivan (2012) further indicates that literature fails to include narratives of the researchers' personal experiences of research itself. Therefore, I identified a gap in research as most of the literature that was consulted focused solely on the voice of the voiceless, a case in point being the research that was done by Nkoane (as cited in Mahlomaholo et al. 2011; Malekane, 2009). My observation is supported by O'Meara et al. (2009), who also note the need for research to explore the impact of higher education community-engaged partnerships on faculty members as well as how they experience or perceive it in terms of the values and the missions of their particular discipline. Because researchers are not perceived as voiceless, they are often overlooked in the research equation and this

could explain the lack of research about researchers' experiences of community-engaged research partnerships.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Research is supported by existing theories, constructs and/or models. It therefore provides the study with an underlying theory/construct, which not only guide the study and the interpretation of results, but also provide a paradigm through which the results can be viewed (Ferreira, 2012). Since global citizenship plays a vital role in higher education community engagement, it seems only fitting that the theoretical framework should be based on the concept of global citizenship.

The concept global citizenship is not a new construct in the least. It dates back to ancient Greek times and was previously known as cosmopolitan thinking (Schattle, 2009). Like many other constructs, cosmopolitan thinking evolved over time and was at some stage even forgotten. However, the emergence of globalisation in the past few decades has been accompanied by a renewed interest in formerly cosmopolitan thinking, which is currently being referred to as global citizenship (Schattle, 2009). Research by theorists Falk (1994) and Urry (2000) has contributed to the contemporary understanding of global citizenship. These theorists individually developed various categories of global citizenship based on certain sectors of the population such as global activists and reformers (Schattle, 2009). The one category of citizenry they failed to single out, however, was global educators, who contribute immensely to global citizenship. The ongoing democratic transformation of South Africa calls for social justice and global citizenship. Based on the policy contained in White Paper 3 (1997) of the Department of Higher Education and Training, higher education institutions are required to address issues of inequality and social injustice by means of community engagement. Community engagement is encouraged and can be supported by cultivating a culture of global citizenship amongst the students. In view of this, Schattle's (2009) category of global educators plays a vital role in cultivating a culture of global citizenship as educators strive to instil social awareness, empathy and a sense of participation in students. Nussbaum (1996) advocates global citizenship as opposed to

national citizenship and argues that community engagement is the vein through which global problem-solving and fulfilling of moral obligations to broader society could be achieved.

According to Green (2012) global citizenship has prominent characteristics, such as: an approach to thinking; social awareness; social empathy; and participation in social, political and economic community issues. Global citizenship as an approach to thinking implies that it is voluntary (Green, 2012). For most individuals, global citizenship is a choice of participating in social, political and economic issues relating to inequality. On the contrary, in higher education institutions community engagement is becoming mandatory to an increasing degree in an effort to promote social responsibility. This sense of social responsibility tends to evolve into accepting personal responsibility as people develop connections to particular social, political or economic issues. This in turn leads to voluntary participation. Social or cultural empathy, another characteristic, is articulated as a global education goal in which higher education institutions encourage individual students to develop the skill of understanding multiple perspectives in aid of global citizenship (Green, 2012).

Social or cultural empathy is often gained through social awareness, which is yet another characteristic of global citizenship. According to Green (2012), social awareness begins with self-awareness as individuals first need to become self-aware in order to become aware of and relate to the world around them. Green (2012) notes that one of the strengths of global citizenship in higher education is that it serves to enrich societies through community engagement. Another strength of global citizenship, according to Green (2012), is that higher education institutions are producing an increasing number of graduates who have been nurtured into global citizens and think in terms of global citizenship.

Many criticisms and challenges have nevertheless been raised about the construct of global citizenship. One of the challenges involves the inclusion of global citizenship in education as this takes time and could be very demanding, especially for higher education institutions (Green, 2012). The rationale for selecting global citizenship

as the theoretical framework for this study is that it underpins the main concepts relating to inequality, globalisation, higher education, community engagement and social justice, as is demonstrated in Figure 2.1. Global citizenship is the golden thread that seems to connect all the aforementioned concepts. It also guides the interpretation of the results in such a way that they will contribute to knowledge generation with regard to higher education community engagement.

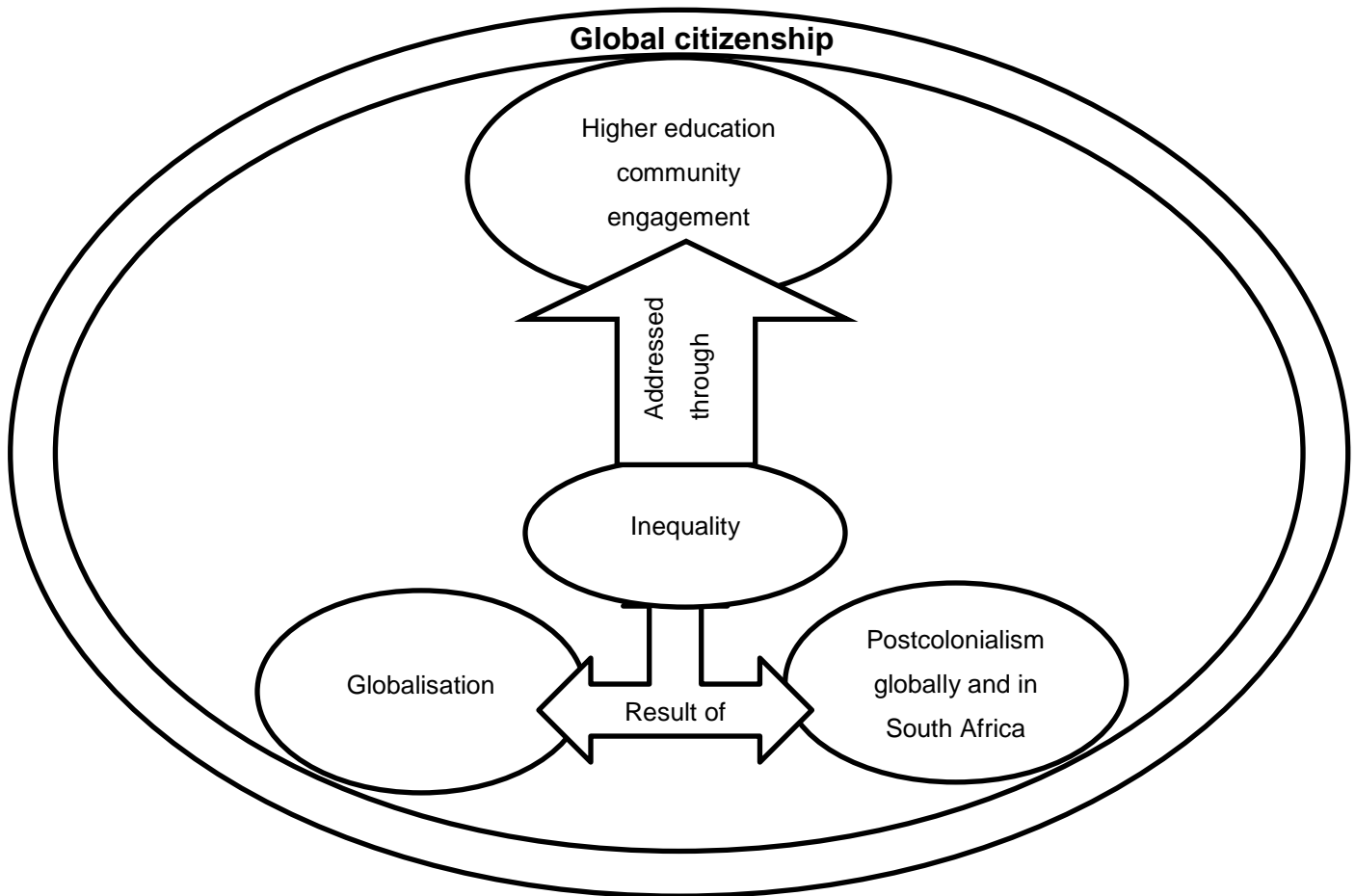


Figure 2.1 Theoretical framework

2.6 CONCLUSION

From the literature review in this study it is evident how the broader body of knowledge about higher education community engagement and its key concepts are interrelated and flow from one to the other. The subkey concepts under higher education are also interlinked with one another while further connecting to the broader key concepts. This literature review also provided a body of knowledge in which gaps in research were identified, namely the researchers' perspectives on higher education community engagement. This gap contributes not only to the research question, but also the rationale of this study.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of the literature that I consulted relating to researchers' perspectives on higher education community engagement. In Chapter 3 I elaborate on the methodological decisions that were briefly outlined in Chapter 1 (see Table 1.2). I furthermore discuss the data collection and data analysis by exploring both the advantages and limitations of the choices I made. Furthermore, I will elaborate on how I addressed the challenges that presented in this study. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the ethical strategies and quality criteria that were followed in undertaking this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN: INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY

3.2.1 Defining the instrumental case

Yin (1994) defines a research design as the foundation of the connections between the raw data and the results and the preliminary research question. The instrumental case study design was selected as the appropriate research design for this study. The case that was investigated in this study is researcher perspectives of long-term higher education community engagement. A case study is defined by Yin (1994, p.13) as “an all-encompassing empirical inquiry that serves to comprehensively investigate a phenomenon within a real-life context”. According to Yin, a case study is an alternative method of doing qualitative research and suggested that it should be used when the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions. The aforementioned statements align with the underpinnings of this study. Creswell (2007, p.73) defines case study research as “a study that explores an issue through one or more cases within a bounded system”. In this study, the case was bounded by context. This study can therefore be defined as researchers' perspectives of higher education community engagement partnerships.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) an instrumental case design is a type of case study that generates insight into specific themes or issues and undertakes to provide a holistic and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. The instrumental case study was particularly useful in this study as it aimed to clarify the themes of a particular phenomenon.

According to Hsieh (2010), flexibility is a hallmark characteristic of case study and is perceived as a strength and as a pitfall at the same time. This study was flexible with regard to data collection methods. The majority of participants in this study opted to complete the questionnaire, which was e-mailed to them. However, some participants preferred telephonic or face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. This same flexibility can, however, also be seen as a negative as it may indicate lack of rigor (Hsieh, 2010; Yin, 1994). This challenge was addressed by utilising the same questions in both the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaires to ensure consistency and uniformity (Seabi, 2012). Another advantage of case study is that it takes into account multiple perspectives as well as multiple sources of data, which enhances credibility (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 1994).

A common limitation in case study is the tendency of investigators to attempt to answer broad questions, in so doing producing generalised insight. This challenge was addressed by binding the case so that it would remain within a reasonable scope (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this study, the case was bounded by a specific context, place and time, namely the FLY project, which has been taking place in the rural regions of Mpumalanga from the year 2006, and is currently still active. Another limitation, contrary to the aforementioned limitation, is that with case study generalised knowledge is not easily produced (Yin, 1994). The emphasis in this study was not, however, on constructing generalised knowledge, but instead to investigate a context-specific case of researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement.

3.2.2 Convenience sampling of the case

I conveniently selected researchers who participated in an existing long-term higher education community engagement project, Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY), to add to

knowledge about researchers' perspectives on community engagement. According to White and McBurney (2013) convenience sampling is not random by any means, but rather a sample that aims to select a desirable group of people for a specific reason. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) convenience sampling implies that participants are selected on the basis of convenience and availability. With regard to case selection, FLY is an ongoing community engagement research partnership with rural schools in Mpumalanga. The FLY research project therefore provides convenient structures, relationships and resources, which consequently contributed to the rationale for selecting convenience sampling. The aforementioned arguments both contribute to the time- and cost-effectiveness of this sampling technique (Creswell, 2007), which are as benefits of this technique. The selected sample was furthermore based not only on the availability of participants, but also on the relevance and the scope of their research in this particular study.

A challenge often associated with this sampling technique is a high probability of self-selection that might infer research bias (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012), which was the case in this study. This is viewed as delimiting the scope of impact of this study as selection bias restricts the frame of comparison with similar contexts (Collier & Mahoney, 1996).

3.3 PARTICIPANT SAMPLING

3.3.1 Sampling technique and selection process

As stated, the participants selected for this study were researchers with experience of a higher education community engagement partnership. Sixteen participants were purposefully selected based on criteria aimed at providing a variety of perspectives on researcher experiences, in so doing achieving diversity:

- University of Pretoria postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows who had undertaken FLY research between 2006-2014
- Local and international co-researchers from higher education institutions who had conducted research in FLY between 2006 and 2014

The objective of purposefully selecting the participants in this study was to gain insight into the researchers' experiences of the specific phenomenon in question in this study, and not to generalise findings with those of all the stakeholders involved in the FLY project. According to Merriam (2009) purposive sampling is frequently used in qualitative research and is perceived as a non-probability sampling technique according to Maree & Pietersen (2007). According to Creswell (2007) purposive sampling implies that the investigator selects the research participants and site for a particular study to purposefully generate knowledge with respect to a particular research phenomenon. Although the sample size seems minimal, the aim was not to generalise the sample population, but rather to narrow it down to a specific set of selection criteria to meet the aim of this study. According to Farrokhi and Mahmoudi-Hamidabad (2012), this may be perceived as participant self-selection. This presented a possible challenge in the present study as self-selection represents research bias and influences credibility. On the one hand participants were selected on the basis of certain selection criteria that might indicate research bias, while on the other the selection of research participants relied heavily on convenience and availability. In returning to the latter challenge concerning the sample size, it nevertheless proved to be effective as qualitative research focuses on generating rich, in-depth data rather than on quantity (Creswell, 2007). In addition to this, Creswell (2007) also mentions that the sample size of a case study should be kept to the minimum as qualitative data collection methods are very comprehensive and can be time-consuming.

A total of 20 participants were electronically invited to participate in the study by the project principal investigator, (personal communication, July 2014, 28). In conjunction with the electronic invitation, an informed consent form (Appendix A), a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and a questionnaire (Appendix C) were sent to potential participants.

