First-generation Students' Transition into a Historically White University: A Narrative Approach

By

Caitlin Ann Vinson

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

MA Counselling Psychology

In the Department of Psychology

of the

Faculty of Humanities

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Dr Nishola Rawatlal

Co-Supervisor: Dr Neo Pule

January 2019

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the following people who contributed significantly to the research process and final product of the mini-dissertation.

- To my supervisors, Dr Nishola Rawatlal and Dr Neo Pule, for their guidance to pursue this topic, patience, and valuable expertise.

- To Mr Ahmed Riaz Mohamed, Dr Amanda van der Westhuizen, and Dr Benny Motileng in the Department of Psychology who added valuable critical input to the proposal and questionnaire of the following research.

- A special thank you to my participants for sharing their stories with me.

- To my husband, family, and friends for their encouragement.

Declaration

I (full names & surname):	Caitlin Ann Vinson
Student number:	13227255

Declare the following:

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University of Pretoria's policy in this regard.

2. I declare that this assignment is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the Internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.

3. I did not copy and paste any information <u>directly</u> from an electronic source (e.g., a web page, electronic journal article or CD ROM) into this document.

4. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.

5. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own work.

Signature	Date

P.O. Box 955
Oudtshoorn
6620
Tel (h): (044) 2725099
Tel (w): (044) 2034111
Cell: 0784693727
E-mail: dsteyl@polka.co.za

29 August 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

STATEMENT REGARDING LANGUAGE EDITING OF MINI-DISSERTATION

Hereby I, Jacob Daniël Theunis De Bruyn STEYL (I.D. 5702225041082), a language practitioner accredited to the South African Translators' Institute (SATI), confirm that I have edited the language of the following mini-dissertation:

Title: First-generation Students' Transition into a Historically White University: A Narrative Approach

Author: Mrs Caitlin Ann Vinson

Yours faithfully

J.D.T.D. STEYL

PATran (SATI)

SATI REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1000219

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Abstract

The present narrative research aimed to gain understanding of the narratives of first-generation students' (FGSs') transition into a historically white university (HWU) in South Africa. Globally, it has been recognised that, because of having parents who have not attended a tertiary institution, FGSs are more susceptible to challenges when making the transition to university.

Challenges in academic, social, and emotional transition to university have led to negative consequences such as withdrawing from university studies. South African literature highlights that such challenges in transition have been evident at HWUs. Yet, there is limited research on the transition of FGSs to an HWU. Existing literature has not considered the individual experiences of FGSs. Therefore, the present research focuses on the narratives of FGSs to gain an in-depth understanding of FGSs' academic, emotional, and social transition to an HWU. Individual interviews were conducted with a sample of four first-year FGSs enrolled at the identified HWU. Crossley's method of narrative analysis was adopted to interpret the findings, by focusing on the themes, imagery, and tone of the narratives. Results showed that the HWU interventions, for instance orientation week, academic tutors, and mentors, played a fundamental role in the transition of FGSs. It was clear that orientation week was crucial in facilitating the social integration of FGSs with the HWU. Once socially integrated, the FGSs developed a positive attitude that helped them overcome the challenges faced when making the transition to the HWU, such as increased workload. Ultimately, the FGSs were able to negotiate their academic, emotional, and social transition once they felt a sense of belonging at the HWU. Therefore, the FGSs' narratives highlighted the importance of the university interventions and attaining social integration in FGSs' transition to an HWU.

Keywords: First generation students, historically white university, student transition, first year student, narrative, academic transition, emotional transition, social transition.

1.   Introduction

The present research explores the autobiographical narratives of FGSs' transition to the identified South African HWU. The chapter first clarifies the definitions of terms that are used throughout the present research, as these terms become crucial in understanding the research. Thereafter, the orientation of the mini-dissertation is provided to outline the structure and flow of the present research. Finally, the chapter provides the background to the research, the rationale behind the research, the research question, and the aim.

1.1   Clarification of Terms

The following concepts form a fundamental foundation of the research. The terms have been defined in an attempt to remain congruent with previous literature regarding the transition of various student populations to university.

First-generation Students (FGSs): Heymann and Carolissen (2011), as well as Spiegler and Bednarek (2013), define FGS as students currently enrolled at a tertiary institution, whose parents did not attend or complete a qualification (degree, diploma, or certificate of higher education) at a tertiary institution.

Transition: In the present study, transition encompasses emotional, social (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013) and academic (Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson & Strauss, 2003) transition of students to a university.

Historically white university (HWU): Cooper (2015) defines such universities as South African universities that were historically racially differentiated and restricted exclusively for white students. These universities include the University of the Free State, University of Port Elizabeth, Potchefstroom University, Rand University, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, University of Witwatersrand, Rhodes University, University of Natal, and University of Pretoria.

Black: Refers to the racial category historically used in South Africa, including people from African, Indian and coloured racial groups (Luescher, 2009).

White: Refers to the racial category historically used in South Africa, including people from European and North American descent (Luescher, 2009).

1.2 Orientation of Mini-dissertation

The mini-dissertation consists of the following five chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction. Chapter 1 provides a background to the research and the rationale for conducting the research. In addition, it outlines the research question and aim.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The literature review justifies the turn to a narrative approach in order to gain the individual and in-depth stories of the FGSs. The chapter then provides a detailed overview of the previous and current literature pertaining to the transition of FGSs both internationally and exclusively to South Africa.

Chapter 3: Methodology. Chapter 3 details the methodology of the research and the process by which the research aim was achieved ethically and rigorously. Furthermore, the methodology explains how the participants were recruited and provides a brief contextual background of the participants.

Chapter 4: Results. The chapter presents the results from the analysis of the produced narratives. Here, an overarching narrative was constructed to give platform to the individual voices and stories of the participants. Using Crossley's (2000a) method of narrative analysis, the narratives were analysed by paying special attention to the tone, themes, and imagery used.

Chapter 5: Discussion. In Chapter 5, the results are discussed in line with previous literature. The limitations and recommendations for further research are also discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a reflection on the research and a summary of the research findings.

1.3 Background to the Research

Literature worldwide has highlighted that some students, particularly FGSs, struggle with transition to university (Marsden, 2014; Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007; Thayer, 2000). Research has found that some social groups of students, for example first-year students, students from racial groups with a low socio-economic status (SES),and FGSs find the transition to university challenging (Bitzer, 2009; Briggs, Clark, & Hall, 2012; Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Nel, Troskie-de Bruin & Bitzer, 2009). As such, much of the South

African research has focused on transition to university in relation to racial categories of students, for example research on the challenges of black students transition into university (Cooper, 2015; Kamper & Steyn, 2011), SES of students (Nel et al., 2009; Snell, 2008), students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Petersen, Louw, & Dumont, 2009) or students entering historically black universities (Modipane, 2011). It is important to consider factors that contributed to these challenges such as the historical climate of the educational system in South Africa.

The historical political structure of Apartheid prescribed South Africa to be socially and economically stratified into divisions between radicalized groups (Altshuler, 2006). Black South Africans were predominantly confined to poor quality education leading to high levels of illiteracy and limited working skills (du Preez, Beswick, Whittaker & Dickinson, 2010). The legacy of Apartheid has left the schooling system of South Africa in an unsatisfactory state, consequentially reducing the number of students from poor socio-economic backgrounds gaining admission into universities and stunting transition into university if admitted (Bernstein, 2007). The schooling system in South Africa was shaped by racial lines which have continued to have an impact post-apartheid (Cross & Carpentier, 2009, Mabokela, 2000). The Bantu education Act of 1953 established a racial segregation of the school system which differentiated provision of school resources based on the racial category of the school (Mabokela, 2000). White schools were propelled into a position of privilege with well-equipped schools, funding, well trained teachers and sufficient resources (Cross & Carpentier, 2009, Mabokela, 2000). Contrastingly black schools had limited funding and resources (Cross & Carpentier, 2009). Ultimately it has been recorded that black schools offered an inferior university-preparation to students (Mabokela, 2000, Nel et al., 2011, Petersen et al., 2009). The entrenched racialized boundaries that were constructed within the education system under apartheid continue to manifest through the schooling system due to the residual effects of the underfunding and neglect of historically black schools (Mouton et al., 2013). Schooling could play a role in the transition of FGS into HWU based on which type of school the FGS attended. Researchers such as Petersen et al., (2009) highlighted the difficulties experienced by first generation of disadvantaged black students when entering a HWU. Further inquiry has also focused on black South African student's adjustment, identity, and emotional difficulties associated with attending university (Sennett et al., 2003). These difficulties were hypothesised to have arisen from the evident disparities between their previously formed cultural identities and the white fostering of the university system (Sennett et al., 2003).

International studies investigating the experiences of first-generation university attendees have mirrored these findings (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Tucker, 2014). The findings were suggestive of ethnic minorities having the greatest difficulties in adjusting to university.

The South African Department of Higher Education released the Education White Paper 3 in 1997 to address the finding that ethnic minorities were experiencing difficulties when entering university (Department of Education, 1997). The White Paper 3 comprehensively discussed the aims of the Department of Education in transforming the tertiary education in South Africa. The aims encompassed a number of goals including addressing the problems of equity and providing a quality education to all. Despite Department of Higher Education's proposal towards transformation, the tertiary education system in South Africa is still crippled by many multi-dimensional challenges (Mouton et al., 2013). Altschuler (2008) suggests that despite the official ending of apartheid in 1994, the social structures and racial ideologies which it perpetuated were still very much present in society. South African wealth distribution between race and gender remains skewed, with a climate of strained resources and racial tension still apparent in society currently (Krugell, 2014). Therefore although the following study was performed more than 20 years post-apartheid, within a University context where participants may be more cognisant of their stereotypes, the ideologies held by the participants may still mirror and be influenced by those of apartheid's social structures.

Principally, difficulties with student's transition to university have resulted in-students withdrawing from their studies or being academically dismissed from university (Bitzer, 2009; Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Mouton, Louw, & Strydom, 2013; Nel et al., 2009; Van Schalkwyk, Young, Ruiters, & Farmer, 2012). Generally, it is reported that students from low SES, first-year students and FGSs are more susceptible to withdrawing from university than are students who have passed the first year, come from higher SES backgrounds, or have parents with tertiary education (Bitzer, 2009; Tinto, 2017). However, regardless of social commonalities such as race (Cooper, 2015; Kamper & Steyn, 2011), FGSs are found to struggle with the transition to university (Kamper & Steyn, 2011; Liversage, Naudé, & Botha, 2017; Stieha, 2010). International research has highlighted that FGSs are more likely to withdraw from studies than their non-FGSs peers are (Ishitani, 2003). Additionally, FGSs are

susceptible to withdraw from their studies due to non-academic reasons, for example wrong career choice (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Tinto, 2017). Withdrawing from studies can have dual negative consequences of exacerbating difficult financial circumstances and leaving FGSs feeling they have disappointed their families (Ward, 2013).

South African research places importance on the role that language plays in constructing reality. It is noted that the term "FGSs" is used infrequently within South African research due to the connotations associated with identifying students as FGSs. The term FGSs has become associated with the negative misconception of students not being able to cope academically or socially (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). In a South African context, these assumptions can be problematic, as they can evoke an experience of being patronising, informing assumptions based on race, capital culture, and language that mirror that of the discrimination engendered by Apartheid (Erasmus, 2010). It is important to re-iterate that the term FGS in the study refers exclusively to students whose parents have not attended a tertiary education institution and is not a replacement term used to disguise constructs of race or SES (Snell, 2008). The term *FGS* does not aim to reduce the importance of research performed on race or SES constructs; it merely argues that there is a need to unpack the narratives of FGSs (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011).