In the text box below there is a sample of the e-mail invitation that was sent to the 20 potential participants by the project's principal investigator.

Box 3.1: Example email invitation sent to participants

Hello again Colleagues,

I would like to ask if you could please spend a short amount of time to assist Alicia Adams (copied in this e-mail) with her data collection for her studies. You can choose what would be easiest for you to either:

- 1. Schedule a brief interview (face-to-face or telephonically) to answer 5 questions and a brief demographic questionnaire; or*
- 2. Alternatively, you can complete the two questionnaires electronically and e-mail it to us.*

I attached the forms (I included the informed consent form). Please inform us what would be most convenient for you.

Huge thanks and lots of hugs.

Project's principal investigator

3.3.2 Participant composition

The following photographs demonstrate some of the FLY project researchers in the field between 2006 and 2014.



Photograph 3.1. 2006 FLY research. From left: Tilda Loots (Postdoctoral researcher), Maria Mangini (MEd postgraduate student) and Prof. L. Ebersöhn (FLY project lead investigator).



Photograph 3.2. 2010 FLY research. From the left: Prof. L. Ebersöhn (FLY project lead investigator), M. Mtsweni (MEd postgraduate student), Lorraine du Toit (MEd postgraduate student), Prof. I. Joubert, Yolanda Swart (MEd postgraduate student) and Prof. R. Ferreira.



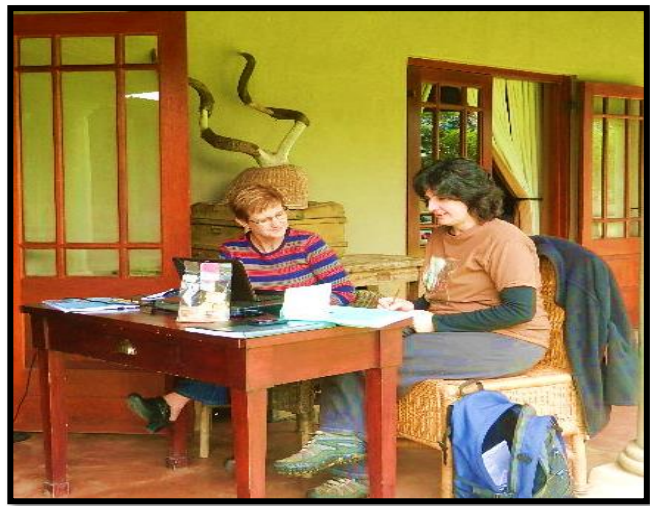
Photograph 3.3. 2012 FLY research. From left: Christelle Huddle (MEd postgraduate student) and Prof. L. Ebersöhn.



Photograph 3.4. 2013 FLY researchers. From top left: Keziah Coetzer (MEd postgraduate student), Marinei Nel (MEd postgraduate student), Marli Edwards (doctoral student), Eugene Machimana (doctoral student), Dr. M. Sefotho and Prof. C. Lubbe de Beer.



Photograph 3.5. 2014 FLY researchers. From top left: Marisa Leask (MEd postgraduate student), Dr. F. Omidire, Dr. R. Mampane, Dr. J. Mwamakana, Bottom left: Dr. S. Coetzee and Prof. L. Ebersöhn.



Photograph 3.6. 2014 FLY research. From left: Deslea Konza and supervisee postgraduate student, Marisa Leask.

Participants completed demographic questionnaires in order to provide integrated and holistic insight (see Table 3.2 for an overview of the sample). Of the twenty participants invited to participate in this study, sixteen responded. Eight participants were postgraduate students and the remaining eight were higher education researchers, among them two from international institutions. The diversity among the participants was representative with regard to age as there were participants from the ages of 30 to 60 years and older. The sample was limited in terms of gender owing to the potential male participation of researchers in the FLY project being less than that of the female. Most of the participants were bilingual in two or more languages, whereas three participants were only proficient in English and two were only proficient in Afrikaans. Fourteen participants opted to complete electronic questionnaires (participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16), whereas one participant opted to do a face-to face interview (participant 10) and one chose to do a telephonic interview (participant 3).

The last question presented to the participants in the demographic questionnaire was to indicate what they believed the FLY partnership to be about. Participants

indicated one or several categories that they believed the FLY partnership concerned. Eleven participants (participants 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 16), most of whom were local researchers, indicated that they believed the FLY partnership to be about Academic-Service Learning (ASL). Thirteen participants (participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16), mostly postgraduate researchers and local researchers, indicated that their understanding of the FLY partnership was to enable postgraduate research. Thirteen participants (participants 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16), mostly postgraduate researchers, understood the partnership to be about higher education community engagement. Eleven participants (participants 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16), mostly postgraduate students and local researchers, indicated that they believed the partnership to be about knowledge generation. Nine participants (participants 1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15), mostly local and all the international researchers, believed it to be about social justice. None of the participants indicated that they believed the partnership to have any focus other than the options that were provided.

Table 3.2 Profile of participants

NO	YEAR	GENDER		AGE IN YEARS				HOME LANGUAGE			LEVEL OF RESEARCH			DATA COLLECTION						
		M	F	Below 30	30-40	41-50	51-60 +	English	Afrikaans	Bilingual (2 or more languages)	Postgraduate	Local researchers	International researchers	Questionnaire	interview	Semi-structured	Electronic	Telephonic	Face-to-face	
1	2006		✓				✓		✓			✓			✓					
2	2006		✓				✓			✓		✓			✓					
3	2009		✓		✓					✓		✓				✓			✓	
4	2009		✓		✓					✓		✓			✓					
5	2009		✓				✓			✓		✓			✓					
6	2011		✓				✓	✓					✓		✓					
7	2011	✓				✓				✓		✓			✓					
8	2011		✓			✓				✓		✓			✓					
9	2012		✓	✓						✓		✓			✓					
10	2012		✓				✓			✓		✓								✓
11	2013		✓		✓					✓		✓			✓					
12	2013		✓		✓					✓		✓			✓					
13	2006		✓			✓			✓			✓			✓					
14	2013	✓				✓		✓					✓		✓					
15	2011	✓			✓					✓		✓			✓					
16	2013		✓				✓	✓				✓			✓					
Total		3	13	1	5	4	6	3	2	11	8	6	2	14	1	1				

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

Creswell (2007) describes data collection as a series of integrated data-gathering activities aimed at answering questions emerging from research. In this study, semi-structured questionnaires (see Appendix C) were used for data collection. Five open-ended questions were put in order to explore various facets of higher education community engagement as experienced by the FLY researchers. These questionnaires were completed electronically by 14 participants and served as an interview schedule for a face-to-face interview with one participant, and a telephonic interview with another participant. Data collection and documentation took place over a period of 1 year and 11 months. The invitations were sent out via e-mail on 28 July 2014. The last data was collected on 6 June 2016.

3.4.1 Semi-structured questionnaires

According to Seabi (2012) the questionnaire is the most commonly used data collection technique. A questionnaire is a form that comprises a set of predetermined questions that requires of the participant to indicate a response. For effective participant responses, questionnaire instructions should be simple, clear and concise (Maree & Pietersen, 2007). In addition to this, Maree and Pietersen (2007) stated that the appearance of a questionnaire should be user-friendly, especially if it is mailed to participants. For the purposes of this study the questionnaires were e-mailed to the participants for the sake of convenience.

The questionnaires used in this study were developed collaboratively in the FLY project. The same questions were used by a collection of researchers investigating the different perspectives of various stakeholders, namely students, parents (Grobler, 2016), teachers and principals (Edwards, 2016) as well as ASL students (Du Toit, 2016) and the retrospective perspectives of collective stakeholders (Machimana, 2016) with regard to higher education community engagement.

Seabi (2012) argues that questionnaires are very efficient for reaching large numbers of participants relatively quickly and cheaply. The format of the questions presented to the participants in the questionnaire (see Appendix C), can be considered as being semi-structured. White and McBurney (2013) define this as a type of questionnaire that allows for flexibility and permits participants to answer

freely. One of the benefits of semi-structured questionnaires is that participants provide honest and detailed responses. This aligns with the purpose of the study, which is explorative and descriptive in nature (Maree & Pietersen, 2007). In addition to this, Maree and Pietersen (2007) also stated that questionnaires, together with thematic analysis, would generate momentous knowledge.

Maree and Pietersen (2007) nevertheless highlighted some challenges associated with semi-structured questionnaires. One of the challenges often experienced with this type of questionnaire is that it may require more effort on the part of participants to complete. The questionnaire comprised only five questions in total, however. Another challenge presented by semi-structured questionnaires is that the amount of detail that is furnished may vary among participants. I addressed this challenge by encouraging each participant to provide an equally detailed response with the aim of providing rich insight for the study. Coding of participant responses may pose yet another challenge relating to semi-structured questionnaires. This challenge was addressed by means of member checking and triangulation.

3.5 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

For the sake of convenience, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two participants (participants 3 and 10) in this study, namely one face-to face interview (participant 10) and one telephonic interview (participant 3). The questionnaire served as an interview schedule for the interviewees (Kelly, 2006). Audio recordings (Kelly, 2006) were made of the interviews and these were transcribed verbatim (see Appendix D).

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 87) an interview is described as “a two-way conversation where the interviewer asks the interviewee questions”. The aim of a qualitative interview is to generate rich data, which serves the purpose of this study. Interviews are a natural form of interacting with participants and provide an opportunity to develop an intimate relationship with the participants in order truly to understand their experiences and views (Kelly, 2007). In addition to this, Nieuwenhuis (2007) stated that qualitative interviews aim to see the world through the eyes of the participant, which dovetails well with the constructionist paradigmatic lens that was selected for this study.

Seabi (2012) defines a semi-structured interview as one that is neither completely fixed nor free but flexible instead. A semi-structured interview is often used to verify data emerging from other data sources and usually requires the interviewee to answer predetermined questions. A benefit of this data collection technique is that it allows for probing and questioning (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), which in this study provided thick and descriptive data. Another benefit is that interviews are easy to conduct. Furthermore, all the questions are dealt with as the interview is controlled by the interviewer.

Challenges associated with this technique are nevertheless noted by Seabi (2012). One challenge commonly identified with this technique is that the investigator may become sidetracked by aspects unrelated to the study. This was addressed by the investigator in this case being consciously aware of this particular challenge, especially during the data collection process. I furthermore also adhered to the questions in the questionnaire and made a conscious effort not to deviate from the aspects relevant to the study. Another challenge regularly associated with this technique is that it is time-consuming. Fortunately, in this study only two semi-structured interviews were conducted. Anonymity was a further challenge that presented itself with this technique (Seabi, 2012). This was addressed by ensuring that all interviews were strictly confidential and that the participants' names would not be disclosed. Furthermore, permission to record the interviews was obtained prior to the event, which contributed to complying with the ethical considerations relating to this study.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data sources included for analysis consisted of 14 completed questionnaires and verbatim transcriptions of audio recordings (see Appendix D). Thematic analysis was used for analysing the data. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), inductive thematic analysis is a process through which data is collected, synthesised and presented as meaningful. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify and analyse patterns that emerge from data. Thematic analysis is moreover a flexible method that is used to identify themes across data sources, primarily in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide different phases of thematic analysis, which were applied to guide the data analysis process. Firstly, these authors suggest that the research investigator needs to become familiar with the data that are collected. I familiarised myself with the data by immersing myself in these through reading and rereading everything numerous times. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) step one is very much a mindful exercise in the data collection process.

The second step involves code generation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding text occurs during this step, when data relevant to the research questions are further analysed (see Appendix E). Text is coded based on the inclusive and exclusive criteria. Once these codes were identified, they were collated, together with any relevant extracts from the data. In contrast, Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) and Creswell (2014) mention coding as the third step they follow. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) suggest that codes need to be assigned to themes rather than themes being assigned to codes. In contrast Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the codes are the foundation and often point out relevant themes. The coding was therefore implemented as step two in this study, as posited by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The third step, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), similar to the second step, involves searching for themes in the data. Based on the codes that were collated and identified, thematic maps were generated to reveal various themes. These consisted of visual representations of subthemes with the relevant codes attached to each theme (see Appendix F). Braun and Clarke (2006) describe this step as coding the codes. They describe themes as patterns and ideas emerging from data as a result of brainstorming. Creswell (2014) supports this by stating that themes are descriptions of codes. These descriptions involve rendering of detailed information.

Braun and Clarke (2006) identify the fourth step as a repetition as in this step themes that had been identified in step three are reviewed. This step provided me with a final opportunity to analyse the data, when only the most compelling extracts were selected and further analysed (see Appendix F). The fifth step involves defining and naming the themes. A detailed analysis of each theme that was identified is

reflected. The sixth and final step entails reporting the themes as the findings in the study.

Thematic analysis, as posited by Braun and Clarke (2006), serves to summarise key themes that emerged from large bodies of knowledge. In addition to this, it also provides rich insight, which aligns with the purpose of this research. Another benefit of thematic analysis is that it generates unanticipated insight, and this is useful as regards the anticipated possibility of bias and tunnel vision on the part of the investigator.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also mention a few challenges associated with thematic analysis, such as research investigators becoming lost in the transcription process, when meaningless paraphrases may be produced. Thomas and Harden (2008) mentioned a lack of transparency as another challenge. This was addressed by demonstrating how codes and themes emerged (see Appendices E and F). A challenge that arose in this research was that the interview questions themselves presented emerging themes. This was addressed by ensuring that the interview questions served as a guide, which ultimately led to anticipated and unanticipated insights.

3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

Reliability and validity are crucial aspects in research and determine the trustworthiness of the research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In essence, research trustworthiness refers to qualitative validation (Creswell, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Nieuwenhuis, 2007) suggest that the key criteria for trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. With this in mind, my framework for methodological rigour was based on Lincoln and Guba's (as cited in Nieuwenhuis, 2007) naturalistic enquiry model of trustworthiness as well as Shenton's (2004) strategies of rigour to accomplish trustworthiness.