Although literature recognises FGSs as part of the 'at risk' populations, for struggling with transition to university, there has been minimal research on FGSs in relation to their transition to an HWU (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Liversage et al., 2017; Marsden, 2014; Phinney & Haas, 2003). Therefore, it was important to consider the narratives of FGSs in an HWU exclusively in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of their transition.

1.4 Research Rationale

Previous research has explored first-year, previously disadvantaged, and different racial categories of students comprehensively; however, there has been limited research concerning FGSs exclusively as a population (Liversage et al., 2017). From the limited previous literature, it has been highlighted that FGSs are struggling with academic, social, and emotional transition to university (Bitzer, 2009, Carolissen & Bozalek, 2016; Tinto; 2017). Difficulties in transition can result in FGSs withdrawing from their studies as well as not completing their studies within the prescribed time. Financially, such consequences can have a negative effect on the FGSs and their families university (Liversage et al., 2017).

Additionally, the negative consequences accompanying the struggles with transition to the HWU have become an obstacle to the strategic goals of the HWU. The identified HWU stated a number of university goals, of which one strategic goal detailed the aim of the university to "increase access, throughput and diversity of students" (Naidoo & Lemmens, 2015, p. 18). Present research on FGS transition into HWUs can therefore be useful to inform HWUs of what is experienced as helpful or hindering by the FGS. Thus, the HWU is informed on how to support FGSs' transition in movement towards achieving the HWU strategic goals.

From previous studies, it is clear that qualitative literature can be particularly useful in unpacking the depth of the experience of students' transition to university (Liversage et al., 2017). Previous literature has focused typically on quantitative research to create understanding of generalisations and trends among student populations (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Stebleton, Soria, & Huesman, 2014). Nel et al. (2009) emphasise the importance of acknowledging the holistic transition of students to a university context and argues the importance of qualitative research in establishing greater depth of data in South Africa. The qualitative research available regarding FGSs has been useful in capturing the depth of personal data but has been conducted only internationally (Phinney & Haas, 2003; Pyne & Means, 2013; Rood, 2009; Stieha, 2011), while qualitative research on FGSs in South Africa remains confined to research on black FGSs (Liversage et al., 2017). Pyne and Means's (2013) international narrative research on the transition of students to university presents the metaphor of FGSs having an invisible voice and highlights the benefit of narrative research interviewing students individually to make the FGSs' voices visible. Therefore, the present narrative research intended to construct a platform to make the FGSs' voices visible by collecting the autobiographical narratives of FGSs in South Africa.

The present research intended to address the gap in the literature by focusing exclusively on the narratives of FGSs from any of the four dominant race groups in South Africa (namely, African, coloured, Indian, and white) and their transition to an HWU. The inclusion of the rationale for research attempts to display transparency in sharing research motives behind performing the research and therefore increases trustworthiness of the research (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Polkinghorne, 2007). To summarise the above-mentioned rationale, the research topic was designed to satisfy a contextual and methodological rationale to gain deeper understanding of the transition of FGSs to HWUs.

1.5   Research Question and Aim

1.5.1 Research Question:

What are the academic, social, and emotional challenges that FGS face when making the transition to their first year at a HWU and what are the strategies used to address these challenges?

The research intended to create greater understanding of FGSs' emotional, academic, and social transition to an HWU. To attend to the research, question, the research aim was to gain deeper understanding of FGSs transition to an HWU by exploring the themes embedded in their autobiographical narratives. The research aims were achieved through the following research objectives

1.5.2 Research Objectives:

1. Collected a sample of participants that reflected the research questions, namely first year FGS students at the identified HWU.
2. Interviewed FGS to collect autobiographical narratives regarding transition in the HWU.
3. Analysed FGS autobiographical narratives using Crossley's (2000) method of narrative analysis.
4. Reported on finding of the FGS narratives.

1.6   Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter provided and outline of the key terminology and orientation of the research. Next, it introduced the research by providing the background and rationale for the research. Finally, the introduction chapter listed the research question and aim. The following chapter, review of literature will expand on the previous literature available pertaining to the research and advocate the turn to a narrative paradigm.

2.   Literature Review

The literature review intended to unpack previous literature regarding student transition and situate the present research in a narrative paradigm. Reviewing the previous literature highlighted the lack of research regarding FGSs' transition to HWU and the need for research

to collect the narratives of FGSs in order to gain a fuller, more detailed understanding of FGSs' transition to university. A brief explanation of the popular models of transition to university gave an account of understanding and conceptualisation of student transition to university in literature. Numerous studies have used models, for instance Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven-vector model to understand student transition when applied to different populations. Reviewing previous literature was important to embed the present research in the greater context of understanding student transition to university. The literature review then unpacked the previous literature from both international and South African contexts with particular reference to academic, emotional, and social transition. Thereafter, the findings of previous literature are discussed with reference to the present research population, namely first-year FGSs at the identified HWU.

2.1   Narrative Point of Departure

A distinguishing benefit of a narrative approach is its ability to create a platform for individuals to construct their reality through the telling of their narrative (Warham, 2012). In addition, a narrative paradigm emphasises the importance of the narratives being understood accurately. Ultimately, a narrative paradigm values the accurate understanding of a story as constructed by the narrator. The following section discusses how the present research adopted a narrative paradigm to provide a platform for the voices of FGSs and maintained the accurate understanding of the meaning conveyed by the FGSs.

A narrative paradigm acknowledges that narratives are not constructed in isolation, but by the interaction of the narrator and the social context in which the story exists (Elliot, 2005). The themes in the autobiographical narratives are often shaped by the social context such as socio-political climate, gender, race, and sexual preference (Elliot, 2005). Therefore, with regard to the present research, it is important to be cognisant that the narrators, namely the FGSs, were influenced largely by the social context, such as the HWU or their home environment. A narrative approach takes a critical position, by questioning the influence that the social contexts had on the FGSs. Heymann and Carolissen (2011) put forward that the university systems have a position of power whereby students are 'helped' to fit into the university system, rather than changing the university system to suit the students. Pyne and Means (2013) describe the voices of FGSs as being invisible in university systems. Ultimately, it alludes to a power discourse whereby the university is powerful in influencing

the reality of the FGSs and minimises the influence of the FGSs on the university. A narrative approach is beneficial, as it considers the power discourse in the relevant social contexts (Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2014). Therefore, the following research considered the silencing influence the HWU had on the FGSs, as noted in previous literature, and thus attempted to create a platform for the FGSs' voices to be heard through their autobiographical narratives. Collecting the autobiographical narratives of FGSs allowed their experiences to be heard individually.

Previous literature has highlighted that FGSs are required to re-author themselves as university students as they begin their transition to university (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jacobs & Pretorius-, 2016). A narrative approach allows the self to be changing and subjective based on one's own self-construction (Crossley, 2000b). Therefore, a narrative paradigm is useful when considering the transition of FGSs to the HWU, as it allows for the fluid development of self as FGSs go through a re-authoring process of making the transition to an HWU.

Furthermore a narrative paradigm places special emphasis on the manner in which language is used, as language use plays a significant role in the constructed reality (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007) Special attention is placed on the role of terms, metaphors, imagery, and the use of everyday language in the construction of reality (Crossley, 2000b).

A limitation that has been repeated in the literature and discussed in the research rationale, is the lack of understanding of FGSs' transition to an HWU. Therefore, it became apparent that there was a need for in-depth research, more specifically autobiographical narratives that attempt to capture the individual FGSs' voices and stories of transition to HWU.

2.2   Models of Transition to University

In general, a student's transition to university is mapped collectively by emotional, social, and academic transition (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Marsden, 2014; Petersen et al., 2009). Research has highlighted that crucial changes occur in students when entering and making the transition to university, such as the emotional, social, and behavioural changes discussed by Chickering and Reisser (1993). It is hypothesised that students who are better able to negotiate emotional, social, and behavioural changes will be better able to succeed in

the university context (Young, 2016). Through extensive research on student transition to university, a number of models of transition have been proposed to outline the traits for successful student transition (Liversage et al., 2017; Walker, 2005). For example, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory on psychosocial development of students entering university which focuses on individual experiences, or Perry's (1970) scheme of intellectual development that centres on thought process. Another model on transition is Holland's environment-personality model that looks at the personality of the individual within their environment and context (Walker, 2008). It has however been argued that Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors theory on psychosocial development is one of the internationally best-known theories on student's transition to university (Liversage et al., 2017). Figure 1 below provides a summary of the seven vectors proposed by Chickering and Reisser (1993).

Vector 1 – Developing competence: To develop intellectual, interpersonal, and manual skills that adequately meet the expectations of the university context.

Vector 2 – Managing emotions: Learning to acknowledge and become aware of emotions as well as to deal with them through appropriate channels.

Vector 3 – Moving through autonomy toward interdependence: Learning to have emotional and instrumental independence, which involves developing autonomy through taking responsibility, setting own goals, and functioning self-sufficiently.

Vector 4 – Developing mature interpersonal relationships: Developing a tolerance for intercultural and interpersonal differences as well as developing intimacy within close relationships.

Vector 5 – Establishing identity: The fundamental traits have been described as having comfort with one's appearance, sexual orientation, and view of self in social, historical, and cultural context as well as having a sense of being valued, self-acceptance, and personal stability.

Vector 6 – Developing purpose: The ability to be intentional with vocational aspirations, personal interests, and interpersonal commitments.

Vector 7 – Developing integrity: Aligning personal beliefs to consider and balance self-interest with that of fellow human beings.

Figure 1. Summary of the seven vectors of psychosocial transition to university (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) model provides valuable information regarding student's transition to university and has formed the framework for further research (Liversage et al., 2017; Young, 2016). Through Chickering and Reisser's (1993) model on student transition to university, it is evident that student transition is multifaceted, encompassing the seven vectors. Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise the intricate nature of student transition and the difficulty in attempting to quantify student transition along a continuum. Therefore emphasising the necessity of qualitative research such as narrative paradigms in gaining greater depth in the understanding of student transition.

Tinto (2014) agrees that student transition encompasses more than merely academic transition and explains the importance of considering a multifaceted approach to supporting students' transition to university, such as social and financial assistance. Tinto (2014) further highlights the belief the university is obliged to provide such support, particularly to students that have been identified as struggling with transition, such as FGSs. While South Africa echoes the international research regarding transition of FGSs, it is important that support provided in South Africa should be tailored to suit the South African context and be realistic and relevant for South African universities (Tinto, 2014). To this end, Tinto's (2014) research on student retention was adapted specifically for the South African university context.