3.7.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Nieuwenhuis, 2007) stated that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in securing trustworthiness. By applying Shenton's (2004) strategies for rigour, credibility was ensured. The following provisions for were

followed with a view to achieving credibility: member checking, peer and supervisor reviews as well as measures to obtain participant honesty.

Member checking was used to ensure accurate data generation. Participants were provided with an opportunity to review the data they had provided via e-mail correspondence and they were able to verify the emerging themes that had been identified (Shenton, 2004). Member checking with the participants took place via e-mail once all the data had been collected and analysed.

I had to be aware of my own preconceived assumptions and beliefs since these could have contaminated my interpretation of the data that were provided by the participants (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). This was addressed by means of reflexivity in a researcher journal (see research journal in Appendix H). According to Mays and Pope (2000, p.51) reflexivity means being “sensitive in the manner in which data is collected and analysed so as to not influence the data generated”. My role as research investigator required me to act in an accountable manner with regard to my approach to the research process. I had to be aware of and monitor my subjective experiences and preconceived assumptions in order not to distort any of the research findings. The researcher journal (see Appendix H) assisted with the monitoring process so as to prevent contaminating the data with my own preconceived assumptions and beliefs.

3.7.2 Transferability

In essence, transferability is concerned with the applicability of findings of one study to another (Merriam, 2009). As the aim of this study was to generate knowledge to inform future higher education community engagement it was essential to determine the transferability of this study. Thick description of the research setting was provided in Chapter 1 to enable scholars to determine whether the study is applicable to a particular context of higher education community engagement (Seale, 1999).

3.7.3 Dependability

Shenton (2004) argues that dependability is also referred to as reliability. Shenton goes on to suggest that if one employed the same research methods and techniques in one study, similar research results could be achieved if the same is done with

another study. The key to dependability is therefore consistency. Dependability can be achieved by means of auditing (Creswell, 2007; Shenton, 2004). In this study, a detailed account of the research methodology was recorded (see Appendices).

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is referred to as research objectivity by Shenton (2004). Auditing was used to achieve not only dependability, but also confirmability. Records containing raw data as well as summaries and verified member-checking notes form part of the audit trail (see Appendices D, E, F, G and H).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria granted ethics approval for the FLY project, of which this study formed part. Therefore, I abided by the ethical principles outlined by the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria.

According to Maree (2007), during the research process it is vital that ethical guidelines are adhered to. It is essential to take into consideration the following ethical principles: informed consent; privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; and protection from harm.

3.8.1 Informed consent

I obtained written informed consent from the FLY researchers who participated in the research process (Appendix A). Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. All the participants in so doing voluntarily consented to take part in this research. Informed consent was also obtained from participants to record interviews by means of audio recordings for research purposes. The participants were provided with information regarding what the study entailed as well as the benefits and the risks involved. The FLY project obtained informed consent from participants to release pictures or images of them upon their initial involvement in the project.

3.8.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Owing to the participants in this study having provided data concerning their personal experiences and opinions, the principle of privacy and confidentiality was applied. The identities of the participants were not disclosed and the data obtained

from the participants were dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner. In addition to this, I applied care when I obtained audio recordings, which were transcribed, as well as when pictures were taken of the researchers during field work and/or during the FLY project. All the data that were gathered were preserved in a safe manner and put into safekeeping in the research offices at the University of Pretoria.

3.8.3 Protection from harm

This study did not foresee any risk nor harm for participants. I nevertheless acted in good faith in my efforts to preserve the dignity of the participants at all times.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3 the research design and methodological choices were discussed and explored in detail. The strengths and the challenges of each method of inquiry presented in this study were identified. In addition to this, I also justified my preferred methods of inquiry. Finally, the ethical considerations and quality criteria relevant to this research were discussed. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of the data analysis and the interpretation thereof.

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, I presented a detailed description of the research design and methodological choices. The conclusion of Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the ethical considerations and quality criteria of this research. In Chapter 4, the results of the data analysis and its interpretation will be discussed. Verbatim responses are used to enrich the discussion. The results describe the researchers' perspectives on higher education community engagement in relation to the FLY partnership with rural schools in Mpumalanga.

4.2 RESULTS OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

From the data collected, two main themes were identified during thematic analysis, namely researcher perspectives on capacity development in higher education community engagement, and researcher perspectives on higher education community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions. The themes, subthemes and categories will be discussed throughout this chapter. Figure 4.1 outlines the themes, subthemes and categories that will be discussed.

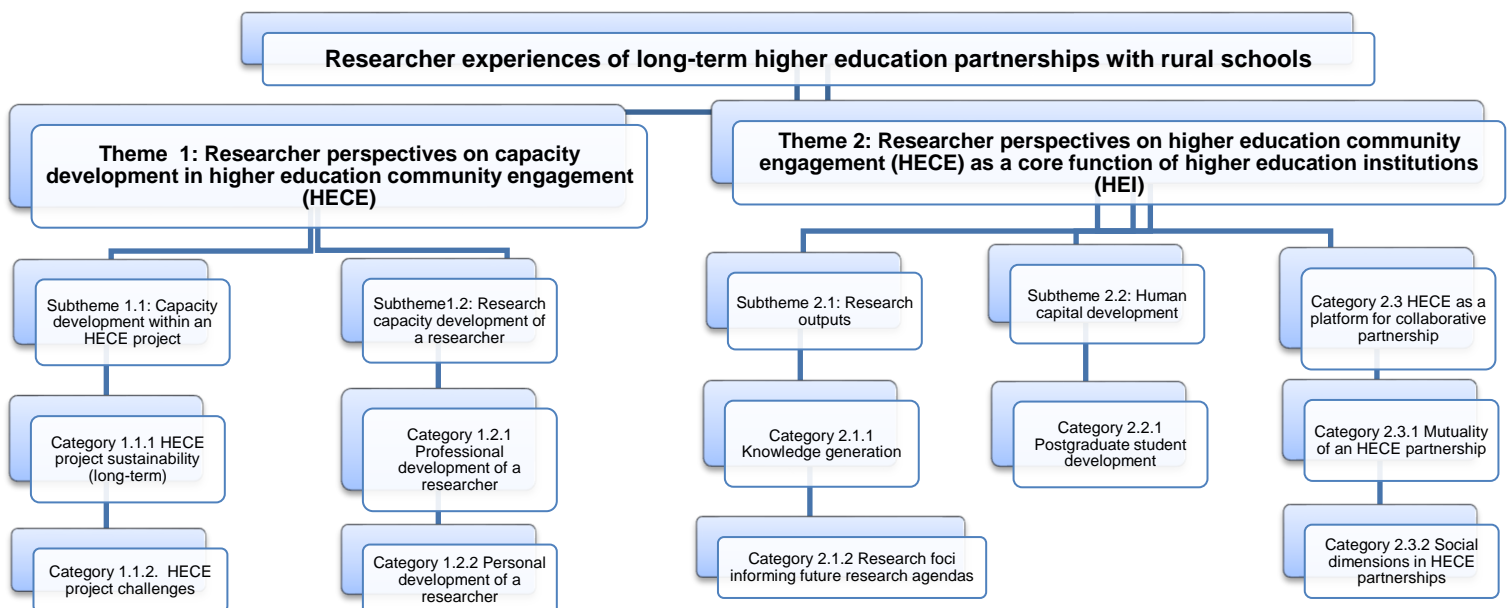


Figure 4.1 Themes derived from thematic analysis

4.2.1 Theme 1: Researcher perspectives on capacity development in higher education community engagement

According to Horton, Alexaki, Bennett-Lartey, Brice, Camilan, Carden, De Souza Silva, Duong, Khadar, Maestrey Boza, Kayes Muniruzzaman, Perez, Somarriba Chang, Vernooy and Watts (2003), capacity development can be summarised as an ongoing process that aims to improve the ability to complete tasks and achieve the goals of the organisation or project. Capacity development is essentially the development of capabilities that are required to achieve specific objectives. These capabilities include growth in knowledge, skills and experience. Capacity development takes place on various platforms in research, *inter alia* in higher education community engagement projects. Capacity development also takes place in relation to various stakeholders, including researchers. The aforementioned have therefore been identified as subthemes. The inclusive and exclusive criteria are outlined as follows.

Table 4.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1

No.	Subthemes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1.1	Capacity development within a HECE project	Data relating to the capacity development of a HECE project	Any reference to future research recommendations for a HECE project as this falls within a different subtheme
1.2	Research capacity development of a researcher	Data relating to the researchers' personal and professional development	Any reference made to ASL student development

4.2.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Capacity development within a higher education community engagement project

From a researcher's perspective, it appears that a higher education community engagement project develops capacity and capabilities which contribute to a project's longevity and sustainability. This is linked to project management and logistics. Researchers reported challenges that are associated with higher education community engagement projects. These challenges relate to capacity development in a higher education community engagement project.

4.2.1.1.1 Category 1.1.1 Higher education community engagement project sustainability (long-term)

Researchers submitted that project sustainability plays a vital role in long-term higher education community engagement projects. Researchers moreover indicated *that the partnership has been going on for some years and it's sustainable (P 2 Lines 4-5)*. The logistics and planning that go into higher education community engagement projects require precision to facilitate the smooth running of research and ASL operations and activities. Establishing and maintaining partnerships also contribute to the project's sustainability. One researcher indicated that they thought the project manager *organized this project (FLY project) extremely good [well] in terms of the logistics ... getting there ... giving therapy ... as well as her connections with the schools and the relationships with the schools (P 3 Lines 9-11)*. Another researcher indicated that *the leadership and interpersonal skills of the project manager have ensured that relationships with the schools and international partners remain positive and productive (P 6 Lines 16-17)*. The objectives of a higher education community engagement project must therefore be well considered and planned each academic year, as conveyed by a researcher: The project manager ... *who acted as supervisor, knew exactly what the focus of their research should be. This helped them to focus on the precise problem of the school and directed their research (P 1 Lines 13-15)*. The long-term higher education community engagement partnership was valued by researchers as *one of the benefits of FLY is the longitudinal nature of the partnership, which allows continuous partnering with schools over time (P 9 Lines 14-15)*.

4.2.1.1.2 Category 1.1.2 Higher education community engagement project challenges

Researchers voiced project challenges they experienced that had direct implications for the research outcomes. These challenges created limitations for capacity development within the project. Multilingualism was one of the challenges experienced by the researchers. As this higher education community engagement project took place in the rural areas of Mpumalanga, researchers were presented with an element of multilingualism. Researchers experienced a language barrier between various community participants, as noted by the following researcher:

But the language barrier was definitely a limitation (P 3 Lines 34-35). We also only have six days with them in total so you really want to effectively give them all the information and knowledge you can, but the language was a big problem, especially when you want them to know everything that you are saying as it's a wonderful opportunity for them (Lines 38-41). They could hardly understand me and I had a lot of paper activity and they couldn't do it because language was an issue (Lines 48-49).

Time constraints were another challenge experienced by researchers doing research in the higher education community engagement project that could have an impact on research findings, as the following researchers experienced:

I wish we (researchers) were able to spend more time in the research field with the participants (P 2 Line 8). Researchers should be allocated more time in the research field (Line 11).

Time has proven to be a problem (research time was limited and thus rushed) especially when data collection is combined with service learning visits (P 5 Lines 47-49).

I'm sure others are similarly limited by the time they can commit to this endeavour (P 6 Line 27).

The fact that the career facilitation can only occur twice a year (for assessment and therapy/facilitation) could be seen as a limitation, in terms of time and geographic location (P 9 Lines 54-55).

Funding has also been identified as a challenge that researchers experienced in higher education community engagement projects, which has implications for research, as the following researcher indicated:

Physical distance (and the financial implications thereof) is a challenge for remote schools (P 9 Lines 22-23). More human resources, research and funding would assist the project in maximizing outputs or extent of support (Lines 52-53).

It is expensive to access the field (P 16 Line 24). I put on hold my project due to [the] absence of funds (Line 25).

At times higher education community engagement projects may receive funding, but continuity in the provision of funding seems to pose another challenge, as shown in the following statements:

Continuous funding to visit the schools (P 11 Line 15) was described as a project limitation. Furthermore, *funding to continue [the] partnership (Line 18)* was put on record by the same researcher regarding the future planning that the project requires, which reiterates the challenge related to funding. Another researcher, further supporting the challenge of continuity of funding experienced by researchers said that there was an *ongoing need to obtain funding (P 13 Line 36)*.

The geographical location of the research site presents not only challenges relating to distance, but also financial challenges as the long travelling distances have financial implications, as stated by the following researchers:

The physical distance (and financial implications thereof) is a challenge for remote schools (P 9 Lines 22-23).

... costs involved due to remoteness of the schools (P 13 Lines 36-37).

The schools are far from UP (P 16 Line 24).

4.2.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Research capacity development of a researcher

Researchers shared that as higher education community engagement researchers they were involved in various research activities, from data collection to writing a dissertation or thesis. They are also exposed to various research experiences that may alter their ways of thinking. This insight informs not only their professional, but also their personal development, as a researcher indicated below:

I learnt a lot more about research and about myself (P 3 Lines 64-65).

The professional and personal development of the researcher therefore forms part of the categories related to the development of a researcher's capacity.

4.2.1.2.1 Category 1.2.1 Professional development of a researcher

In a higher education community engagement project researchers reported that they were exposed to various research activities, context/s and challenges that in

essence resulted in a personal paradigm shift or improved research skills, or both. Researchers describe this as a learning curve that contributed to their professional development as researchers, as indicated in the verbatim extract below:

As a researcher ... I learnt so much. It was a lovely project to be involved with in terms of learning the research process and how to write a dissertation, and how to look holistically at a project to see the pros and cons and how it followed (developed) and what we can learn from it (P 3 Lines 60-62).

I joined the team as a young researcher in the Faculty of Science (not at UP) and my previous research was conducted very differently. It was my first exposure to qualitative research. I embraced the experience and learnt a lot (P 16 Lines 32-34).