In South Africa, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) reported a concern regarding the high attrition rates of students at South African Universities (CHE, 2013). Focus of the CHE then strategically deviated from input and output, to urgently improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and support for students in an attempt to improve throughput (CHE, 2014a). Consequently, the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) was developed (CHE, 2014b). The QEP aimed to improve student success, defined by the Director for Institutional Audits at the South African CHE as "increasing the number of graduates that are personally, professionally and socially valuable" (Grayson, 2014. p. 1). Part of the QEP was to invite an expert in the field, Vincent Tinto, to South Africa to address the stakeholders of South African Universities (CHE, 2014b). In Tinto's (2014) symposia, including one at the identified HWU in August 2014, he was asked to expose South African universities to his lifelong research on student retention, with specific attention to disadvantaged FGSs

(Grayson, 2014). In these symposia, Tinto highlighted that "access without support is not opportunity" (Tinto, 2014, p. 13). In Tinto's (2014) South African symposium lectures, he acknowledged that there were limits to retaining all students, but universities should play a proactive role in attempting to limit student withdrawal. In research on retention, Tinto (2014) emphasises the importance of distinguishing the difference between students that are excluded due to academic failure and those that voluntarily withdraw due to non-academic circumstances, such as difficulties in emotional or social transition or the effect of financial pressure. Tinto (2014) proposes that the universities should focus on preventing withdrawal of students due to non-academic circumstances. The process of providing students with support begins with identifying social groups that are at risk to withdraw from university due to non-academic circumstances, for example, FGSs. Focus is then placed on identifying possible causes of disengagement in these student populations. From these identified causes of disengagement, it is important to construct policies and programmes that serve to support students. Essentially, universities have been encouraged to play an active role in the transition of students, particularly FGSs (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Tinto, 2014). Therefore, the following research aims are valuable in providing in-depth understanding of FGSs' transition to an HWU through their autobiographical narratives.

2.3 Academic, Emotional and Social Transition of FGSs to University

FGSs experience challenges in social, emotional, and academic transition (Marsden, 2014; McMillan, 2015; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Chickering & Reisser (1993) highlight the importance of emotional integration, developing social skills, and developing academic competence for successful transition to university. It has been hypothesised that emotional and social transitions are the most difficult for FGSs to negotiate (Phinney & Haas, 2003; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Although transition to university requires a combination of academic, emotional, and social competence, no one category should be favoured over another (Young, 2016). Research regarding FGSs' transition has highlighted some transitional challenges that FGSs commonly experience, which might be a result of possible shared characteristics in the social group (Liversage et al., 2017; Stebleton et al., 2014). It has been reported that FGSs frequently share certain characteristics such as being older, coming from an ethnic minority at the university, not being taught in one's first language, having to be financially independent from one's family, being a parent, holding a job for income while studying, and having to travel a significant distance to the institution (Bitzer, 2009; Stebleton

et al., 2014; Tinto, 2014). However, FGSs' ability to cope at university has been underlined as less dependent on demographics, but rather intricately related to emotional (specifically self-efficacy) and social transition (Phinney & Haas, 2003; Tinto, 2017).

The findings of international and South African research on FGSs' transition have revealed similarities for academic and emotional transition of FGSs. Differences only become apparent between international and South African literature in the social transition of FGSs to an HWU and the South African interventions proposed to assist FGSs better in their transition to an HWU. The review of findings below unpacks the literature on transition and specifies where the South African literature differs.

2.3.1 FGSs' academic transition. Academic transition encompasses a student's ability to cope with the academic requirements of the university, to interact with the academic staff of the university and to reach his or her desired academic goals (Sennett et al., 2003). Literature regarding the academic transition of FGSs has been contradictory and more complicated than a reflection of academic capabilities. Upon more investigation into the academic transition of FGSs, it appeared that, in addition to academic capabilities, there were more confounding variables that influenced FGSs' academic transition, for example incorrect study choice or lack of time management skills (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Some research has found no substantial difference in the academic performance of FGSs in comparison with non-FGSs (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013), while other contradictory studies argue that FGSs perform poorer academically than their non-FGS counterparts do (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Marsden, 2014; Ramos-Sánchez & Nichols, 2007). In conclusion to the academic transition debate, it appears that the academic performance of South African FGSs at university was influenced largely by their high school, with some high schools equipping students better for university than others did (Nel et al., 2009). The students who attended schools that equipped FGSs better academically were better able to make the transition to the university academic environment and achieve a higher academic performance to reach their academic goals (Jacobs & Pretorius, 2016; Mouton et al., 2013; Nel et al., 2009). Research has shown that the FGSs that struggled with making the academic transition to university lacked time management skills, correct study methods, had not been taught independent learning techniques, and were hesitant to use resources such as tutors and lecturers for assistance (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Marsden; 2014; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013, Stebleton et al., 2014). Additionally, FGSs struggled to make the transition academically due to

underestimating the academic requirements for university, for example the large workload (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Some FGSs reported that they went to university without a realistic expectation of how much time and effort a degree would take (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013).

FGSs reported that another challenge for them in academic transition was not receiving enough counselling regarding degree and subject choice (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2007). Liversage et al. (2017) found that FGSs lacked the guidance and advice needed to make decisions at university, such as career choice. Consequently, FGSs withdrew from studies because of having lost motivation for the degree due to ill-informed study choices (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). Essentially, the literature highlights a reality of Tinto's (1982) concern that academically capable students withdraw due to non-academic reasons.

South African universities have introduced a number of successful interventions to address the confounding variables resulting in student withdrawal. Some of the interventions include, but are not limited to, assisting the lack of preparation of entering students by means of mathematics bridging extra classes, providing tutors, and comprehensive orientation programmes (Jacobs & Pretorius, 2016; Mckay, 2016). There has been criticism that universities overemphasise academic preparation in the year of student enrolment, while universities internationally have found greater success in starting pre-university interventions as early as primary school (Nel et al., 2012). Literature informs that earlier interventions can be more useful in assisting students towards smooth academic transition (Nel et al., 2012). Furthermore, research has put forward that it should be the responsibility of the university system to assist students in a smooth holistic transition, not only the academic transition (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Young, 2016). Consequently, universities have also been criticised for assisting students' transition only academically, and ignoring the social and emotional transition, even though social and emotional well-being has proven to affect academic performance (Nel et al., 2012; Young, 2016).

With adequate preparation and correct expectation of the workload for university, FGSs are better able to negotiate the academic transition. South African literature argues that universities need to implement timelier interventions, before students enter the university environment, and emphasises the active role that universities should play in their students'

15

academic transition (Nel et al., 2012). Literature also highlights that academic transition can be affected drastically by aspects other than academic ability, such as incorrect subject choice and motivation level. By collecting the autobiographical narratives of FGSs, the present research was able to collect a detailed account of factors contributing to academic transition. In the present research, it became important to consider the autobiographical narratives of the FGSs' academic transition in order to gain understanding of the academic transition of FGSs so that HWUs can develop effective interventions that will play an active role in FGSs' academic transition.

2.3.2 FGSs' emotional transition. Emotional transition refers to a student's self-efficacy, motivation, and ability to negotiate his or her sense of belonging within a new context (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Emotional transition is also the growth in self-knowledge and self-confidence in the given context (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). FGSs face difficulties in their emotional transition when negotiating their sense of belonging to identifying themselves as a university student (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jacobs & Pretorius, 2016). Research shows that FGSs struggle to re-author their identity as university students because they do not have the prior knowledge of what being a university student means or entails (Briggs et al., 2012; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Jacobs & Pretorius, 2016). Thus, FGSs feel separate from the university and can take some time to feel included. Consequently, FGSs can feel less confident about themselves and their abilities, and struggle to develop a strong sense of competence and self-efficacy (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

FGSs reported a number of factors that increased their motivation for their studies (Liversage et al., 2017; Phinney & Haas, 2003; Pyne & Means, 2013; Rood, 2009; Stieha, 2011). The most commonly reported motivator is the drive to succeed in order to help their families financially in the future (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015). Conversely, however, research also suggests that FGSs may have trouble with emotional transition due to the fear of failure from the pressure they experience from knowing their family depends on them (Liversage et al., 2017). It has been hypothesised that many FGSs typically come from lower SES (Bitzer, 2009; Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Tinto, 2014). Financial stress can increase stress levels and the fear of failure felt by FGSs as they have to find bursaries and funding and are required to meet the academic requirements of the funding (Bitzer, 2009; Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Liversage et al., 2017). Signs of academic failure not only have implications of extending study duration and lowering self-confidence,

but also have drastic financial implications of losing funding or having to pay back funders, which would result in further difficulties for families of FGSs (Liversage et al., 2017).

Furthermore, it became evident in the FGS population of the study that FGSs' self-efficacy is low (Bitzer, 2009; Nel et al., 2009). Interviews with FGSs revealed that FGSs felt they were not adjusting emotionally and socially as well as their non-FGS peers were (Pyne & Means, 2013). FGSs experienced feelings of inadequacy due to their perception of their academic inadequacy, which in turn deflated their self-confidence and motivation to continue with their higher education (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Stebleton et al., 2014). Consequently, FGSs may struggle to have the self-confidence to integrate socially. Therefore, emotional and social transitions have been highlighted as areas of greatest difficulty for FGSs' transition (Marsden, 2014; Phinney & Haas, 2003).

The emotional transition of FGSs is based predominantly on their ability to develop a sense of belonging at the HWU. The present narrative study provided a platform for the FGSs to narrate their experience of transition where their individual voices would be heard.

2.3.3   FGSs' social transition.   The ability to participate and integrate socially at university is regarded as social transition (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Difficulties with social transition are evident when a student at university experiences feelings of isolation (Marsden, 2014; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). FGSs experience feelings of social displacement when entering university, as many FGSs reported feeling socially isolated (Marsden, 2014; Phinney & Haas, 2003; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Ward, 2013).

FGSs' social transition is hindered by the negative stereotypes associated with FGSs (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). Studies show that FGSs are conscious of some of the stereotypes surrounding being a FGS. Stereotypes such as not being academically prepared and being "less accomplished than their non-FGS peers" (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011, p. 1389) affect FGSs by reducing their confidence and preventing them from developing deep relationships. Consequently, FGSs reported that they concealed their FGS status and did not engage on a meaningful level with other students in order to conceal their FGS status (Orbe, 2004; Pyne & Means, 2013; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013).

Research findings suggest that FGSs relied on their parents for support as much as non-FGSs did; however, they reported their parents often did not know how to help them or did

not understand their concerns (Liversage et al., 2017). Consequently, FGSs reported a need for more social support systems that could assist them with regard to university concerns, particularly with social transition, such as making friends in an HWU. A very successful intervention that FGSs reported was their involvement in residence mentorship programmes in the residences of the HWU (Liversage et al., 2017). Students reported that mentorship programmes and being involved socially in a residence facilitated a smooth social transition due to increased integration through involvement. However, the difficulty of social transition prevails when FGSs feel restricted from becoming involved (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011, Stebleton et al., 2014). FGSs showed that they were restricted due to the consequences of restrained financial resources, as they tended to come from low SES (Bitzer, 2009). Financial constraints further resulted in a barrier for social involvement, as FGSs frequently lived in private accommodation opposed to university residences to save money (Stebleton et al., 2014). Joining university day houses and societies typically require fees, which additionally excludes some FGSs from integrating and getting involved socially at the university (Stebleton et al., 2014). Modipane (2011) suggests interventions to assist social transition, including strengthened communication with staff and promoting awareness of support services available to students. However, FGSs have reported being reluctant to use the university resources, as the FGSs perceived the university environment as unsupportive (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013).