Being exposed to various research activities provides an *opportunity for postgraduate students (researchers) to develop general skills e.g: problem-solving, time management, planning and execution of community engagement initiatives, etc. (P 13 Line 29)*. The same researcher identified a *change in perspective (P 11 Line 13)* as a project strength, which suggests that their involvement in the higher education community engagement project resulted in a paradigm shift in their perception.

One researcher indicated, *... students (researchers) are being exposed to community context/s (P 7 line 4) as a strength* as this exposure to higher education community engagement research provides researchers with an opportunity to experience various research contexts. Another researcher describes researchers' research output as professional development in stating that higher education community engagement projects provide researchers with *a space to advance their own professional development too, especially through publications (P 7 Line 16)*.

Higher education community engagement researchers also reported that they were exposed to various research foci. Researchers shared that exposure to diversity, adversity, resilience and rurality during the research process created a new awareness of and greater insight into these foci. The researchers conveyed that this included both professional and personal development, which is evident in the following statement: *... having the opportunity to see teachers at work in South African schools that share some characteristics with Australian remote schools, and*

to research shared educational issues and potential solutions has been professionally and personally rewarding. The FLY partnership has also extended into other professional activity, such as a Visiting Fellowship, and further visits to schools and campuses in both Australia and South Africa, which has contributed to a broader understanding of international issues, not only for me, but [also] for other colleagues at ECU (P 6 Lines 17-24).

This statement demonstrates the spill-over effects of professional development on the personal development of researchers.

4.2.1.2.2 Category 1.2.2 Personal development of a researcher

Researchers reported that exposure to various research contexts provided them with an opportunity to develop personally as they were confronted with unfamiliar and uncomfortable settings that they had to deal with, which awakened a greater awareness of adversity and diversity, as demonstrated in the statement below:

I feel that I learned the most in the experience(s) of being a researcher in a remote school context. As I say, being exposed to a context with overwhelming risks is most certainly an eyeopener (P 9 Lines 94-96).

It takes you out of your comfort zone and you have to think outside of the box (P 3 Lines 22-23).

The aforementioned two statements demonstrate a sense of culture shock among researchers, as a result of which they developed an awareness of diversity and adversity. Another researcher pointed out that conducting research in a multicultural context can be a limitation in higher education community engagement research projects as *race is an important factor in establishing trust, cultural connections and effectiveness in providing what the rural communities need (P 14 Lines 6-7).*

Yet another researcher indicated that a personal researcher identity developed through the higher education community engagement involvement, which was described as follows:

My identity as researcher would not have developed the way it did without the community of practice I was part of (P 8 Lines 8-10).

Other researchers reported a sense of social justice being achieved as well as developing into a global citizen, as is reflected in the following statements:

I felt encouraged when I realised that I was not only doing research, but that the participants gained from the research as they were empowered with skills that were beneficial in their lives (P 2 Lines 12-14).

I think it was very difficult for me to do therapy (part of intervention research and not an ASL activity) with the children because of the language barrier and it was such a learning curve because in the end I could see why I need to go out there (P 3 Lines 33-34). If I look at it retrospectively, it was a huge learning curve for me. It changed me as a person in terms of thinking differently and being adaptable (Lines 62-62).

Researchers also demonstrated that they developed a personal connection to the higher education community engagement research project, as shown in the following statements:

I feel privileged to be part of the FLY project (P 12 Line 68).

It was very rewarding to be involved in such a significant and valuable project (P 15 Line 16).

4.2.2 Theme 2: Researcher perspectives on higher education community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions

Higher education community engagement is a core function of higher education institutions in South Africa (Bond & Paterson, 2005; Caputo, 2005; Lazarus, et al., 2008; Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Mahlomaholo, Francis & Nkoane, 2010; Netshandama, 2010; Higher education community engagement aims to achieve social justice in marginalised communities, while it also aspires ultimately to produce global citizens (Moiseyenko, 2005). Collaborative partnerships with communities are employed by higher education institutions as a mechanism through which higher education community engagement is practiced. Apart from higher education community engagement, producing research outputs and developing human capital

are also core functions of higher education institutions (Callaghan, 2015). The latter two core functions are entrenched in higher education community engagement. These core functions and collaborative partnerships are part of the subthemes. The inclusive and exclusive criteria are outlined as follows.

Table 4.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria of Theme 2

No.	Subthemes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
2.1	Research outputs	Data relating to knowledge generation in various forms (e.g. dissertations), research foci (e.g. diversity) and informing future research agendas	Any reference to sharing expertise, expert knowledge and experience
2.2	Human capital development	Data relating to human capital such as PhD and MA graduates	Any reference made to ASL students
2.3	HECE as a collaborative partnership	Data relating to collaborative partnerships, social dimensions, fellowship and mutuality	Any reference to data relating to partnerships other than collaborative

4.2.2.1 Subtheme 2.1 Research outputs

Research outputs are considered a form of knowledge generation, which is a core function of higher education institutions (Callaghan, 2015). Furthermore, higher education community engagement research conducted in collaborative partnerships may inform future research agendas.

4.2.2.1.1 Category 2.1.1 Knowledge generation

Knowledge generation is a core function of higher education institutions and is acquired through research (Callaghan, 2015). In a transforming society such as South Africa, where inequalities are intensifying, it isn't enough merely to generate and disseminate knowledge (Ramaley, 2014). In the current study researchers stated that the knowledge that is generated should be disseminated with a view to achieving social justice and social transformation, as the following statements establish:

One of the researchers reported that a strength of higher education community engagement partnerships is that *it provides a platform for research and knowledge generation ... provides social justice (P 11 Lines 9-10).*

Social justice is achieved through higher education community engagement research, as phrased by a researcher:

And so you as researcher can come onto [into] that space not feeling that you are using them (participants) but rather you feel like you are giving back to the community (P 10 Lines 111-113).

Social justice is also served by this partnership (P 11 Line 6).

Research output as well as dissemination of knowledge that is generated are two core functions of higher education institutions (Callaghan, 2015; Ramaley, 2014) that are carried out by researchers as a part of their involvement in higher education community engagement:

Publications and dissemination of research, as well as the involvement of postgraduate research students have added to the scholarly development of students and colleagues over the years (P 13 Lines 47-49).

4.2.2.1.2 Category 2.1.2 Research foci and informing future research agendas

Owing to a growing need to address inequality in society through higher education community engagement research (Lazarus et al., 2008; Ramaley, 2014), great emphasis is placed on research foci (Marullo & Edwards, 2000). Research output should therefore address social issues such as inequality (Callaghan, 2015), poverty (Seekings, 2003), rurality (Balfour et al., 2008), and resilience, poverty and education (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012). According to the researchers who participated in this study, the research foci undertaken in higher education community engagement projects address social issues.

One of the research foci, as reported by researchers, includes research on resilience, as can be concluded from the statements below:

The broad focus of the FLY research project is to generate knowledge on ways to promote resilience in resource-scarce rural school[s] (P 12 Lines 4-5).

I know that it [FLY project] is situated in the context of assets-based intervention that creates opportunities for teachers and researchers to study and mobilize resilience-linked resource[s] (P 15 Lines 1-2).

The partnership is especially aimed at exploring how teachers can promote resilience by using schools as a safe environment to buffer against adversity (P 15 Lines 4-5).

Teachers in rural areas researched, overcome [overcame] significant barriers and therefore demonstrate[d] resilience through these positive adaptive outcomes (P 15 Lines 18-21).

Additional research conducted in the higher education community engagement project included research on rurality, as the extract below shows:

Within the broader FLY project, my post-doctoral study focuses on long-term higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools (but also included some urban schools that participated in a previous research partnership (P 12 Lines 7-8).

Research on multilingualism in South African schools was also a topic of research in the higher education community engagement project, as is reflected in the following statement:

The research student has investigated the English language teaching practices of teachers in two remote primary schools as they teach students (with) first languages that are different from each other and, in some cases, different from the teacher's first language. The complexity of the multiple language environment in South Africa makes this a rich and necessary area of research. This research has provided baseline data for a larger project aimed at developing the pedagogy of teachers as they teach English in this complex context (P 6 Lines 9-15).

Another researcher summed up having an awareness of the higher education community engagement research that was conducted as follows:

I began my research study in 2012, whereby I took on another role (as researcher) to investigate partnerships in relation to educational pathways to resilience. Through my research endeavours, I also noted that some other research studies involving FLY have investigated students' experiences in community engagement (Malekane, 2009), literacy intervention with educators (Du Plessis, 2013), [and] educators' career resilience (Coetzee, 2013) (P 9 Lines 4-9).

Higher education community engagement projects not only produce research outputs, but also inform future research agendas and in addition bring to light recommendations for further research. The following statement clearly shows this:

Therefore, future planning could be focused on programs that emphasise academic support - Both through early literacy interventions, learning support programs and enabling educators to foster resilience (through the areas mentioned above that were found to encourage resilience in students, from my research study) (P 9 Lines 65-68).

This researcher suggested future research agendas which emerged from their research and in addition also made recommendations regarding future research in the following statement: *I could suggest the following, not only to be kept in mind with planning further initiatives, but also to be communicated to students in ASL: I urge readers and researchers to participate in longitudinal collaboration, rather than observing from the outside (i.e. get your hands dirty!); to strive towards positive development and prevention rather than finding and solving problems; from multicultural rather than Eurocentric views [viewpoints] and standards for interventions and research alike; and from a relationship-necessitated approach rather than a 'give and take' linear process. By doing this, I believe that when partnering for resilience in FLY or any other related partnership, a more comprehensive and accurate picture can be made, in order to nurture resilience and work with the outside [outlying] communities in South Africa. (P 9 Lines 82-90).*

Higher education community engagement partnerships not only provide a platform for research, but also bring about opportunities for future research agendas, as voiced by the following researcher:

The partnership is a platform for academic service learning (for students) and also a platform for further research (contributing to knowledge-generation). (P 11 Lines 4-6).

4.2.2.2 Subtheme 2.2 Human capital development

A further core function of higher education institutions is to produce human capital (Callaghan, 2015). This includes postgraduate students (Callaghan, 2015; Weisbrod, 1962). Graduation requirements of students include undertaking to produce academic research that is captured in the form of a dissertation or thesis, in which research outputs are reflected. These research outputs are moreover also considered human capital (Callaghan, 2015).

4.2.2.2.1 Category 2.2.1 Postgraduate student development

Researchers submitted that higher education community engagement provides a research opportunity for postgraduate students. Students have the opportunity to become involved in research activities in fulfilment of their postgraduate degrees. This is evident in the following statements:

The FLY project has given me the opportunity to pursue my PhD studies (P11 Lines 36-37).

My postdoctorate research study forms part of this greater research project, namely a long-term collaborative partnership project (Flourishing Learning Youth, FLY) (P 12 Lines 1-2).

In addition to providing a service to learners in an at-risk school context, students gain experience in community-based educational psychology support, thereby reaching some of the outcome stipulated for the MEd qualification (P 13 Lines 8-10).

Higher education community engagement projects provide students and young researchers with opportunities for research in addition to expansion of their professional development (Sawyer, 2004; Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008).

4.2.2.3 Subtheme 2.3 Higher education community engagement as a platform for collaborative partnerships

Higher education community engagement projects require collaborative partnerships with the community (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010). The higher education community engagement collaborative partnership involves collaborative teamwork, sharing of resources, networking and fellowship (Strier, 2011).

4.2.2.3.1 Category 2.3.1 Mutuality of a higher education community engagement partnership

A higher education community engagement collaborative partnership usually demonstrates mutual benefits for the various participants or stakeholders (Strier, 2011). Partners are equally resourceful and benefit equally from the partnership (Strier, 2011; Rosner-Salazar, 2003). This is evident in the following statement:

Local schools are regarded as equal partners who have knowledge, resources and know-how of building their community and bringing in the change (P 4 Lines 9-11).

Higher education community engagement partnerships are perceived as mutually beneficial, as displayed in the extract below:

FLY is about community service learning, where a mutually beneficial learning experience is forged between the University of Pretoria and the community through research (P 7 Lines 1-2).

Higher education community engagement partnerships aren't just about providing service learning, it's so much more! ... about the community, you know ... Of people ... about myself. Sometimes I think ... that they [learner and student] have hugely benefited in the discovery ... (P 10 Lines 39-42).

4.2.2.3.2 Category 2.3.1 Social dimensions in higher education community engagement partnerships

The higher education community engagement project was described by the researchers as a form of fellowship, a platform for networking, sharing of experiences and resources. Higher education community engagement partnerships

provided partners with a platform to share personal experiences, as reflected in the following submission:

The researchers are able to interact with the participants in their real settings; experiencing their (participants') environments. It allows the facilitators (researchers) to share their experiences (P 2 Lines 5-7).

Higher education community engagement partnerships provided partners with a platform *to share educational issues, and potential solutions has [have] been professionally and personally rewarding (P 6 Lines 19-20).*

Higher education community engagement partnerships provided partners with a platform to collaborate with colleagues for professional support, as displayed in the following statements:

I think more departments should invest in collaborative research projects like this one. I found a lot of comfort in working in a team of researchers – bouncing [off] ideas and supporting each other and learning from each other (P 8 Lines 7-10).

I find it easier to work as part of a team of researchers, as it provides team members with a platform and safe space to share and bounce off ideas with each other. It is also valuable to work in a team by sharing academic knowledge and relevant articles. I know that I received many interesting and relevant articles from team members, which I used for my literature review. Being part of the team of researchers creates a space for group cohesion and a feeling that you are “not alone”. (P 12 Lines 19-25).

Although partnering with communities seem beneficial, and is based on the mutuality of the partnership (Strier, 2011), one researcher reported that differences in race may present some challenges with building rapport, stating that *race is an important factor in establishing trust, cultural connections and effectiveness in providing what the rural communities need (P 14 Lines 6-7).*

4.3 LITERATURE CONTROL

The section on literature control attempts to demonstrate a comparison between the results of the current study and the findings in existing literature. Similarities and

differences with existing literature will be discussed. Furthermore, silences that emerged from the data will also be related.

4.3.1 Discussion of findings that reflect similarities with existing knowledge on researcher perspectives of higher education community engagement

Theme 1 describes the participants' perspectives on capacity development in higher education community engagement. Literature essentially describes capacity development as an ongoing process through which organisations or projects gain, maintain or grow capabilities, enabling them to achieve the organisations' or projects' goals and objectives (Hacker et al., 2012; Horton et al., 2003). Capacity development is a process which takes time (Horton et al., 2003). According to Hacker et al. (2012) capacity development is furthermore influenced by the project's sustainability and longevity and vice versa, therefore inextricably linking these concepts to one another. Mohr and Spekman (1994) also argue that research partnership capabilities contribute to project sustainability and longevity. Some of these capabilities include commitment to the partnership, project coordination and communication. Sawyerr (2004) and Hacker et al. (2012) concur, stating that partnership commitment and project infrastructure and management contribute significantly to capacity development as well as project sustainability. Furthermore, Hacker et al. (2012) posit that stating clear project goals and objectives contribute to project sustainability.

In the same vein, the participants in the current study identified aspects similar to those which emerged from existing literature, namely maintaining relationships within the partnership, sound management of the project and logistics as well as determining clearly defined research goals and objectives as factors that influence capacity development and project sustainability. This study therefore concurs with existing knowledge on capacity development and project sustainability in higher education community engagement.

Another similarity in literature points out the link between continuous funding and project sustainability (Hacker et al., 2012; Sawyerr, 2004; Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). The participants in this study not only identified a need for continuous funding

as a challenge for the higher education community engagement project, and but also as a resource that is required for project sustainability.

Participants in the current study also reported experiencing certain challenges or barriers which had direct implications for their development of research capacity. Participants reported language barriers, owing to cultural diversity, time constraints, funding and geographic location as challenges experienced in a higher education community engagement project. In the same vein literature about higher education community engagement points out that funding (Drahota, Meza, Brikho, Naaf, Estabillo, Gomez, Vejnaska, Dufek, Stahmer & Aarons, 2016; Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013; Hacker et al., 2012; Jongbloed, Enders & Salerno, 2008; Sawyerr, 2004;), time and geographic location constraints (Drahota et al., 2016; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012; Toews & Yazedjian, 2007) and cultural differences (Drahota et al., 2016; Marullo & Edwards, 2000) are all challenges experienced in higher education community engagement projects, which agree with the findings of the study based on the participants' perspectives.

In the current study, participants also reported capacity development at personal and professional levels. Some participants indicated professional development in their research skills owing to their involvement in higher education community engagement research projects. Existing literature on research capacity development with respect to general research skills and competencies (Mugabi, 2015; Sawyerr, 2004) as well as literature on programme development supporting community engagement research (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna, & Slamati, 2008) support this. Marks, Erwin and Mosavel (2015) argue strongly in favour of higher education community engagement providing young researchers with an environment for developing their research capacity, finding a research niche as well as gaining subject-specific knowledge.

The participants in this study also indicated experiencing a growing awareness of social justice and confirmed that becoming global citizens was part of their personal development. This is supported by a significant amount of literature (Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Ilcan & Basok, 2004; Rudman, 2004; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Braskamp, 2008; Mark et al, 2015) about researchers' role in achieving social justice, becoming agents of change, inspiring citizens to become

sensitive to their responsibilities, and attaining global citizenship. It can therefore be said that exposure to adversity and diversity through higher education community engagement not only provides a greater awareness and understanding of social justice, but also plays a role in cultivating global citizens.

The participants in the present study were exposed to adversity and diversity, therefore they were presented with the challenge to engage in research outside their comfort zones, in authentic research settings. As a result, the participants experienced barriers in language as well as being confronted with safety issues. The participants furthermore alluded to barriers in rapport-building as a direct result of cross-cultural research relationships, which concurs with what is found in existing literature (Strier, 2011).

Liamputtong (2008) conducted a study on research in a multicultural context and concluded that it did indeed have an impact on the research process. However, Liamputtong's (2008) study puts greater focuses on the ethical and methodological aspects than the interpersonal challenges experienced by the researchers and the impact of this on the research. Research conducted by Bester (2012) suggests a gap in research with regard to working in the multicultural research context and the impact of this on research from the researchers' point of view. On this basis doing research in a multicultural context requires further research to be conducted, especially from the perspective of the researcher.

Theme 2 describes the perspectives of the current study's participants on higher education community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions. Higher education community engagement is becoming more and more prevalent as a postapartheid transition agenda (Lazarus et al., 2008). Due to this transition, the role of higher education institutions are changing, mostly as a result of complex issues that society is faced with (Ramaley, 2014). Higher education institutions therefore play a vital role in achieving social justice (Moiseyenko, 2005). One of the ways in which social justice can be achieved is through higher education community engagement (Lazarus et al., 2008). The participants described community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions in South Africa, which agrees with existing knowledge in this regard (Bond & Paterson, 2005;

Caputo, 2005; Lazarus et al., 2008; Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Mahlomaholo, Francis & Nkoane, 2010; Netshandama, 2010).

In higher education community engagement universities partner with local and rural communities (Strier, 2011). Collaborative partnerships in community engagement have therefore become of common interest in higher education institutions (Mark, Erwin, & Mosavel, 2015; Strier, 2011). It is clear that the findings of the current study therefore concur with existing knowledge about higher education community engagement as a platform for collaborative partnership.

As found in existing literature, participants in this study also perceived research outputs (Callaghan, 2015; Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008) and human capital development (Callaghan, 2015) as further functions of higher education institutions. In addition to this, participants perceived higher education community engagement as a platform where research outputs or knowledge generation can take place while also achieving social justice. This agrees with what is captured in existing literature as regards research productivity (Callaghan, 2015), social justice (Marullo & Edwards, 2009) and community engagement in higher education (Fitzgerald, Burns, Sonka, Furco, & Swanson, 2012). Existing literature and the participants of the current study both allude to knowledge generation in higher education institutions as a result of involvement in community engagement.

Furthermore, the knowledge generated would benefit society (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). According to Fitzgerald et al., (2012), knowledge that is generated to benefit society will also contribute to the development of researchers into responsible citizens. This notion was echoed by the participants in this study. Social justice and global citizenship can be achieved through addressing pressing societal issues (Ramaley, 2014). The research foci therefore play an important role in achieving social justice (Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

Participants also indicated human capital output as subsequent to their involvement in their research into higher education community engagement. Human capital outputs not only include postgraduate students, but also the production of academic work, such as articles, dissertations and theses (Callaghan, 2015). Participants reported outputs of both master's and doctoral-level human capital

development as a result of research conducted in higher education community engagement projects, and this agrees with what is found in literature (Callaghan, 2015).

Callaghan (2015) argues that South Africa produces robust human capital. In support of Callaghan's (2015) argument, according to the participants, higher education community engagement research projects provide a platform for extended research opportunities. The participants also voiced that through their research about rural schools and resilience, further research agendas were identified. This is supported by literature, which has identified that higher education community engagement research usually necessitates further research (Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008). Sawyerr (2004) moreover supports this statement by positing that long-term higher education community engagement partnerships provide a platform for continuous research.

In the current study, participants acknowledged higher education community engagement as a platform for collaborative partnerships. Strier (2011) supports this perspective and indicated that these partnerships assist communities in leveraging a relationship to achieve social justice. Participants in this study described the partnership as being mutually beneficial to all partners, which could contribute to project sustainability. Similarly, Strier (2011) characterises successful higher education community engagement partnerships with mutuality, support and involvement. Hacker et al. (2012) seconds Strier's (2011) argument by describing partnership success as one that provides mutual benefits and encourages equal involvement. Hacker et al. (2012) also link partnership success with project sustainability. Like the participants, Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno (2008) highlight higher education community engagement as being mutually beneficial, which implies a sense of connectedness and collaboration. Furthermore, the social dimensions of higher education community engagement partnerships were also characterised by the participants as a form of fellowship and a platform for colleagues to share resources. The partnership was moreover described by the participants as a platform that allowed an exchange of various resources such as knowledge and expertise. The partnership was essentially described as a resource bank, where partners could access resources in an effort to generate knowledge. The participants

of the current study for this reason valued and appreciated the partnership's social dimensions and their advantages.

4.3.2 Discussion on findings that reflect differences with existing knowledge of researcher perspectives on higher education community engagement

It is evident that the findings of the current study mostly corroborate those of existing literature. There is nonetheless a minor difference with existing literature. In Theme 2, a difference existing literature is that African universities are not producing enough human capital through higher education community engagement (Sawyer, 2004). Contrary to this statement, participants in the current study indicated that they had research opportunities that they were provided with by a higher education community engagement research project. Furthermore, through their research findings, further research agendas were identified, which provided expanded research opportunities.

4.3.3 Discussion on findings that reflect silences in existing knowledge on researcher perspectives of higher education community engagement

In Theme 1, participants in the study did not identify a link between the mutuality of higher education community engagement partnerships and project sustainability. The participants were silent on partnership interdependence, which is also referred to as partnership mutuality, as an aspect that influences capacity development and sustainability of higher education community engagement partnerships, as emerged from literature (Mohr and Spekman, 1994).

In Theme 2, it was established that knowledge generated in higher education institutions should benefit society (Fitzgerald et al., (2012), therefore pressing issues in society influence the research foci (Marullo & Edwards, 2000). Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno (2008) indicated that government plays an influential role in research foci undertaken by higher education institutions depending on the severity of the societal problems that are experienced. In the current study participants were silent on the entity or organisation responsible for their choice of research in higher education institutions. According to Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno (2008) the influence of government on research foci in higher education institutions is significant and could influence researcher participation and motivation. To the contrary,

participants in the current study merely commented on conducting research on resilience and rurality as part of their involvement in higher education community engagement. Although research foci on rurality and resilience are especially pressing issues in South African society (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012) it remains unclear whether the participants conducted research concerning these research foci based on an independent decision by the higher education institution or whether these research foci influenced by government exerted any pressure on the higher education institution. This therefore requires further research.

Finally, participants were silent regarding human capital output in terms of the degree to which human capital was produced. Some literature on human capital development indicates insufficient production (Sawyer, 2004), whereas other literature indicates the robust production of human capital output (Callaghan, 2015). Participants mentioned the production of human capital, but what was silent in the data, however, was the degree to which the human capital was being produced. This also requires further research.

4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study that concur with those in existing literature include knowledge on capacity development within higher education community engagement projects in relation to the sustainability of the projects. Another, similar, finding that correlates with existing literature includes the challenges experienced by the higher education community engagement project, such as funding, time constraints, geographical location-related factors and cultural barriers.

Literature relating to capacity development also exists with regard to personal and professional development, which include developing research skills as well as an awareness of social justice, and developing into a global citizen.

Existing literature furthermore highlighted cross-cultural barriers in higher education community engagement partnerships, as was clearly demonstrated in Theme 2, although this was inconspicuous in Theme 1 in relation to researchers' doing research outside their comfort zones in multicultural settings.

There is moreover abundant literature about higher education community engagement as a platform for productivity of research outputs, social justice, sharing of resources, collaboration and connectedness and human capital outputs. This engagement is also a platform for recognising further research opportunities and informing future higher education community engagement partnerships.

Finally, some literature supports the latter with regard to higher education community engagement presenting expanded research opportunities which may consequently lead to the robust production of human capital.

As mentioned earlier, an insignificant amount of literature contradicts the findings of the current study, although there is nevertheless some existing literature, which seems to contradict the results that emerged from this study insofar as the insufficient production of human capital is concerned.

Data analysis revealed some silences in the data. Participants in this study did not identify a link between project mutuality and project sustainability, as indicated in literature (Mohr and Spekman, 1994). Furthermore, participants did not comment on the influence of government on the research foci of higher education community engagement, as presented in literature (Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008). Finally, the participants did not indicate the degree of human capital that was produced through higher education community engagement.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to explore researchers' experiences of long-term higher education partnerships with rural schools in order to generate knowledge about higher education community engagement. The results of the data as well as the findings of the study were discussed in Chapter 4, where specific themes and subthemes were identified.

In Chapter 5, I will bring the current study to conclusion, beginning with a summary of all the preceding chapters and then addressing the primary and secondary questions, which were presented in Chapter 1. Thereafter I elaborate on the limitations as well as the contributions of the study. In conclusion, I offer recommendations for future research, training and practice.

5.2 SUMMARY OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study, which included the rationale and purpose of the current study. The primary research question and subquestions that guided this study were introduced. Key concepts were also stated and explained. The paradigmatic lenses were moreover described in detail in this chapter. Chapter 2 comprised a discussion of existing literature on colonialism, globalisation, inequality and higher education community engagement. The theoretical framework of global citizenship was also deliberated in this chapter. In Chapter 3, the research design and methodological choices were discussed. The ethical considerations and quality criteria of the current study were also described. In Chapter 4, the results of the data were discussed, including the findings of the current study. The literature control section of this chapter reflects a comparison of findings derived from the current study with those from existing literature.

5.3 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the following subsections, the research questions will be answered in accordance with the findings. I shall begin by addressing the secondary research questions as this contributes to answering the overarching primary research question.

5.3.1 Secondary research questions

5.3.1.1 How can insight into researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools determine what they know about higher education community engagement?

I found, based on the findings in Theme 1, that researchers experienced higher education community engagement partnerships as an opportunity for capacity development. I moreover found that researchers perceived capacity development as interlinked with project sustainability and vice versa. More specifically, I found that researchers confirmed they found effective project management, good logistics and maintaining of partnership relationships as vital for project sustainability. This aligns with existing knowledge on capacity development and project sustainability and longevity (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Sawyerr, 2004; Hacker *et al*, 2012).