The perception of being unwelcome for support is particularly evident at HWUs, where FGSs feel dislocated from the support structures, such as academic consultation with lecturers (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017). Students perceive some HWUs as more accommodating for white, middle-class Afrikaans students (Booi, Vincent, & Liccardo, 2017; Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017). Carolissen and Bozalek (2017) caution against the dangers of perpetuated stereotypes about institutions but highlight the value of student's perceptions regarding institutions, as they can reflect the normative assumptions of students. In turn, these assumptions of students can influence their development of feeling a sense of belonging to the university, which ultimately affects their emotional transition (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017).

2.4   FGSs' Transition to HWU

It has been highlighted that difficulties with emotional and social transition are particularly evident in transition to an HWU (Booi et al., 2017). Research regarding students'

perceptions of HWUs has noted that students perceive HWUs as having heightened expectations of student's quality of work, which in turn hinders students' emotional transition, as they begin to question their abilities (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017). Additionally, HWUs are perceived as culturally divided with the exclusion of students differing from the dominant historically white discourse (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017; Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001). Students' perceptions of the cultural divide at HWUs centre on the chosen languages of teaching, as they believe the languages of teaching, namely Afrikaans and English, dictate dominant discourse and exclude students that feel they differ (Booi et al., 2017; Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017). Research on perceptions of HWUs indicates that even students that did not differ in demographics reported feeling isolated due to the stark intimidating connotations with HWUs. The negative perceptions with regard to HWUs inhibit student's emotional and social transition (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017).

In progression towards assisting students that feel alienated from the university, the identified HWU has pioneered a system since 2010 to support FGSs' transition (Naidoo & Lemmens, 2015). The initiative is based on results from the Student Academic Readiness Survey (STARS), which aims to single out different 'at risk' populations of students (Naidoo & Lemmens, 2015). The intervention allows students to identify themselves within various populations, such as FGSs. Thereafter, students are provided with tailored support, such as assigning individual mentoring for FGSs. While other HWUs in South Africa have implemented programmes to assist 'at risk' students (Nel et al., 2009), the STARS (Naidoo & Lemmens, 2015) programme aims to tailor assistance for FGSs as an exclusive group.

Tinto's (1982) research regarding the retention of students emphasises the need for universities to play an active role in facilitating student's transition. Tinto (1982) focuses on universities constructing environments that prevent withdrawal from university due to non-academic circumstances where possible, for example by means of assistance with lack of motivation or mentoring. Although university interventions have been useful for many students, some students are still struggling with the transition, despite the efforts made by the universities (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2012).

HWUs have been criticised for 'helping' students to make the transition to the HWU in order to prevent the HWU from having to make the transition to accommodate FGSs (Schreiber, Luescher, & Moja, 2016). 'Helping' FGSs integrate with the higher education

system can be argued as compelling students to make the transition to the dominant discourse, rather than the university making provision for the FGSs (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Nel et al., 2009). As such, students that do not make the transition to fit into the dominant discourse will feel isolated and struggle with emotional and social transition (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2016). To facilitate the transition of FGSs to HWUs, it is important for universities to have a good understanding of FGSs' transition.

2.5   Chapter Conclusion

Because of difficulties in transition, FGSs are viewed as an 'at risk' population, vulnerable to withdrawing from their studies or academic dismissal from the university (Tinto, 2014; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2012). Literature indicates the importance of studying exclusively FGSs in promoting conversations at universities regarding the support they can provide to assist FGSs in making the transition to university (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). A narrative approach is beneficial for research regarding FGSs, as it values the voice of the individual. By creating a platform for the individual voices of the FGSs, the research aimed to unpack the FGSs' narratives of transition to an HWU.

3.   Methodology

The present study utilised a narrative approach to understand FGSs' transition to an HWU. A narrative methodology was used to emphasise the importance of the individual voices of the participants in the present study. Narrative research is primarily interested in the subjective truths of the narratives rather than in producing objective accounts (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007). In essence, narrative research is not concerned with the dilemma of whether the narratives are fact or fiction, but aims to inform the reader of the meaning created by the narrator (Warham, 2012). Therefore the present research was interested in capturing the meaning created by the FGSs in their autobiographical accounts of transition to the HWU. A number of recommendations were implemented to ensure the rigour and credibility of the present qualitative narrative research. The present research was designed to understand the autobiographical narratives of FGSs transition to an HWU.

3.1   Research Design

The research design centred on the research aim, namely to gain deeper understanding of FGSs' transition to an HWU, and to unpack the themes embedded in the autobiographical narratives. While narrative research is useful in producing depth of data, it can become a challenge to make meaning of the wide range of autobiographical narratives. Therefore, Murray (2003) recommends that researchers implement an established method of analysis to enhance the rigour of the research and counteract challenges. Therefore, Crossley (2000a) developed a method of narrative analysis when using Squire's (2008) experience-centred narrative approach. Crossley (2000a) developed a six-step method to guide researchers in analysing experience-centred autobiographical narratives. By adopting Crossley's (2000a) method of analysis, the present research unpacked the transition of FGSs conveyed in their autobiographical narratives. Permission to perform the research was gained by the relevant ethical committees, namely the Psychology Departmental Research Committee and the Humanities Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria. Furthermore, permission was obtained from the Head of Department of Psychology and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities.

3.2   Sampling and Recruitment of Participants

The present study aimed to gain understanding of FGSs' transition to an HWU by means of analysing four first-year psychology FGSs' autobiographical narratives. Because the intention of narrative research is to focus on finer detail and greater depth in each participant's narrative rather than to generalise (Maree, 2016), a small sample size of four participants was recruited. The sample was recruited by means of purposive convenience sampling. Convenience sampling entailed recruiting the closest participants in proximity to the researcher for the research, namely psychology students (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). Additionally, purposive sampling restricted the inclusion criteria of the sample to first-year FGSs at the identified HWU.

3.2.1   Inclusion criteria. The following inclusion criteria were followed:

1.   Participants had to be FGSs, as defined in the research as students whose parents had not attended or gained certification from any form of tertiary institution.

2. Students had to be in their first year of enrolment at a tertiary institution, more specifically, at the identified HWU.

3.2.2   Exclusion criteria. The following were exclusion criteria:

1. Students who had parents who had entered any form of tertiary institution.
2. Students that were not in their first year of enrolment at a tertiary institution, which included students that had been enrolled at other tertiary institutions before starting their first year at the identified institution, or students that were repeating their first year academically but had been enrolled at the institution in the previous year.

The motivation behind the purposive inclusion criteria was the emphasis in the literature that the greatest difficulties in transition occur during students' first year at university (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2012). A sample of students in more advanced stages of their tertiary education, for example those in their second year or above, may include only students that were able to negotiate the transition. Therefore, in an attempt to minimise selecting a biased sample, the present study included only students in their first year of enrolment. Although narrative research aims to minimise bias within the research sample, it is not the aim of narrative research to provide an objective representation of the population through the sample recruited (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007). The research therefore does not serve to give an account or representation of the entire population of first year FGS, but rather depth of data from the limited sample of first year FGS recruited. Within the sample, only psychology students were recruited, which intern elicits bias. Only recruiting psychology students limited the research to only gaining accounts of transition within a specific subject set, which covered three faculties of the HWU. The researcher is cognisant that the sample only yielded a small representation of the entire population and therefore recommended in subsequent sections that the research be repeated to collect a wider representation.

Participants were recruited after permission to perform research and recruit a sample of psychology students was gained from relevant ethical committees and HWU authorities. Participants were recruited by an e-mail sent requesting voluntary participation. The recruitment advertisement e-mail (Appendix A) was sent to the first year psychology students at the University of Pretoria through the ClickUp e-mailing list of the Department of Psychology. The e-mail instructed the participants to identify themselves as FGSs according

to the definition of FGSs provided in the e-mail, as defined in the study. The contact details of the researcher were included in the e-mail to enable willing FGSs to contact the researcher.
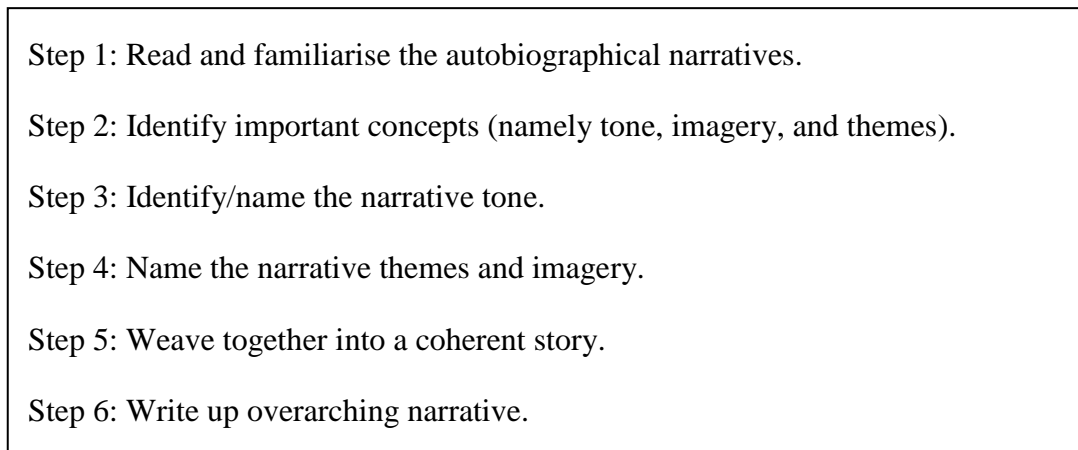
3.3 Narrative Production

The autobiographical narratives were produced using a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B). The interview guide was used to probe participants in sharing their autobiographical narratives describing their transition to an HWU. Signed consent forms (Appendix C) were required from each participant prior to the interview process to consent to the interview, voice recording, transcription, and storage thereof (Swartz, De la Rey, Duncan, & Townsend, 2008). Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw the research at any stage. Additionally, participants were informed of their right to withhold any information they did not feel comfortable sharing. The interviews, of approximately an hour, were audio recorded, which was optimal for the researcher, as it allowed the entire interview to be documented without having the distraction of having to make notes, or the danger of not recording all information (Terre Blanche at al., 2006). In addition to being able to capture all the information from the interviews, it was also important that the research had to gain a correct understanding of the content being discussed in the interviews. Therefore, it was important that the participants were probed to unpack the meaning that was communicated implicitly in the narratives, in order to gain accurate and in-depth understanding of their meaning. The researcher transcribed the interviews and analysed all autobiographical narratives by using Crossley's (2000a) method of narrative analysis. All names and locations used in the interviews have been replaced with pseudonyms during transcription to protect the participants' identities. Pseudonyms were given in such a manner that they would not alter the outcomes and understanding of the research. To protect any confidential information and to be part of the research analysis process, the researcher exclusively conducted the interviews and performed the transcriptions.

Although the research did not anticipate any emotional or psychological risks, participants were provided with the contact information of the Student Support counselling service of the HWU, should they experience any distress because of the interviews. The participants would then be able to contact the counselling service to ensure they receive any further counselling they needed.

3.4 Narrative Analysis

Crossley's (2000a) six-step method of narrative analysis was adopted to analyse the produced narratives in order to achieve the research aim of gaining understanding of FGSs' transition to the identified HWU. The figure below summarises the six steps of Crossley's (2000a) narrative analysis.

Step 1: Read and familiarise the autobiographical narratives.

Step 2: Identify important concepts (namely tone, imagery, and themes).

Step 3: Identify/name the narrative tone.

Step 4: Name the narrative themes and imagery.

Step 5: Weave together into a coherent story.