In terms of the findings in Theme 2, I found that researchers clearly perceived higher education community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions. This finding also highlighted other functions of higher education institutions which researchers had identified, namely producing research outputs and developing human capital. This perception was once again supported by existing research (Bond & Paterson, 2005; Caputo, 2005; Jongbloed, Enders & Salerno, 2008; Lazarus, *et al* 2008; Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Mahlomaholo, Francis & Nkaone, 2010; Netshandama, 2010; Callaghan, 2015). Furthermore, researchers know that higher education community engagement projects require collaborative partnerships (Strier, 2011).

5.3.1.2 How can insight into the researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools identify strengths in higher education community engagement partnerships?

In Theme 1 it becomes apparent that the current study concurs with existing knowledge, which indicates a connection between project sustainability and capacity development and effective project management, good logistics and maintaining relationships with project partners. Capacity development is defined as growth and development in various capabilities that subsequently contribute to project sustainability (Hacker et al., 2012). According to Mohr and Spekman (1994) partnership capabilities such as successful project management, logistics and maintaining partnership relationships can therefore be perceived as strengths in higher education community engagement. From the researcher's perspective in the current study project sustainability was also found to be a strength in itself as it provided opportunities for continuous capacity development in higher education community engagement projects and research. A further strength in higher education community engagement, from the researchers' perspectives, is the personal and professional development derived from being involved in higher education community engagement projects. This finding is also corroborated by a variety of existing literature on professional development related to research skills and capabilities (Mugabi, 2015; Sawyerr, 2004). Other existing literature supports this researcher insight that higher education community engagement provides opportunities for personal development with regard to gaining an awareness of social justice as well as evolving into a global citizen (Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Ilcan & Basok, 2004; Rudman, 2004; Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Braskamp, 2008; Strier, 2011; Mark et al, 2015).

In theme 2, I furthermore found that the researchers perceived partnership mutuality as a strength, with which existing literature concurs (Strier, 2011). Researchers conveyed that higher education community engagement partnerships provide them with not only the opportunity to develop their research skills, but also to produce research outputs. In addition to this, researchers expressed that higher education community engagement allows them to discover their research niches. I

also found that researchers described higher education community engagement as beneficial to other partnership stakeholders, such as members of the community, especially since higher education community engagement aims to achieve social justice.

In addition I found, from the researchers' perspectives, that human capital development as well as knowledge generation and dissemination were seen as functions of higher education institutions. In addition to this, researchers similarly perceived these functions as strengths of higher education community engagement partnerships.

Finally, I found that the researchers' perspectives indicate higher education community engagement provides a platform for research outputs as well as for collaborative partnerships. In addition, I found that the social dimensions and collaborative nature of higher education community engagement partnerships were perceived as strengths by researchers as this not only contributes to project sustainability (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Sawyerr; 2004; Hacker et al., 2012), but is also viewed as a partnership resource.

5.3.1.3 How can insight into researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools identify limitations in higher education community engagement partnerships?

In Theme 1, in accordance with the perspectives of researchers, I found project funding, time constraints, geographical location, language barriers and other cultural differences to be limitations in a higher education community engagement partnership. Another possible limitation of higher education community engagement partnerships emerged in Theme 2, namely research foci. According to existing literature, research foci are significantly influenced by government as well as inequalities experienced in society. Although this finding was inconclusive in this study, it nevertheless presents a possible limitation, especially as this may affect researcher motivation and participation (Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008).

5.3.1.4 How can insight into researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools determine what is required for future planning in higher education community engagement projects?

The future planning of higher education community engagement, as perceived by the researchers, requires limitations or challenges to be addressed. Firstly, I found that funding for higher education community engagement projects needs to be sourced for project sustainability in addition to the smooth running of research activities, as voiced by the researchers. I found that time constraints were yet another limitation of higher education community engagement, as researcher perspectives confirmed. On the basis of this limitation, the time factor should be taken into consideration when planning for research activities takes place so that sufficient time is allocated to the various research activities. Another limitation which emerged from the findings, which requires a change in future planning, is the cultural and language barriers. Planning with regard to cultural and language barriers is especially necessary as this has direct implications for research itself (Strier, 2011; Liamputtong, 2008).

5.3.2 Primary research question: How can insight into researchers' experiences of long-term higher education community engagement partnership with rural schools inform future higher education community engagement?

Global citizenship is the theoretical framework of this study (see section 2.5). Green (2012) states that higher education institutions play a role in cultivating a culture of global citizenship through changing ways of thinking and encouraging participation in social, political and economic issues. The latter subsequently contributes to awareness of social injustices in society as well as a sense of social empathy developing. In addition to this, Nussbaum (1996) describes higher education community engagement as a vein through which global citizenship can be achieved. The construct global citizenship therefore shaped my understanding of the researchers' perspectives with regard to higher education community engagement as this appears to be the ultimate outcome of community engagement and social justice.

This research therefore contributes to knowledge and insight on higher education community engagement. According to researchers' perspectives in this current study, the following contributions can be made with regard to higher education community engagement:

- Capacity development within higher education community engagement partnerships is necessary for project sustainability and longevity.
- Project challenges compromise project sustainability and capacity development. It is therefore required that these challenges are addressed in the future planning of higher education community engagement agendas to ensure project sustainability and ultimately even project success.
- Successful higher education community engagement partnerships require collaborative partnerships that are mutually beneficial for all partners involved.
- Higher education community engagement requires platforms for knowledge generation, human capacity development and collaborative partnerships. Therefore, policy guiding higher education community engagement should consider establishing these platforms in order that the core functions of higher education institutions can be performed.
- Higher education community engagement benefits researchers as it contributes to their personal and professional development. This could therefore play a motivational role in researchers' involvement in higher education community engagement.
- Higher education community engagement benefits from collaborative partnerships since it contributes to project sustainability and serves as a resource in the partnership.

5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

First and foremost, this study contributes to and expands the limited and scarce literature about researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement partnerships that exists. This study essentially contributed to literature on higher education community engagement partnerships from researchers' perspectives and therefore also addresses the gap in literature, as previously highlighted in the rationale of the study.

Insight into researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement points out strengths and limitations, which can serve to inform future higher education community engagement partnerships.

Moreover, the findings of this study confirmed what researchers currently know about higher education community engagement partnerships. Researchers' knowledge and experience of higher education community engagement concur with the findings of this study, which indicate what is required in planning for future higher education community engagement partnerships.

Finally, the findings of this study may further contribute to researchers' experiences of long-term higher education partnerships with rural schools.

5.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the identified limitations and delimitations of this study are discussed. Firstly, I used qualitative research methodology, which is time-consuming. A significant amount of time was spent collecting, analysing and interpreting data (Creswell, 2007). Nevertheless, in this case qualitative research methodology produced comprehensive data and enabled quality interpretations thereof.

Secondly, my subjectivity as a research investigator posed another limitation in this study (Carr, 1994). This limitation was dealt with through practising reflexivity in my research journal (see Appendix H for research journal) (Mays & Pope, 2000) and through member checking (Baxter Magolda, 2001).

Thirdly, limitations relating to generalisation were also encountered (Yin, 1994) due to the limited number of participants and the boundaries faced by the participants who had been selected. The emphasis in this study, however, was not on constructing generalised knowledge, but rather to investigate a context-specific case, namely researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement. This limitation goes hand in hand with the delimitation that will be discussed in the statement which follows.

Finally, there was a delimitation in the scope of this study, which is often associated with convenience sampling (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012). The aim of this study was to focus on describing the researchers' experiences of

higher education community engagement. The case was therefore bound to limited participants, the researchers. Due to the limited scope of the participants, the findings of this study cannot be generally applied to different populations (Simon, 2011).

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

I bring the current study to conclusion by suggesting a few recommendations for future research, practice and training.

5.6.1 Recommendations for future research

The following recommendations are proposed with regard to future research based on the findings of the study in relation to existing literature:

- It is recommended that further research should be conducted concerning researchers' choice of research foci in higher education community engagement to determine whether the research foci are based on the independent decision of the higher education institution or whether they are influenced by government pressure on the higher education institutions.
- It is suggested that further research should be conducted on the degree to which human capital is developed through higher education community engagement.
- A further suggestion is that additional research should be conducted on research in multicultural contexts and the impact of this on research from researchers' perspectives.

5.6.2 Recommendations related to practice

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed regarding the future practice of higher education community engagement:

- Professionals such as researchers and higher education community engagement faculty members could use the insights of this study to improve future higher education community engagement partnerships.
- Higher education institutions that are considering partnerships with rural schools as part of community engagement could also benefit from the insight derived from this study through highlighting the strengths and limitations of this partnership with rural schools.

5.6.3 Recommendations related to training

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed regarding future training:

- It is recommended that administrative faculty members use the findings of this study as a point of departure when planning and implementing higher education community engagement projects and activities.
- It is moreover recommended that faculty members employ the findings of this study to develop and implement community engagement modules and activities.
- It is furthermore recommended that academic service learning students use the findings of this study to gain insight into higher education community engagement partnerships with rural schools.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this study was to explore researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement as part of a long-term higher education-rural school partnership. The findings of this study revealed two main themes that summarise the researchers' experiences of higher education community engagement. Insight about higher education community engagement partnerships was gained from the researchers' perspectives, which serve to inform future higher education community engagement partnerships. Other professionals who work in this field may benefit from the findings of this study as it provides insight into higher education community engagement.

As a research investigator, I am confident that this study will contribute to the scarce and limited literature on researchers' perceptions of higher education community engagement as part of a long-term higher education-rural school partnership. I am furthermore confident that the findings in this study will contribute to higher education community engagement in relation to social justice and global citizenship.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Individual consent for participation in a Research Study
A research project of the University of Pretoria
Project title: Flourishing Learning Youth

Invitation to participate

We would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. However, in order to take part in this research you will be requested to sign this consent form which gives you permission to participate in this study.

Description of the research

This study aims to capture your experiences of an on-going higher-education community engagement partnership with rural schools. Furthermore, we would like to understand what in this partnering relationship is not working and also how it should be done differently to strengthen the partnership in future.

Risk and Inconvenience

We do not foresee any risks in your participation of this study. If any problems do arise we will avail ourselves to you and ensure that you comprehend all the proceedings and feel comfortable to continue in the study. Your identity will not be revealed to anyone and any information that we acquire from this study will be kept confidential.

Confidentiality

All the information we acquire from this study will be kept strictly confidential and will only be made available to the research team. No information will be shared with anyone else. The only exception is if there is a serious problem concerning your safety or that of any other person in which case we are required to inform the

appropriate agency. If such a concern does arise, we will ensure that we discuss the matter with you before taking action. Please note that none of the questions in this study are designed to collect information that will require us to contact anyone. All the information obtained from this study will be stored in locked files in research offices at the University of Pretoria.

Because confidentiality is important we would expect that any information that you provide also remain confidential and that you would not discuss this information with anyone.

Benefits

We hope that this study will benefit you, the higher-education institution that you are associated with and the greater society. There are no financial benefits to this study.

What are the rights of the participant in this study?

Participation in this study is purely voluntary and any participant, can at any time during the study, may refuse and discontinue their participation without any given reason. You will not be affected in any way, should you decide not to participate or to discontinue your participation in the study.

Has this study received ethical approval?

This study has been approved by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria.

Questions

Please feel free to ask about anything that is unclear and take as long as you feel necessary before making a decision about whether or not to give consent to take part in the study. If you perhaps have any further questions that may arise later on in the study feel free to contact my supervisor Prof. L. Ebersöhn at, 012 420 2337 or you may contact me at, 076 3718750 or by e-mail: alicianiolegummy2@gmail.com.

Informed Consent

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, conduct, risks and benefits of this study. I have also read or have had someone read to me the above information regarding this study and that I understand the information that has been given to me. I am aware that the results and the information about this study will be processed anonymously. I may, at any stage, without any prejudice, withdraw my consent to participate in this study. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare that I may participate in this study.

- (a) Writing your name below means that you voluntarily consent to participate in the project and that you are aware of what will happen to you in this study. If you decide to withdraw from the study, all you need to do is inform the project manager, Prof. L. Ebersöhn.

Name: _____ (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- (b) Writing your name below means that you voluntarily consent that we may take audio recordings of you during the project and share these during discussions as well as in reports that we may write about this project. We will not share your name with the people who hear these recordings. If you decide that we should rather not take audio recordings of you in the project then all you need to do is inform the project manager.

Name: _____ (Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I, _____ herewith confirm that the person above has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

If you have any further questions about this study, you may contact the investigator, Prof. L. Ebersöhn at 012 420 2337. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant you may contact the University of Pretoria Education Faculty Ethics committee at 012 339 8612.

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APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE



**UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA**

Faculty of Education

Demographical questionnaire

A. Particulars	
Questionnaire number (<i>Administration use only</i>)	
Interviewee surname and name	
Date of birth	

General Instructions
Tick the box where necessary, or answer the question in the space provided

1. Gender (Tick one)	Male	Female
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Ethnicity (Tick one)	
Black	<input type="checkbox"/>
White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coloured	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Ages (Tick one)	
Below 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
30-40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-50 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
51-60 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
61-70 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Language proficiency (Tick appropriate options)	
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Afrikaans	
English	
isiNdebele	
isiZulu	
isiXhosa	
Sepedi	
Sesotho	
Setswana	
Shona	
Siswati	
Tshivenda	
Other (Specify):	

5. Where do you live? (Tick one)	
Gauteng	
Another province (Specify):	
Another country (Specify):	

6. What is your highest post-graduate level of education? (Tick One)	
Masters	
PhD	
Other (Specify):	

7. State your current occupation.	

8. How many years were/are you involved in the FLY project? (Tick one)	
1 -2 Years	
3-4 Years	
5-6 Years	
7-8 Years	
9 years and more	

9. In what year(s) were you involved in the FLY project? (Tick one)	
2006	
2007	
2008	
2009	
2010	
2011	
2012	
2013	



10.	<i>Are you currently involved with the FLY project? (Tick one)</i>	Yes	No
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If so, specify how are you involved?