Step 6: Write up overarching narrative.

Figure 2. Six analytic steps of narrative analysis (Crossley, 2000a).

The first step of Crossley's (2000a) narrative analysis required the researcher to become familiar with the emerging themes by becoming immersed in the autobiographical narratives. The researcher achieved the first step by transcribing the interviews and reading the interview transcripts. It was important for the researcher to transcribe the interviews, as it allowed for a higher level of familiarisation with the transcripts. The researcher transcribing the interviews additionally prevented any external contamination of the transcripts that may have occurred through an external transcriber interpreting the narratives.

The second step involved the researcher developing a grasp of the themes, imagery, and tone in each narrative. In the second step, the researcher dissected the transcripts by bringing to the surface the narrative tone as well as the possible themes, imagery, and metaphors used. The second step was achieved by creating a table for each autobiographical narrative in which all the themes, imagery, and tone could be extracted. Appendix D shows an extract that demonstrates the second step of analysis from one of the autobiographical narratives.

The third step involved the researcher categorising and naming the tone of each autobiographical narrative. The overall tone of the autobiographical narrative was categorised

and named by considering the tone identified in each question, as shown in the second step of analysis. By collectively considering the tone identified in each question in the narrative, the researcher was able to identify the overall tone of the autobiographical narrative. Arguably, the narrative tone is the most pervasive feature of Crossley's (2000a) narrative analysis, because it conveys the content as well as the meaning. For example, the tone of a narrative can be optimistic, despite describing stories of negative events. The language used may represent a negative event, but still be conveyed optimistically. The identification of the tone enables the researcher to consider the overarching meaning of the narrative by the manner in which it is told. Narrative research is interested in both the content and meaning of the narratives. Inquiry into the tone enabled a representation of the meaning intended by the FGSs to be highlighted.

In the fourth step, the researcher named the common themes that were extracted from the autobiographical narratives in the second step. Essentially, the fourth step condensed the second step into overarching themes that summed up the collection of narratives. All the themes and images that were identified in the second step of analysis were drawn together to form the main themes. Figures 3 and 4 in the Results Chapter illustrate the themes named. In the fourth step, it was fundamental that the researcher grasped an accurate understanding of the meaning intended by the FGSs. A narrative paradigm acknowledges that metaphors and imagery will have different meanings and associations for each listener. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to have a good understanding of the meaning that the FGSs attached to imagery and metaphors used in their narratives. Unscheduled probing questions were used to help the researcher to understand the meaning of the imagery and metaphors as intended by the FGSs (Morrow, 2005). For example, one of the FGSs, Alfred, used the metaphor "*it's sucking my blood out*". To gain clarification regarding the imagery, the researcher needed to use an unscheduled probe to prevent misunderstanding. In the fourth step, it was clear that some of the themes and images were repeated throughout the autobiographical narratives. The repeated themes were condensed into an overarching theme and considered important to the FGSs due to the repetition.

The fifth step compared the imagery, themes, metaphors, and tones identified in each of the autobiographical narratives. The comparison of the autobiographical narratives highlighted the similarities and differences between the autobiographical narratives as highlighted in the table in Appendix E. From the comparison of the autobiographical

narratives, it was clear that there were a number of common themes in the transition of the FGSs, as well as some themes that were unique in each narrative.

The sixth and final step was to integrate the autobiographical narratives into a written account retelling the collection in an overarching narrative. Here, the commonalities and unique stories in the FGSs' narratives were identified and named. The themes were grouped into emotional, social, and academic transition in order to remain congruent with previous literature. The themes, imagery, and metaphors were then organised into the relevant types of transition in which they were described, and an overarching narrative was constructed from the combination of all the autobiographical narratives.

Clandinin and Murphy (2007) put forward that narrative research aims to encourage wondering about alternative possibilities rather than report certainties. The final analysis aimed to give voice to the participants and convey commonalities in their autobiographical narratives regarding the meaning they constructed in making the transition to the identified university. The final analysis does not report certainties but rather the subjective and fluid transition to an HWU as experienced by FGSs.

3.5   Researcher's Role

Reflexivity is important in narrative research, as the researcher becomes the 'storyteller' of the co-constructed narrative (Thorne, 2009). Ultimately, narrative research is the reporting of a story constructed by the researcher and the participant. Therefore, it is valuable for the readers to be aware of the researcher's contexts, due to the role the researcher plays in the narrative production and reporting thereof (Thorne, 2009). A brief background of each participant is provided in the research, while maintaining confidentiality. Likewise, a brief personal background of the researcher is included in order to uphold reflexivity within the study. The researcher acknowledged that regardless of personal positioning and background context, it would inevitably contribute to and have an influence on the results of the research and the interpretation thereof (Polkinghorne, 2007). A reflection of the researcher's influence will be elaborated further in the subsequent chapters of the research.

3.5.1 Brief description of researcher

The researcher is a white 26-year-old Counselling Psychology Master's student. Her home language is English. The researcher moved to the Eastern Cape after completing Grade

12 to complete her undergraduate and honours degree at another HWU. She lived in a university residence while completing her first year at the HWU. She enjoyed her first year experience, although at times it was difficult for her to be away from her home. The researcher is not an FGS.

3.5.2   Reflexive Statement. It is important to gain an understanding of the frame from which the researcher comes to understand the position from which the results were interpreted better. Therefore, the researcher includes the following first-person reflexive statement to provide transparency with regard to the position from which she comes.

When recalling my first year at university and my experience of transition to university, it seems too far away to remember in clear detail. However, some points of my transition to university were significant and left an imprint on me. These formed my understanding of transition to university from my personal experience.

When considering my career pathway after school, I realise it was the trend in my family that I would go to university. Both of my parents studied at tertiary institutions; therefore, further education is highly valued in my family. It was never a decision I made to attend university or not, but rather a natural progression that I had seen throughout my family. Therefore, the decision by FGSs to come to the HWU is interesting to me, as I do not have any frame of reference with regard to making such a decision. My bias is that the implied decision is to come to university. My privilege also informs that there will be resources to make such a decision and that acceptance into university is almost a guarantee.

When I arrived at university, I remember having to decide which elective subjects to take. In the process, I came across modules such as Ichthyology and Entomology, and I did not know what those were. It was difficult to choose modules at university, as the modules were different from the subjects I had completed at school. After some research online, I was able to make a better informed decision regarding my modules, and I chose subjects that would complement my major. Therefore, from my experience, I believed that choosing modules could be a difficult process due to the newness of university modules and unfamiliarity with what content they entail.

In the first week of lectures, I was shocked at the number of students in each class. The number of students was overwhelming. I remember thinking it was very different from school.

I could not believe how many people were in one class. My assumption is that there is a big difference between the classroom setting of school and the lecture setting of university, with less individual attention and much bigger classroom sizes that can be overwhelming and intimidating.

Owing to moving away from home, I decided to apply for university residence accommodation. Being in the residence was very helpful for meeting the students in the residences and developing a sense of belonging to the HWU. I was also assigned to a resident mentor. She was in the same degree and helped me academically if I needed help. I experienced the residence system of the HWU that I attended as very beneficial socially and academically. It was difficult to be away from home, but the residence became a new home. Being a part of the residence made me feel like I belonged somewhere in the HWU. From my experience, my bias is that residence facilitates transition to university both socially and academically. In addition, my transition to university was facilitated by the residence, which is not accessible to everyone, and a benefit of a position of privilege.

In sum, the researcher completed her undergraduate and honours degrees at a different HWU and is therefore unfamiliar with the first-year experience at the identified HWU. She is a white Counselling Psychology Master's student. The researcher is also not an FGS, and is cognisant of her assumptions and understanding of her own privilege. She maintains that not having experienced the identified HWU as a first-year student will protect her from assumptions of understanding the participants, while acknowledging that it may result in added unscheduled probing in an attempt to understand the participants' stories due to the differences between them.

3.6   Brief Description of Participants

The context of the participants was fundamental to understanding their autobiographical narratives (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). A brief outline of each participant is provided while maintaining confidentiality. All identifiable information has been altered in such a way that it does not affect the understanding of the participant.

3.6.1   Lerato. *Lerato is a black 20-year-old female. Her home language is Xhosa, but she is proficient in both English and Afrikaans. She is currently studying BA Law, with ambition to complete her LLB. She reported that she failed Grade 11 and opted to repeat*

Grade 12 at a private college, as she did not gain admission to her chosen course. She is from Cape Town and has temporarily moved to Pretoria to complete her studies. She currently resides with her uncle, in close proximity to the university, but she reports that she would have preferred to be in a university residence if she had not missed the application deadline. Her real passion lies in music, particularly rap music. She describes her time at university as "fantastic, fantastic. From the get go until now, it's been fantastic."

3.6.2 Caroline. Caroline is a white 19-year-old female. Her home language is Afrikaans. She completed her matric in 2017 and was advised by her parents that she should get a university degree to be able to find a good job. She moved from living with her father in Cape Town to living with her mother in Centurion for the purposes of her university education. She is enrolled for a BA Law degree and is hoping to complete her LLB. Caroline reported that she enjoyed her degree and the academic content, but she found the social aspects of university more challenging.

3.6.3 Alfred. Alfred is a 26-year-old black male. Alfred's home language is siSwati. He was raised by his mother after his father had passed away before he entered primary school. Alfred matriculated in 2010 from a school in his hometown in Lydenburg. Initially, Alfred intended to go to university straight after high school, with financial sponsorship from his uncle, but after his uncle passed away in his grade 12 year, Alfred no longer had the financial support and needed to find a job to subsidise his family's income. Owing to the financial pressures, he relocated to Middleburg, where he worked as a barman before a series of promotions that led him to becoming the bar manager and eventually working in sales. He then decided in 2017 to resign from his full-time job, when he had saved up enough income, and become a full-time student. He enrolled for a degree in education and has since decided to pursue educational psychology. He resides close to the university campus in a private flat. He describes university as "very enjoyable".

3.6.4 Ayanda. Ayanda is a black 19-year-old female. She completed matric in 2016. She is currently enrolled for a BA general with the goal to complete her honours in Psychology. She decided to study at the University of Pretoria to be close to home. She lives with her family in Centurion. Between school and university, Ayanda was involved in different learnerships and various volunteering roles. She describes her experience at university as "not fun". She said, "It's not that I don't want to be here, because I do want to be here, I just want to enjoy being here."

Including the background information of the researcher and the participants aimed to create transparency in the present research. From having background knowledge, a clearer and more accurate picture of the narratives can be portrayed, essentially contributing to the trustworthiness of the research. The present research adopted a number of research methods recommended for narrative research to enhance trustworthiness of the research.

3.7   Trustworthiness and Quality of Narrative Research

Qualitative research is primarily interested in upholding the trustworthiness of research, in contrast to the emphasis of quantitative research on validity and reliability (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Credibility and rigour, transferability, and confirmability are outlined as the underpinnings to attaining and ensuring a trustworthy study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the present study, a number of narrative methods of ensuring trustworthiness were incorporated, as discussed below.

Credibility and rigor are concerned with the accuracy of the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The credibility of the research was maintained by means of audio-recording the interviews with the FGSs, and the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim. Verbatim transcription allowed for the use of direct quotes to reproduce the voice of the FGS accurately. Another method employed in the present research to ensure credibility of the research was the use of unscheduled probing to enhance clarity of understanding between the researcher and FGSs. Unscheduled probing allowed the researcher to guard against making assumptions that would contaminate the results (Morrow, 2005). Rigour was enhanced in the research by using an established method of analysis, namely Crossley's (2000a) method of narrative analysis and the thorough awareness of literature regarding concepts being explored.