11.	<i>What do you believe this partnership to be about? (Tick appropriate option/s)</i>
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Academic service learning.	
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Higher education community engagement.	
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Knowledge generation.	
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Social justice.	
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<i>Other reasons:</i>	
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APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE/ INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

ERA Unit - Unit for Education Research in AIDS

Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

Researcher experiences of a long-term higher education partnership¹ with rural schools

Conducted by: Alicia Adams

Supervised by: Prof. L. Ebersöhn

Name & Surname: _____

Current affiliation: _____

Year(s) participating in FLY² Project:

Based on your time and experience as FLY-collaborative researcher, please answer the following questions. Please give examples to enrich your answers.

¹ CEC12091412827

² Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY)-partnership with a Secondary School, and other Gert Sibande district schools.

1. What do you know about the FLY-partnership?

2. What are the strengths of the FLY partnership?

3. What are the limitations of the FLY-partnership?

4. What do you think is required for future planning in FLY?

5. Please reflect on your retrospective experiences as researcher in the FLY project:

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APPENDIX D

AN EXAMPLE OF A VIRBATIM TRANSCRIPTION FROM A FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA ERA Unit - Unit for Education Research in AIDS
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA Department of Educational Psychology
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

Researcher experiences of a long-term higher education partnership³ with rural

Conducted by: Alicia Adams

Supervised by: Prof. L. Ebersöhn

Name & Surname: P 10 _____

Current affiliation: A _____

Connection with FLY (Flourishing Learner Youth) study with schools: Collaborative researcher

Year(s) participating in FLY⁴ Project: 2012-2013

Based on your time and experience as FLY-collaborative researcher, please answer the following questions. Please give examples to enrich your answers.

1. What do you know about the FLY-partnership?[Research Investigator]

“Partnership.....emmm..... the University’s partnership....they are in partnership with schools in remote rural areas in Mpumalanga. I think with a collection of schools in the area. The secondary and primary schools..... and there is emmmmm

³ CEC12091412827

⁴Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY)-partnership with a Secondary School, and other Gert Sibande district schools.

engagement of service learning programmes for Master students in the department of Educational Psychology emmmmmmm as part of their training... in providing psychological services emmmmm to those err to Grade 9 learners..... Although, they do involve teachers as well and other community members in some cases.... Maybe.... within the emmm research that has been done emmmm by.. or with the services that's been provided....for the emmm the learners in the school....so that they can find out emmmm..... Students go there a minimum of twice a year. In May and in September and all the researchers also participate in the programmes,.... career guidance and knowledge generation which contributes to research in different areas where emmmemmmm.....I know....there are projects of.... different languages where they [the teachers] go around and do research on how they go about doing their teaching of different languages..... English... as a second language in the Foundation Phase and it is part of that partnership [FLY]. But I know there is also workshops and training programmes that has to do with the development of teachers.. for governmental teachers in their teaching ability in mathematics and teaching mathematics. Emmm research involving mathematics as well.... all forming part of the FLY project.” *Anything else that you would like to add?* “I think it started in 2006 and there is quite a large number of students emm no sorry learners and past learners that have benefited from the research of the training of the Educational Psychology students. I do know this first hand because I had interaction with teachers from schools... they ... they the learners.. have benefited from the actual projects and they actually ask the students to come more often so that they can continue to work with the learners”.

2. What are the strengths of the FLY partnership? [Research Investigator]

“I think the fact that it is a partnership. The school.. the school as a co-operative body itself, the learners within the school, the staff and the community go along way strengthening everything that we [researchers] do. Because.. we pair students with learners.. it's a life changing experience for some because if not for that.... Then some learners might not have the opportunity emmm to have that kind of guidance..... or to have that kind of engagement with people from a higher education institution of learning.... where they can express their feelings and can ask questions. So.. I find that.... very VERY valuable! Because then they can share

their problems and questions with the students, then the students go back later to the learners and tell them {"This is what you told me and this is what I my reports is saying about you."} And then they share this with the learners and with their parents. You can have a fascinating experience as a student.... And that's what they [students] give feedback about. Because their lives change as well after this. .. As past conceptions are clarified and sometimes the students have an ah ha moment.... They say {"WOW! I actually learnt something."}. It's not just about providing service learning, it's so much more!.....about the community you know.... Of people.. about myself. Sometimes I think..... that they [learner and student] have hugely benefited in the discovery.... For the student, on the one side and the learners on the other side. And their parents.... They find it so much help....when they get the report back.. feedback emmm the reactions of the parents is shocked! {"Like did my child actually do this."}. I think that, is really nice, I like that! I mean... I talked to a number of teachers and they say emmm how beneficial the project is.

3. What are the limitations of the FLY-partnership? [Research Investigator]

"If we start from the academic service learning, then I think one limitation can be the expectations of the students. The students sometime.....emmm.....It's possible to actually feel that you [students] are going to this partnership to achieve one thing. You [students] have to emmmm.. If you [students] are not careful.... If you [students] are not open-minded you [students] lose sight of the benefits you [students] can derive from this partnership. You [students] are there.... You [students] as students go there for training. If you [students] go there thinking this is going to be simply just something that you can tick off your check-list of things you need to do..emmm saying {" I've done this.... So I can tick it off."} then you lose a lot of the value that the partnership provides. Another limitation is that... by the time of the last reflections.... the students admit.... {" Ja... maybe... that... maybe that.... what I thought was going to happen.. never actually happened."} So we [lectures/supervisors] should tell them [students] ahead of time... {"You have to put aside your own preconceived ideas of what to expect from these rural schools. You have to try and not be judgmental."}. *So is this a possible plan or suggestion for the future?* "Yes! I have to make sure they [students] understand that all their ideas isn't really what it's like and then incorporate that with their [students] preparation and to

make them more open minded so that they aren't shocked and so that's not or won't be a limitation. So that they know that this is what is facing them and so that they don't lose sight. Other possible limitations could be providing false hope to learners and not being able to deliver. That can be a limitation, not that I'm saying that it is but rather that it could be if we are not careful and rise expectations. So I'm saying that students can create false hope and it could be a limitation and that this can take away the richness of the research and this can affect the research. There are actually much more benefits than limitations and I can't really think of more limitations.

4. What do you think is required for future planning in FLY? [Research Investigator]

The first thing is that you [researcher] to these rural schools in such remote areas.. you have to be flexible, so in terms of planning there is only so much you can do. You have to literally be flexible. You can't be rigid because if you are and things don't work out as you planned it...[sigh].. You will have to be able to work with that. So in terms of the student, they need to be taught guided to be more flexible. They have to know that what they expect might not come true. They [students] also need to learn how to relax more on their first encounter. So in terms of future planning, students have to be more flexible and be prepared to be flexible. In the process of planning emmm... the travel... you going there.. the accommodation..... all of that.. You have to realize that things may not go according to plan and you will have to work around that. So in your planning...plan to be flexible so that you can accommodate any problems that may arise that is out of your control. So in your planning, plan to be flexible so that you have room to adjust because sometimes you'll find people panicking because thing isn't going according to plan. Also, to better prepare the students or make them more aware those things don't always go according to plan and to just keep that in the back of their minds. Perhaps in future... if students are paired up, they can perhaps bounce ideas off each other and in that way they have support and encouragement in cases where things don't go according to plan.

5. Please reflect on your retrospective experiences as researcher in the FLY project: [Research Investigator]

As a researcher it's an excellent platform for you to learn more about your specific field if you want to emmm... I think having the opportunity to be part of this space where you have so many years of experience to build on is very enriching because you can literally compare what you find now, with what was found in the past. I know that this gives opportunity for future research. So you have a rich field in which you can do your research in. And as a researcher, its a valuable space to be in...like we have..... emm I mean I spoke to some teachers and you can see that they literally don't want it [research projects] to end because they see the benefits and for someone who is conducting research and is involved in this service, having the input of the people over a number of years adds value to your research, and you're reflections. As a researcher, having the confidence of knowing you can go back to a particular place and know that you are not there to exploit them [participants] and that you are not there to just use them but rather to co-generate knowledge. You aren't coming there with an opinion. I like that the community also gets to share and participate. They [participants] also get the information [research results]. The [participants] also have access to the knowleged generated. They are free to come here [the University of Pretoria] and gain access to what we have found. This gives you as researcher peace of mind... that if you emmm leave..... the partnership is an on-going project. Emmmm so those.... Partners may still gain access to what they need even after you leave. To what you found, what we did and how. They get feedback. So altogether, for someone who is doing research, there's a community where you have community members, staff members [teachers] and parents and learners and you are the researcher going into that space..... its enriching, its safe and secure, collaborative. And so you as a researcher can come into that space not feeling that you are using them [participants] but rather you feel like you are giving back your knowledge generated, you are giving back to the community. Also, the collaboration is good. I'm passionate about one thing and my colleagues are passionate about other things but we come together to collaborate and the students. So it gives us the opportunity to come together, like a meeting point, to see where the others are and where you can work together. So it's a nice environment for researchers not just local but international as well. So there's an opportunity to learn from others who are experts in their field and partner up with other researchers. So there is a world of knowledge in this partnership and that's not easy to come by.

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF THE CODING STEP IN THEMATIC ANALYSIS



Researcher experiences of a long-term higher education partnership¹ with rural schools

Conducted by: Alicia Adams
Supervised by: Prof. L. Ebersöhn

Name & Surname: Participant 3
Current affiliation: E
Year(s) participating in FLY² Project: 2009-2012_____

Line **Based on your time and experience as FLY-collaborative researcher, please answer the following questions. Please give examples to enrich your answers.**

1. What do you know about the FLY-partnership?

1 "Eeemm ...ok.....What I know is that there is a partnership between the department of
2 Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria and the Ngilandi schools in Mpumalanga
3 where they work together in terms of providing support by providing psychological services
4 where we as students visit the schools and in terms of learning support and like helping
5 support them with daily barriers. So that's what I got from it... a university practicum...but
6 there are other research projects that go with it. But I think the main thing is for TUK's to get
7 research in order for future people to work with them but also to help the school by means of
8 providing psychological services which was the main aim I would say".

Commented [AA1]: University-community partnership

Commented [AA2]: Collaboration

Commented [AA3]: Academic service learning: activities associated with it

Commented [AA4]: Academic service learning:

Commented [AA5]: Research platform

Commented [AA6]: Mutuality

Commented [AA7]: Knowledge generation for future collaboration

¹ CEC12091412827

² Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY)-partnership with Ngilandi Secondary School, and other Gert Sibande district schools.

2. What are the strengths of the FLY partnership?

“Eemmm..... I thought about this one before emmmm.....I think that XXX organizes this projects extremely good in terms of the logistics... getting there..... giving therapy..... as well as her connections with the schools and the relationships with the school. So first of all I think that the logistics is really very good. Then in terms of the school, for the children I would say that it's a wonderful opportunity for them because they grow up in that area and what I learnt from the group of boys I worked with is that some of them have never been out of that area or boundaries. So they don't have a broad variety of career options in the area where they stay so we came there and we provided them with resources and knowledge and information for them to broaden their horizons as well. So I think that that was a huge strength as students were bringing in resources in. Then for me as a student it was a wonderful learning experience as it was a learning curve. It was the best cross-culture learning experience of my life and another strength of the FLY project is that you go into the rural areas. We are used to testing in perfect environments but then you go into the rural areas it gives us a real life opportunity of testing and therapy. It takes you out of your comfort zone and you have to think outside of the box. It kind of forces the student to have a different way of thinking and be adaptable and to be in tune with your client. So if I have to sum it up, it helps the students in terms of cross-culture and helps the student come out of the comfort zone and learn to adapt. Then another strength was that the FLY project allowed us to develop strong relationships with fellow students. So if at any time you are experiencing difficulty with the learners then you can turn to your fellow students for support and they can help. So you can learn from each other and share experiences. So it's like a very big support structure. In terms of research, there is so much research going into learning and development through the FLY project. Going out there each year and taking students... a lot of research comes out of each visit which is awesome”.

3. What are the limitations of the FLY-partnership?

“This was difficult for me to be honest.... Eemmmm.....but emmm I think it was very difficult for me to do therapy with the children because of the language barrier and it was such a learning curve because in the end I could see why I need to go out there. But the language barrier was definably a limitation. There were 9 boys in my group and only 1 could understand English. So luckily he would translate but there were times that he himself couldn't and some days he wasn't present so on those days it was difficult for me to communicate with them and

Commented [AA8]: Project management (good)

Commented [AA9]: Influences

Commented [AA10]: Networking

Commented [AA11]: Project logistics (Organised, smoothing running of operations)

Commented [AA12]: Capacity development for participants-Career exposure:

Commented [AA13]: Capacity development Empowerment/ enabling for partners

Commented [AA14]: Platform for learning (for students)ASL

Commented [AA15]: Researcher Capacity development-Diversity: culture

Commented [AA16]: Authentic learning/experience

Commented [AA17]: Researcher capacity development-Diversity: rurality

Commented [AA18]: Authentic learning/experience

Commented [AA19]: Researcher Capacity development Diversity: thinking (awareness of injustice)

Commented [AA20]: Diversity: Paradigm shift in thinking (social justice)

Commented [AA21]: Diversity: rurality

Commented [AA22]: Fellowship

Commented [AA23]: Collaboration: offers colleague support

Commented [AA24]: Part of fellowship

Commented [AA25]: Co-construction of knowledge

Commented [AA26]: Fellowships

Commented [AA27]: Research output (HEI core function)

Commented [AA28]: Multilingualism: Language barriers

Commented [AA29]: Learning experience: capacity development (confronted a challenge- comfort zone)

Commented [AA30]: Learning experience

Commented [AA31]: Language barrier

Commented [AA32]: Participant participation: inconsistent

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I'm sure they didn't grasp the ideas of the therapy. We also only have 6 days with them in total so you really want to effectively give them all the information and knowledge you can but the language was a big problem especially when you want them to know everything that you are saying as it's a wonderful opportunity for them. I can't think of any other limitation because everything else worked out so well".