Transferability encompasses the manner in which the research represents the concepts being studied (Morrow, 2005). The present research used two strategies for maintaining transferability as outlined by Nieuwenhuis (2016). First, transferability was achieved by means of transparency in the sampling inclusion criteria, highlighting the congruency of the research, as the sample selected resembled the aim of the research. Second, brief biographical descriptions of the researcher and participants were provided to create an understanding of the context and population represented.

Confirmability is an aspect of trustworthiness that is concerned with the plausibility of findings. The present research used direct quotes and brief contexts of the participant in order to understand the FGSs' autobiographical narratives better and thus increase confirmability (Polkinghorne, 2007). Furthermore, the following research was compared with previous literature, and themes were highlighted where the research either confirmed or differed from previous research. The incorporation of previous literature enhanced the degree of neutrality in the dissemination of results.

Morrow (2005) points out that maintaining the standard of quality of qualitative research must ensure the trustworthiness and rigour of the research. As highlighted above, numerous methods were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the present research. Furthermore, various ethical committees assessed the present research to ensure a well-established research design and ethical conduct prior to conducting the research.

3.8   Summary of Chapter

The present narrative qualitative study aimed to gain understanding of FGSs transition to an HWU. The chapter unpacked the research design adopted, namely a narrative approach. A narrative methodology is useful in capturing the individual voices of the FGSs regarding their experience of transition to a South African HWU. An established method of narrative analysis was used to guide the analysis of the autobiographical narratives, namely Crossley's (2000a) six-step narrative analysis. The present research was approved by all relevant ethical committees and incorporated a number of narrative recommendations to ensure trustworthy and quality results. Research was accomplished by interviewing four first-year psychology FGSs at the identified HWU. The FGS participants were asked to volunteer to participate in the present research via an e-mail sent to the first-year psychology class at the HWU if they met the inclusion criteria for the present research and were willing to participate. A structured interview guide was used to collect the autobiographical narratives of participating FGSs. Prior to the interviews, consent was gained from participants for both the interview and the recording thereof for transcription purposes. The researcher acknowledged the researcher's influence on the results and reflected on possible subjectivity involved in the analysis of results. Furthermore, the chapter provided brief backgrounds of the researcher and all participants, with identifying information being replaced with pseudonyms. Finally, the chapter unpacked the narrative recommendations incorporated in the research method to

ensure trustworthiness of the present research and the findings thereof. The research aimed to gain depth in exploring the meaning FGSs created in their social, emotional, and academic transition to an HWU.

4.   Results

The findings of the present research provide deeper understanding of FGSs' transition to the HWU by means of analysing FGSs' autobiographical narratives, which were analysed using Crossley's (2000a) narrative analysis. Summaries of the themes for each interview were made as explained in the second step of the analysis. Figure 3 below illustrates the themes identified in each narrative.

Lerato	Caroline	Alfred	Ayanda
• Motivation for studies from family, to have better opportunities	• Motivation to study from parents and their experience	• Motivated to study to help family	• Motivation for studies from family, to have better opportunities
• Studying important to parents	• Studying important to parents	• Initial concern before entering HWU	• Decided to stay closer to home for family
• Worried, but then excited for university	• Degree more important than which degree or career	• Family response	• Anxiety on entry to university
• Worried about having white people	• Importance of orientation	• Financial strain	• Difficult to socially integrate.
• Enjoy cultural differences and diversity	• Ambivalent feelings towards university	• Risk of going to university	• Missed orientation
• Family metaphor	• Time pressures	• Enjoyed the difference from school to university	• Lack of integration into the university
• Unity in same goal	• Workload	• Role of orientation week	• Prioritisation of academics
• Workload high	• Handling workload better	• No career counselling	• Different from school
• Different to school	• Different from school	• High workload, little time	• Financial strain
• Value for opportunities	• Difficulty of making friends	• Reconstructing self	• Transport time
• Importance of orientation week and University resources	• Developed social skills	• Changing self towards goals	• Dual responsibilities
• Failing or changing waste of money	• Prioritisation of academics over social	• Enjoy social integration	• Family do not understand the demands of university
• New self-construction	• Assistance from university resources	• Self-motivation	• Gratitude to be at university
• Inspiration to friends		• Positive attitude	• Enjoy being a student
• Focus on goals		• Hardship best education	• Sense of purpose.
• Positive attitude		• Being role model	
• Hardship becomes valuable.			

Figure 3. Themes in each FGS's autobiographical narrative.

The common themes were identified in each interview according to the second step of analysis. Thereafter, the summaries of each interview were compared to identify common themes among the interviews. Colour coding was used to illustrate the manner in which themes were grouped. The fourth step of analysis then involved naming the common themes

and constructing overarching themes. Figure 4 illustrates the naming of the themes in the right-hand column. Colour coding has been continued to illustrate the themes that were condensed and named. The themes were then categorised for the dissemination of the results, as seen in the categories in the left-hand column of Figure 4.
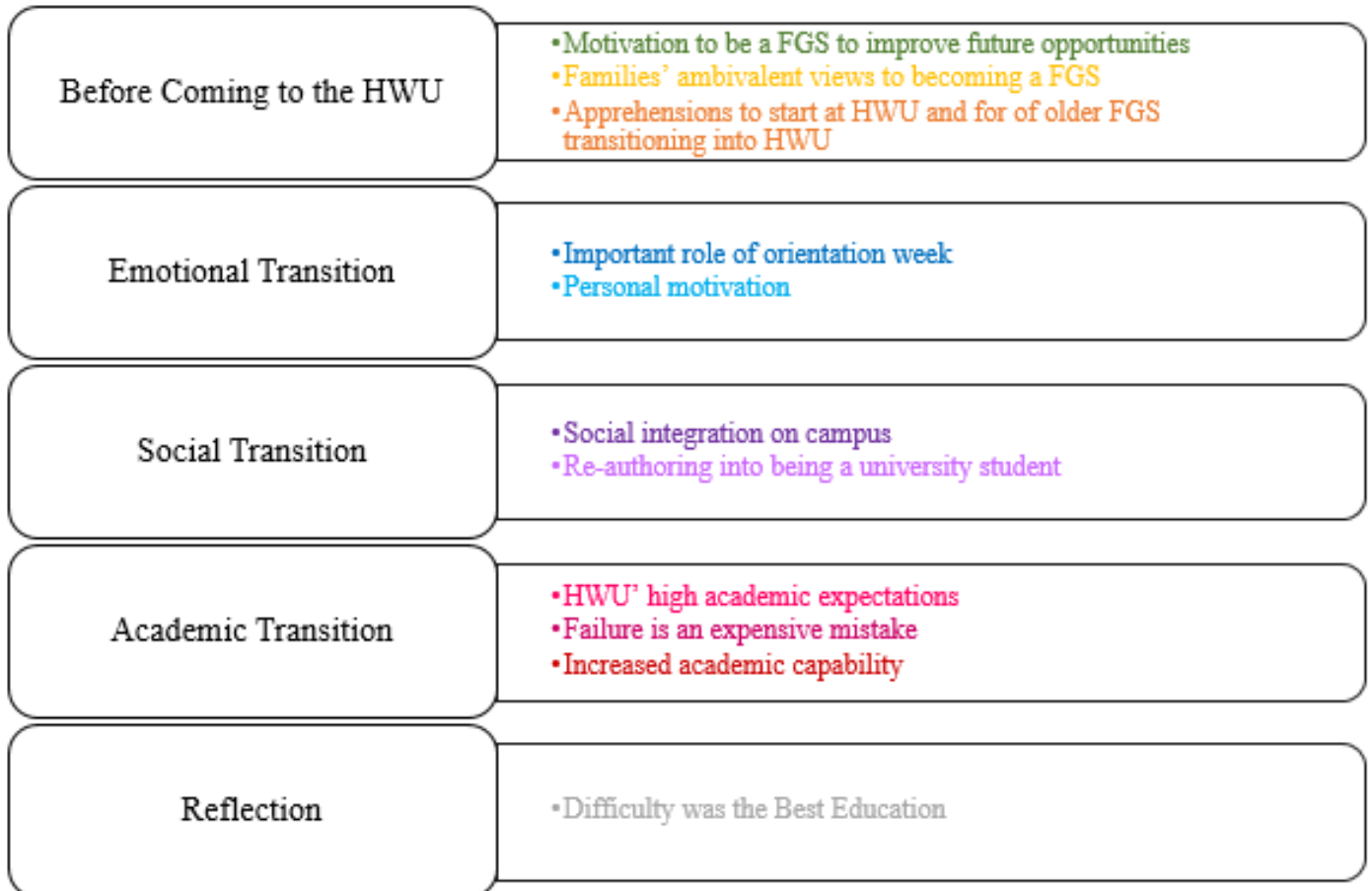
Figure 4. Overarching themes of FGSs' autobiographical narratives.

The results are discussed within the five categories depicted in Figure 4, beginning with the FGSs' motivation for coming to the HWU. Next, the results are organised within the three divisions of transition used in previous research on FGSs' transition, namely emotional, social, and academic transition. The themes are ordered with emotional transition first, as the FGSs reported being met with emotional transition first. Followed by social transition and finally, academic transition. The results end with reflections by the FGSs on their transition to the HWU. Therefore, the results are reported as follows:

Before making the transition to an HWU: The motivation behind the FGSs' decisions to come to the HWU, their families' reactions, and the FGSs' experiences before coming to the HWU are unpacked.

Emotional transition to an HWU: This includes the manner in which the FGSs emotionally made the transition to the HWU through the help of orientation week and the university resources. It also unpacks the FGSs' personal motivations to persevere to make the transition to the HWU and what motivated the FGSs when they faced challenges at the HWU.

Social transition to an HWU: This accounts for the FGSs' experiences of social integration on the HWU campus and how they described re-authoring themselves to become HWU students.

Academic transition to an HWU: This describes the FGSs' experiences of the challenging academic expectations of the HWU, what motivated FGSs to continue through the academic challenge and transition academically, as well as a reflection of the FGSs' feelings that they had increased their academic capacity

Reflection that difficulty was the best education: In reflecting on transition to the HWU, the FGSs discussed their personal growth and how they felt that their experiences of challenges when making the transition to the HWU had left them with invaluable experiential knowledge.

4.1 Overarching Narrative

The themes from the autobiographical narratives have been combined and are reported below in one overarching narrative. The overarching narrative provides a detailed representation of the FGSs' transition to the HWU and allows for the individual voices of the FGSs to be heard. To ensure the FGSs' individual voices are represented, direct quotes from the autobiographical narrative are included. The overarching narrative unpacked the individual narratives of the FGSs from before coming to the HWU, emotional, social, and academic transition while at the HWU, and finally, a reflection of their transition because of being at the HWU.

4.2 Before coming to the HWU

The narratives of the FGSs before coming to the HWU played a significant role in navigating their experience of the transition to the HWU. The FGSs' motives for coming to the HWU, as well as their emotions and thoughts before and when they initially arrived at the HWU, were significant in guiding their transition. To gain fuller understanding of the FGSs'

narratives of transition to the HWU, it is necessary to acknowledge the context of the FGSs prior to coming to the HWU. For some of the FGSs, the decision to study at university was a non-negotiable decision, with family pressure insistent on tertiary education. For other FGSs, however, it was a unique decision to bring into fruition a latent dream. Regardless of their families' preference, the FGSs all made their decision to study at university based on a common dream. For some of the FGSs', their dream was to enhance the future career opportunities available to them and to be able to support themselves and their families financially.

4.2.1 Motivation behind becoming an FGS to improve future opportunities.

There was a heightened awareness in most of the FGSs narratives that without further education there would be limited job opportunities and earning potential. It was evident in the narratives that all the FGSs had been exposed, through the experiences of their parents and family members, to the limited job opportunities and income associated with not having a tertiary education.

Their [Caroline's parents] experience motivated me, because they didn't have any further education. So, they know how difficult it is to get a job and make a living without further education. (Caroline)

The FGSs all described being constantly aware of the career opportunity restrictions placed on their parents due to their educational level. From being surrounded by these restrictions, the FGSs felt motivated to further their education in order to have a different experience to that of their parents. Most of the FGSs also had the ambition to be able to support and improve their families' circumstances after they had obtained a university degree. Alfred said, *"I really want to do it [study at university]. When I saw the situation at home, it's not a bad situation, but it's something that I really want to improve."*

A university degree was regarded as highly important, for both the FGSs and their families. Some of the FGSs reported that they prioritised going to university and completing a degree over choosing a career in which they were interested. Those FGS acknowledged that, regardless of what degree they were accepted for, their priority was to get a university degree.

I think for my parents it was very important to go study further, that I study at university, because neither of them studied after high school. So they just said I need to

go study after high school, it doesn't matter what. Just go study something. Just to be something. (Caroline)

When unpacking the narratives of the FGSs, it became clear that there was one primary motivation to enrolling as an FGS, namely "*to have a better life*" (Caroline). Some of the FGSs narratives revealed their belief that tertiary education is the key to their financial stability, job opportunity, and lifestyle improvement. All the FGSs unanimously described the challenges of their home environments as the motivator to study at university. However, the FGSs' families had varied responses to the FGSs' decisions to go to the HWU.

4.2.2   Families' ambivalent views to becoming an FGS. There was ambivalence in the FGSs' narratives regarding their families' responses to their decision to study at university. While some of the FGSs families prescribed the decision to study further, other FGSs' families were less inclined to accept the decision. Alfred mentioned how his brother tried to convince him to change his mind about studying full-time and that his mother was shocked by the news.

I think she was more shocked because I am kind of like, I wouldn't say, a main bread winner, because she works ... I always assist in the house. So, I really felt her concern that she is no longer going to have the support that she has been receiving from me. (Alfred)

Family members of the FGSs showed some resistance towards full-time university education, as it would inevitably result in a change in the responsibilities of the family members. FGSs had been able help share the responsibility of running a household and had been able to generate an income to contribute to the family, but now they would need to be supported by the family. The resistance was described as primarily the result of financial concerns, with an awareness of how financially demanding university can be. There was a change in the family's response towards university once the financial concerns had been accounted for. Alfred explains the change in his mother's response as follows: "*...and now she [Alfred's mother] is the one that is calling and being all concerned*". Although the responses of families of FGSs responses changed, guilt was still present in the narratives of the FGSs. Alfred felt the need to apologise to his family for his decision to study and the financial burden that it would be to his family.

Ma, I'm really sorry about the delays that we are going to be having for these years and the struggles that we are going to be having for those years. But just remember… that I am doing this because I really need to. (Alfred)

Guilt because of the financial burden was present in all the FGSs' narratives, as there was a repeated theme of the concern they had regarding the high costs accompanying university. Consequently, Ayanda complained that *"financially, I think university is just ridiculous".* However, the FGSs transformed the guilt into a motivator, where they viewed passing their subjects and working hard as a sign of gratitude towards their families. The FGSs emphasised how grateful they were to be given the opportunity to go to university. In the FGSs narratives, it became evident that being able to study at university was extraordinary. The idea of being able to go to university was not seen as a normal progression, but rather as an opportunity of which the FGSs were eager to take full advantage. The attitude of gratitude was evident throughout the narratives.

I would also say I have learnt really to appreciate what I have and the opportunities that were given to me. Because I mean, a whole lot of students out there apply to come here and they were rejected and then I was just one of those lucky few that were accepted. So I have to take the opportunity with both of my hands. (Lerato)

There was also an underlying theme in the narratives that showed that the FGSs made decisions based on the well-being of their families. It appeared that there was a strong emphasis on the importance of family. All of the FGSs intricately tied their decision of going to the HWU with the consideration of its effect on their families. They reported feeling gratitude and guilt about the financial sacrifice. Gratitude was a prominent theme, with echoing statements of thankfulness for the opportunity to study. When the reality of being accepted into the HWU was apparent, some FGSs felt an apprehension develop. One of the FGSs noted how his apprehension developed because of his awareness of being older than what he perceived as the age of the normal first-year university student. He outlined his apprehension was due to the risks that accompanied being an older student, both socially and financially.

4.3   FGSs' Emotional Transition to an HWU

All the FGSs mentioned that, when arriving at the HWU, they initially felt a combination of "*hopeful but nervous at the same time*" (Caroline). The FGSs' nervousness was a result of the uncertainty of what was to come, but they remained hopeful due to the opportunities available to them. Many of the FGSs reported the important role that the HWU orientation week played in helping to inform them of the opportunities and resources available to them at the HWU. Their hope was also a result of the HWU far exceeding their expectations.

> *I was like WOW. I never knew at university there were these other things that are there and these other opportunities that are open for everyone ... whenever you are there in the rural areas ... you never consider the amount of ... information that's out there, the opportunities that's out there, the careers, the diversity that is out there, until you eventually get there. In a way, you are not prepared for it. As much as you can tell yourself, I know I am going to university in the next two days, I know I will be prepared for it. But then, when you get there ... you are like wow ... I never knew it was like this. (Alfred)*

4.3.1   Important role of orientation week. Many of the FGSs explained how helpful and informative orientation week was for them. It was particularly useful for Alfred, as he used orientation week to decide on his career choice. Alfred explained that the rural area he came from did not have much information regarding the career choices available to him. During the orientation programme, there was an address where he found out about educational psychology as a profession for the first time. He decided to find out more information regarding the career before making his decision to become an educational psychologist.

Caroline also experienced orientation week as helpful because she was informed about university mentors. She decided to complete an application for a mentor. She explained how much she relied on her mentor during the initial stages of transition to university. Ayanda's experience, however, differed from those of the other FGSs during the initial stage of transition to university, as she was not able to attend orientation. Ayanda's defeated tone described her experience of feeling as if she was severely disadvantaged compared to her peers by missing orientation week. She mentioned that missing orientation week left her

feeling alone and socially distant from her peers. Even almost halfway through the year, when the interviews were conducted, Ayanda still felt behind her peers socially due to missing orientation week. Her narrative highlighted the importance of the social connections that seemed to be made by students while finding out about the university together.

> *On my first day, I think I was very anxious because it was the last day of orientation and I didn't know where to go ... I was running around everywhere and I was very confused and I had no one to do it with ... I missed orientation so I didn't get to make friends and I still don't have friends. (Ayanda)*

From the narratives of the FGSs, it became clear that orientation week had a significant effect on the FGSs' attitude towards university and with regard to their awareness of opportunities, resources, and gaining a sense of belonging to the HWU. The role of orientation week was pivotal in setting the tone for the remainder of the FGSs' transition to the HWU. Through the narratives, it became apparent that the FGSs who attended orientation had a more positive attitude towards university and were better able to negotiate the challenges they experienced while making the transition to university.

4.3.2 Personal motivation. The FGSs mentioned a number of motivators that assisted them to keep going when they were struggling with transition to the HWU. Through reminding themselves of their goals and keeping a positive attitude, the FGSs reported that they were able to persevere when the transition to the HWU was more difficult. The FGSs expressed feeling motivated by acknowledging that they had a greater purpose through going to university. Ayanda described how she felt that she had a calling to be a psychologist and that going to university had helped her to feel that she was reaching her purpose in life.

> *I really wanted a sense of purpose, and studying gives me that because I can see what I will be able to do after school. Not that that is limited to education but, without it, you can't do much. (Ayanda)*

Alfred mentioned how having awareness of his sense of purpose helped motivate him. He knew that the challenges he faced when making the transition to university were necessary for him to overcome in order for him to reach his goals and affect the lives of those around him. Keeping perspective on his greater purpose assisted him in overcoming any obstacles. *"No matter how you look at things, there is always that bigger picture than where you are*

currently at" (Alfred). Lerato also described the importance of her goals in assisting her to keep motivated. She described how she needed to change her daily routine to reduce the time she spent in recreation and sleeping in order to cope with the workload of the HWU. The shift in routine was not easy for her, but she kept encouraging herself by repeatedly reminding herself of her goals for her future. *"Don't sleep on your dreams, even now I tell myself, I will sleep when I'm done, when I have gotten my degree or masters or whatever"* (Lerato).

Furthermore, the FGSs were proud of themselves for going to university. There was an expression of self-pride in identifying as a university student. Lerato expressed her pride in herself by saying, *"I can finally say that I am at university."* There were expressions of celebration as the FGSs acknowledged achieving their goal of going to university. As the FGSs made the transition to the HWU, they felt a sense of belonging and began to identify with being university students.

The FGSs were also motivated to make the transition to the HWU and do well academically in order to be an example to their families and those around them. The FGSs wanted to be living examples that inspire others. For Alfred, it was particularly important that he inspired the younger generations of his family.

> *My brother didn't complete matric, my sister didn't complete matric ... So, I was like, I can be a good example to my niece and nephews, you know. I really need to build that character, for them to be like but look at our uncle, to be able to go and do this, so we can go further than that. (Alfred)*

Lerato expressed the positive effect that her decision to go to the HWU had had on her friends, and she wanted to continue to be an example to promote that they could do the same. There was a strong emphasis in the narratives of all the FGSs that their journey to university was not only for their benefit, but also for their families and those around them. The FGSs desired to inspire and encourage those around them to have the same experience they did by going to the HWU.

4.4   FGSs Social Transition to an HWU

The FGSs shared contrasting experiences of the social climate of the HWU. Initially, Lerato was worried about the demographics of the HWU but was pleasantly surprised at the

social climate when she arrived at the HWU. She described the HWU as being like a family. Alfred had mixed experiences when socially engaging with other students, but overall enjoyed the diversity. At times, he found people willing to interact, while at other times he needed to put in more effort. Caroline and Ayanda, however, struggled with social integration; however Caroline was able to develop her skills to socially make the transition to the HWU.

4.4.1 Social integration on campus. Lerato described that she initially was worried because she knew there were many white Afrikaans students at the HWU. She described being worried about going to the HWU, as she had never regularly interacted with white peers. Although she had white scholars in her class at school, she reported that they were a minority race group with which she did not interact regularly.