4. What do you think is required for future planning in FLY?

"Emmmm ok let me think..... well I think it runs very good, not sure if it's still running like when we did it or if the system is the same but think my thing is more of a formality because I think I'm a very structured organized person and I like to be prepared. I don't think they prepared us as to how it was going to be. I knew it was a remote school with black children, I taught at a school with black learners in Joburg so I thought I knew, I can do this but when I got there it was totally different. They could hardly understand me and I had a lot of paper activity and they couldn't do it because language was an issue so I maybe, well now I know that its good not to give the students too much information as it should be a learning process but it would be nice if someone would give me the realistic and holistic view of the school like this is the situation, the children have limited language skills ect... in that way I could have gone and translated the words in their language or something. So yes... if I had more information about their background or more information on them then I could have gone and changed my therapy techniques and so on and just be better prepared to communicate with them."

5. Please reflect on your retrospective experiences as researcher in the FLY project:

"Emmmm ok... First I was a therapist then I collected data. It was a huge learning curve for me. In terms of thinking out the box, coming out of my comfort zone, being more adaptable and being more in tune with my clients. As a researcher.....I learnt so much. It was a lovely project to be involved with in terms of learning the research process and how to write a dissertation and how to look holistically at a project to see the pro's and con's and how it followed (developed) and what we can learn from it. If I look at it retrospectively, it was a huge learning curve for me. It changed me as a person in terms of thinking differently and being adaptable so for me that was the main thing. I learnt a lot more about research and about myself."

Commented [AA33]: Mobilize available assets
Translation
Flexibility in communication
Multilingualism

Commented [AA34]: Time limitations

Commented [AA35]: Multilingualism: language barrier

Commented [AA36]: Logistics: Smooth operation

Commented [AA37]: Awareness of diversity- comfort zone adapting to adversity and diversity.

Commented [AA38]: Personal development-Preconceived ideas of project

Commented [AA39]: Language barrier

Commented [AA40]: Research scope: site and participant insight

Commented [AA41]: Research scope: lack of insight

Commented [AA42]: Research activities- professional development

Commented [AA43]: Capacity development (as a researcher)

Commented [AA44]: Research capacity development

Commented [AA45]: Researcher capacity development-personal transformation

Commented [AA46]: Researcher capacity development-personal

Commented [AA47]: Researcher capacity development-professional



Researcher experiences of a long-term higher education partnership³ with rural schools

Conducted by: Alicia Adams
Supervised by: Prof. L. Ebersöhn

Name & Surname: Participant 2
Current affiliation: A
Year(s) participating in FLY⁴ Project: 3 years (2006-2008)

Based on your time and experience as FLY-collaborative researcher, please answer the following questions. Please give examples to enrich your answers.

1. What do you know about the FLY-partnership?

It involves students (researchers) in schools and communities. The researchers do their research by involving the youth and empowering them with skills. The researchers' results are used in encouraging other scholars to do further research in these communities.

2. What are the strengths of the FLY partnership?

The researchers do their research in the most disadvantage communities. The partnership has been going on for some years and it's sustainable. The researchers are able to interact with the participants in their real settings and experience their environments. It allows the facilitators to share their experiences.

3. What are the limitations of the FLY-partnership?

I wish we (researchers) were able to spend more time in the research field with the participants.

Commented [A48]: Academic service learning

Commented [A49]: Collaboration

Commented [A50]: Capacity development (enabling)

Commented [A51]: Platform for on-going research and knowledge generation

Commented [AA52]: Research output

Commented [A53]: Awareness of Diversity: Marginalized groups/rurality

Commented [A54]: Project: long-term/ongoing and sustainable t

Commented [A55]: Fellowship

Commented [A56]: Authentic research/learning experience

Commented [A57]: Collaboration: shared learning experiences

Commented [AA58]: Challenge: time constraints

³ CEC12091412827

⁴ Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY)-partnership with Ngilandi Secondary School, and other Gert Sibande district schools.

Line	4. What do you think is required for future planning in FLY?
9	To involve more researchers in the project as there are a lot of issues in the communities that need to
10	be dealt with through further research. The involvement of more participants in the research project.
11	Researchers should be allocated more time in the research field.
	5. Please reflect on your retrospective experiences as researcher in the FLY project:
12	I was able to engage with participants in their environment when doing research . I felt encouraged
13	when I realized that I was not only doing research but that the participants gained from the research
14	as they were empowered with skills that were beneficial in their lives . I was able to collect data in an
15	environment that was conducive to the participants as they were used to their environment and they
16	did not feel intimidated , as such, they were free to share experiences with the researchers .

---oOo---

- Commented [A59]:** Capacity development: project growth/sustainability
- Commented [A60]:** Diversity: awareness of social inequality
- Commented [A61]:** Community engagement
- Commented [A62]:** Challenge: participant participation limited
- Commented [AA63]:** Challenge: Time constraint
- Commented [AA64R63]:**
- Commented [A65]:** Authentic research environment
- Commented [A66]:** Capacity development for researcher: Inspired
- Commented [A67]:** Mutuality
- Commented [A68]:** Capacity development: researcher
- Commented [A69]:** Capacity development: participants
- Commented [A70]:** Comfort zone for participants: awareness of diversity
- Commented [A71]:** Comfort zone for participant: awareness of diversity
- Commented [A72]:** Collaboration

APPENDIX F

**AN EXAMPLE OF THEMATIC
MAPPING-UNCOVERING THEMES
AND SUBTHEMES**



THEMATIC MAPPING

Theme 1: Researcher perspectives on capacity development in higher education community engagement

Capacity development within HCFE

Research capacity development for a researcher

Subthemes

Categories

HECE sustainability	Project challenges
Project organised & structured	Too rigid
Well-established project.	Time constraints Time limitations
project is structured	Multilingualism: language barrier
Good logistics	Human resources
on-going	Cultural diversity Cross-cultural
sustainable and well managed under good management	geographical location travelling challenges physical distance remoteness/ far away
Relationships maintained	Funding financial implications
Relationships ongoing	poor administration on behalf of participants

Categories

Personal development	Professional development
Out of comfort zone	offer my expertise
Change in perspective	Research activities
Awareness of social justice	learning experience
Awareness of diversity and adversity	Research Foci: awareness of professional development
Self-awareness	Research skills/process
Research identity forms	Project management
Learning curve	General skills (problem solving, time management)
Thinking differently	Publication of work

Theme 2: Researcher perspectives of higher education community engagement as a core function of higher education institutions.

Research outputs

Subthemes

Platform for collaborative partnerships

Human capital development

Categories

Knowledge generation	Research foci & informing future agenda
Core function of HEI	Further research exploration
HECE: Research outputs	

Category

Postgraduates
MA graduates
PhD graduates
Thesis

Categories

Mutuality	Social dimensions
Beneficial	connectedness
Equal	support
Collaborate	Sharing
	fellowship

APPENDIX G

AN EXAMPLE OF MEMBER CHECKING

An extract from an email conversation between research investigator and Participant 8

[Research investigator- indicated by the colour black]

[Participant response- indicated in colour]

Hi Participant 8,

I would appreciate it if you could briefly respond to the following:

- My summary of your data and possible themes identified from your data.
- Possible themes identified from data across participants.

(Please indicate if you agree and if you would like to add anything- in another colour)

Summary of your data:

What do you know about the FLY-partnership?

Your answer: ASL opportunity for Educational Psychology students.

What are the strengths of the FLY partnership?

Your answer:

- Prof XXXXX (in other words I'm saying that she is a good project manager)
- Welcoming attitude of participants (their willingness to participate in the project/partnership?)

What are the limitations of the FLY-partnership?

Your answer: Participants are over researched

What do you think is required for future planning in FLY?

Your answer: Building connections (for project growth and sustainability)

Please reflect on your retrospective experiences as researcher in the FLY project:

Your answer: I found the collaboration useful (provided support, connections, and partnership resources and partnership seen as a support mechanism)

Please provide feedback on the following possible themes/subtheme that was presented across participant data:

- Project challenges (funding, time and space constraints, language and cultural barriers)
- Capacity development for participants: career and psychological services
- Capacity development for researchers (personally and professionally)
- Research outputs/ knowledge generation: rurality-resilience, language barriers in rural schools ect; also function of HECE.
- Collaborative partnerships: mutuality, social dimensions, connections, support, resources

All is good Alicia.



APPENDIX H

AN EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH JOURNAL NOTES TO DEMONSTRATE REFLEXIVITY

28 July 2016

My supervisor approved all documents for him (Demographic Questionnaires, Questionnaires & Consent form.) What a relief!

I also sent out all the invites to the participants. It took a while since I had to do it one by one.

My supervisor also assisted by searching out the emails on my behalf.

Hopefully this would get the participants to respond promptly. I noticed that some of the participants

are situated overseas. Not sure

if the emails will be received at appropriate times. Nevertheless, I

think I'm just really anxious

as now I have to wait for the participants to respond.

26 July 2016

Today I officially began the research process of my study.

I sat together with a fellow researcher to draw up the consent forms and the questionnaire. I will then

run this by my supervisor tomorrow so that I can start sending out

the invites to my participants. I

received a list of names from my supervisors, some of which

I know. There are about 20

possible participants that I need

to invite. I'm hoping that

all 20 would be willing to

participate in my research study.



12 August 2014

I already stated receiving some responses from participants. I'm still very anxious even though I received about 1 or 2 responses so far. I'm worried that I don't get ~~enough~~ enough participants to respond. About 2 participants informed me that they would like to either have a face-to-face interview or a telephonic interview. The one participant works on campus therefore it's close by, however the other participant lives in another country. This means that I will have to call her on her landline which might be very costly.



30 September 2014

Something to do with it. I stuck strictly to the questions in the questionnaire. I used these questions in the questionnaire as a interview schedule therefore it guide me in the process. I only asked questions for clarity here to there to maintain some sort of consistency with those participants who didn't have face-to-face or telephonic interviews with me.

Today I done my first telephonic interview with one of the participants. The participant was kind enough to give me a call. This really saves me a lot. I think because of this I was more at ease during the telephonic interview as opposed to me having to call her and be pressured to end the call as soon as possible so as to not push up my telephone bill. The telephonic interview was very fruitful. I really didn't expect the participant to provide me with so much information. So far the telephonic interview has provided me with the most comprehensive data so far. I question the fact that this being a telephonic interview and the participant feeling pressured to give detailed answers had

and she knew that I was apart of the FLY ASL practicum therefore she mentioned a few things that 'I think' she assumed I knew as a result of being involved in the FLY project as a ASL. I knew at this point that I had to be a researcher looking at this participants data from an different perspective. Almost as if I was an 'outside' researcher coming into this project for the first time. based on this, I started asking more clarification type questions toward the end of the interview to ensure that data was capture authentically and not as an ASL that skewed similar experiences to that of the participant. This interview was good practice for my next interview which is scheduled a month from now. The next one will be a telephone interview.

31 July 2014

Today I had my first face-to-face interview with ~~the~~ a participant who opted not to email the questionnaires to me. I had to mentally prepare myself for this interview seeing that it was the first participant that I would have to collect data from in a "non - electronic manner". I had a 'to do' list with all the things I had to take with such as a note pad, pen, recorder the Consent form, Demic-graphic questionnaires. In the beginning it was quite intimidating to sit across a person and take notes while he speak. It was very difficult to keep up. Good thing I had the interview recorded. Another ~~set~~ challenge ~~to~~ I was faced with was that the participant was a former lecturer of mine.



10 June 2015

I'm still working on my Chapter 3 research as been very slow due to my internship. I only realised today that it's been awhile. My supervisor asked me to send a summary of all the positive feedback from participants. I quickly had a look at the data again to complete this. Then I realised that I missed a few things the first time round while making summary notes & started the initial coding procedure. I also realised that I didn't have much participants. I then regret the invites out to those participants who responded indicating that they would participate but never sent their responses. So here's to another waiting period. Hopefully I could get a good response this time.

7 March 2015

It's been a while since I've attended to my research. I'm currently working on my Chapter 3 (Research Methodology) and learning a lot about the research process - data collection, documentation etc... I started transcribing the face-to-face & telephonic interviews I had last year so that I could have all the participant documents in a word format so that I can make/ add comments. Some participants sent me the responses in a PDF format so I will have to transcribe that as well into a word document. This is very time consuming. If I knew then I would have asked my participants to complete the documents in a word format. "Researcher learnings"!



15 Feb 2016

I've received yet another participants response (a year and a few months after the initial invite). I met with a fellow researcher and we went through our data since we are completing similar research just different participants. We bounced theme off of each other and made suggestions here & there. This also helped with research reflexivity. My ideas were either confirmed by the ~~the~~ fellow researcher or rejected.

I made a list of all the rejected ideas/themes and a list of them again. Thereafter I will bounce them off my supervisor to see what she says and advise me to ~~do~~ do.



12 Feb 2017

would be considered they were in-
agreement with my findings &
themes. Looking back, I think
it was easy for me to
separate my ASL experience
from that which the participants
provided as they were reflecting
from a researcher perspective.
Nevertheless meeting with fellow
researchers as well as my
supervisor ~~ast~~ assisted me in the
data analysis process & prevented
and researcher bias (if any).

I've finally come to the stage where
all my data has been collected, analysed
and coded. I read through the
participants data at least 3-4
times before starting with the coding.
I knew the data well. "Who said
what". I also have a good sound
foundation of certain topics due to
my literature review. This also made
it easy for me to spot themes
that were slightly concealed or
hidden in the text. Where necessary
some participants ~~had~~ were emailed
to confirm/clarity ~~the~~ certain
assumptions. Looking back, I think
the data collection process was the
most frustrating process in my research
as participants took time responding
to initial invite as well as emails
regarding member checking. I did state
in the email that no response