> *I was quite worried because I know the *HWU, like its Afrikaans white people and I was just like, yoh. Ok, at least I understand Afrikaans, but being around a whole lot of white people, I have never experienced that, even in school … But I haven't really been offended or experienced anything bad. Even interacting with them, for me I have just had a good experience with them. They are open to knowing more about me and my culture and where I am from ... Even the people that I hang out and around, they allow me to express myself. They would like, want me to teach them a couple of words from my language too ... And we can like start conversing in my language and theirs too. So you know, university is just FANTASTIC, fantastic, from the get go till now. It's been fantastic. People around me are really nice. (Lerato)*

Once Lerato had been at the HWU, she described that she actually liked the diversity and had favourable experiences with some of the white students. She enjoyed the cultural diversity, being able to learn about the cultures of other students and to share her own.

> *So, I feel like putting myself out there and just hearing their stories and sharing my experiences as well. In that way, we are able to build each other and just be better as people or as a people, in English they would say. (Lerato)*

Lerato felt included in the HWU through the diversity and felt that it broke down her perceptions of cultural boundaries. She described that she found value in meeting fellow students and learning from them. Lerato also told a story of a social interaction she had with a

lecturer at the HWU that had a significant effect on her, leaving her feeling welcomed into the university and amazed at his kindness.

People around me are really nice, even the lecturers. There was this one time it was raining. I think I was coming from the IT buildings, but I took like some kind of shortcut to get to Thuto and he was like, why you getting wet? Come under the umbrella with me. He wasn't even going to the Thuto building, but so he walked with me to the Thuto building, and I was like … I'm amazed. I have never experienced such. (Lerato)

Lerato only described how enjoyable and fluid her social interactions at the HWU were. She summed up that because she was an outgoing person who enjoyed learning about others, it made social interaction easier for her. Alfred also described himself as an outgoing person who valued meeting other students and learning about them. At the HWU he also particularly enjoyed learning about people's cultures, but occasionally he came across people who were reluctant to engage with him. He explained having to pursue engagement with these people intentionally.

I am now more interested in learning the Pretoria Sotho, so you guys really have to teach me. And they like 'nah! But you can learn that from everyone', and I'm like 'yeah, but I chose you guys, so you really need to be teaching me, since you are already in the faculty of teachers, you really need to start practising by me', and to this day we are friends. So I really open up to people. Sometimes it's a bit hard, based on someone's personal beliefs or personality. They can be like 'ay, no don't even go there'. But I try to create a common ground. (Alfred)

Alfred, as well as Lerato, emphasised the benefit they felt from integrating with people at the HWU. They valued learning one another's cultures and languages and sharing their own. From learning about fellow students, they felt more a part of the HWU and were more motivated to be on campus and achieve their goals.

Yes, pleasant to see the opportunities, the different cultures, languages, race all coming, just to one area and all having not the same idea, but all working towards their own academic goal. (Alfred)

The FGSs spoke about the unity of the students at the HWU by having a shared academic goal. The FGSs felt a sense of belonging to the HWU in knowing they had similar goals to those around them. They were aware that every student was at the HWU to study and get a degree, which created a sense of unity, even the students with whom they had nothing else in common.

Although social integration was easy for Lerato and Alfred, it was not as fluid for the other participants. In contrast, Caroline and Ayanda found it more difficult to make friends and build relationships on campus. They described themselves as more reserved socially. Caroline explained, *"I am not really a going out there person to make new friends. So I would rather keep to myself, but you need to have some people, you know."* Caroline's mentor advised her on the importance of making friends at university and suggested she join a university society. From joining the society, Caroline mentioned how she was able to meet people without it being time consuming and uncomfortable. She reported that through her experience at the HWU she had developed the ability to initiate conversation and speak to people whom she did not know. Caroline spoke fondly of her social transition in being able to make friends at the HWU. *"I never used to talk to people I don't know, but now I talk to people more easily, to like make friends"* (Caroline).

A factor that made social integration more difficult for Ayanda was the new environment, as the HWU had a greater number of students. Ayanda mentioned, *"I had lots of people around me. So it was a little difficult to be around so many people. And I didn't make friends, I still don't have friends."* Social transition to the HWU was particularly difficult for Ayanda, as she had the desire for friendship and social interaction, but she did not have the time and felt that she had missed her opportunity to make friends during the orientation week. Ayanda also spoke of trying to initiate interaction by getting the contact details of people in her classes, but that the interactions did not initiate friendships. It seemed that the FGSs that were more willing to engage with peers or who had time to participate in social activities or societies were better able to make the social transition to the university.

4.4.2 Re-authoring into being a university student. The FGSs embraced the re-authoring of themselves towards their future goals. There were aspects the FGSs reported wanting to grow in order to attain their goals. Alfred paints a rich image of his re-authoring by explaining that *"you always re-constructing your socks and re-patterning them, making them*

a bit longer". When talking about transition to university, it became evident that the FGSs wanted to move from who they used to be in order to focus on the future, towards who they want to become. Examples of their re-authoring included changing how they converse with others, present themselves physically and conduct themselves behaviourally in an academic context. Alfred gives a storied account of his personal re-authoring:

> *So how you maintain the conversational part, and how you dress and how you talk and how you present your idea as well. It kind of like has to be different from like what you had, your ideas, your cultural background or previous educational background ... So, if you want to be the president, why not start behaving like the president? (Alfred)*

Alfred emphasised that it was important for him to start being the professional he wanted to be one day now. He reflected that when he went to the HWU he decided to make changes in the way he presented himself to be more in line with his goals for the future.

Another notable transition was the change in the FGSs becoming, as Lerato described, "*open-minded*". The diversity in the student population bred a curiosity about other cultures and languages. The narratives of transition contained multiple stories of being asked to teach others about themselves, their culture, and their language. Through the cultural curiosity, Lerato felt included in the HWU, as she felt other students valued her story, which, in turn, made her more curious about their stories. Overall, social interaction on campus played a significant role in the transition of FGSs. FGSs who felt they were able to integrate socially narrated how they enjoyed the social integration and felt they benefitted from it.

4.5   FGSs' Academic Transition to an HWU

The FGSs felt that the HWU had high expectations of academic work. The FGSs mentioned that the workload was too much, too difficult, and they felt they had too little time to complete all tasks assigned. The transition from school to university was also difficult, as the FGSs did not feel prepared to get all the resources they needed independently and to manage their time. Additionally, FGSs who had dual roles of being students and responsibilities of helping with their families felt the academic and social transition even more challenging. The FGSs were driven to transition academically due to the financial expense of failing. Through the effort of the FGSs and by using the resources of the HWU, the FGSs reflected how their academic capacity had enlarged significantly during the time at

the HWU. The FGSs felt they had developed academically to meet the demanding academic expectations of the HWU.

4.5.1   High academic expectations of the HWU. All the FGSs echoed the initial difficulty with the academic expectation of the HWU. The narratives repeated accounts of the large academic workload, the work being substantially more difficult than school, and feeling as though there was not sufficient time to complete the work. Lerato personified her workload as having a demanding voice and emphasised the necessity to be productive.

I'm still trying to catch on and understand everything that they are doing but there is still assignments and tests that I have to study for. ... There's not much time to sleep. They like ah I need to sleep and then the assignment is like 'what is that even?'... Unlike previous years in school, where everything is given to you and you get your timetable and get your textbook. But now you have to create your own timetable and get your own textbooks. You just always on the go ... You literally have to breathe while you work. Then not just breathing-in doing nothing with the air. But I'm managing, while trying to manage. (Lerato)

The FGSs found time management difficult, in order to fit all the HWU academic expectations into their timetables. They felt the expectation of attending all lectures was also difficult to attain. While the FGSs acknowledged the importance of going to lectures, they complained about the challenge of being able to attend them. Lecture attendance became a common theme, as early morning lectures were particularly physically draining for FGSs who lived further from campus. The FGSs who lived with their families reported having to wake up very early to travel to campus. Caroline mentioned how waking up early to travel to the HWU was particularly difficult after having written a test the night before. She reported that she still had work to do after getting home late after her evening test in order to meet the academic demands. She highlighted how time consuming the academic expectations of the HWU were. The other FGSs echoed that academic demands were a challenging commitment. Although the FGSs found the HWU expectations demanding, they still always acknowledged their gratitude towards being at the HWU. For example, all the FGSs mentioned the heavy workload, which was typically punctuated with a statement of gratitude for being given the opportunity to learn. The positive outlook and gratitude toward their opportunity to study was something that motivated the FGSs to keep going during the challenging times.

Many of the FGSs complained about the time pressure of the commitment to be a university student. Ayanda had dual responsibilities, as she reported being required to be both a university student and a contributing member of her family. *"So now the difficulty is having to do chores you know, cooking after school. I have to study, I have to cook again"* (Ayanda). The dual responsibilities of having chores at home and having to fulfil the expectations of the HWU were challenging for Ayanda to balance. Consequently, she explained it had left her feeling physically drained. Having had no one in her family that had attended university made it challenging for her to try and explain to her family that she could not carry as many responsibilities at home as she previously had during school. Ayanda emphasised her struggle with trying to get her family to understand that she needed time for her studies. She mentioned that she spent all her time on campus either in class or in the library and left campus as late as possible to attend to her other family responsibilities when she arrived home. Because of her demanding dual responsibilities, Ayanda felt that she was disappointed in her university experience, as she had been under time pressure resulting in her prioritising academic commitments over social engagement. Therefore, she reported that she had not had time to engage on a social level and had not made friends as she had hoped she would. Without the social engagement, Ayanda felt dislocated from the HWU, although she reported doing well academically. The pressure to make the transition academically and maintain a good academic performance was evident in the narratives of all the FGSs. For Ayanda, the academic transition seemed to come at the expense of her social transition. The primary concern with doing well academically was the costs involved in failing a module and costs of being at university longer than anticipated.

4.5.2   Failure is an expensive mistake.   The FGSs reported the financial strain of university left them feeling a combination of fear and guilt. The FGSs were fearful of failure due to the financial implications involved. Alfred explained, *"I really need to improve because I'm not going to be spending R12000 on a module and having to fail."* Additionally, the FGSs were aware of the sacrifices their family members had made and viewed failure as wasting money. The financial burden of the HWU transpired into FGSs putting pressure on themselves to work hard academically, to show their family their gratitude and not waste money. Consequently, the FGSs consumed themselves with improving their academic performance to meet the expectations of the university.

4.5.3   Increased academic capability. All the FGSs described that when they entered the HWU, they felt overwhelmed by the workload and what was expected of them academically, but during their first semester, they had already started to get used to the expectations. Caroline explained, "*The workload is a lot more, but it's becoming more handle-able now. I have probably just increased my capacity to handle it.*" In turn, the FGSs' academic transition facilitated an emotional transition, as increased academic capability allowed the FGSs to feel more in control, which was depicted in the change of emotions from nervousness to feeling in control. Alfred's story of his experience of taking control had striking imagery. Alfred described his experience at the HWU as "*... a roller-coaster. But I know for a fact that I am the one who is controlling the gear. Ok we are going down, we are going up. I really do feel in control.*" The emotional transition to develop a sense of control was perhaps a product of his academic transition. When Alfred felt he had grasped the academic transition, he transposed the feeling of mastery of academics into feeling a sense of control. Through challenges such as the academic challenges, the FGSs reported that they had gained experiential education that was invaluable to them.

4.6   Reflection that Difficulty was the Best Education

Throughout the narratives of transition to the HWU, there were obstacles that the FGSs had to overcome. However, the FGSs valued the role that the difficulties played in their growth and transition to the HWU. The FGSs reflected that part of the process of being educated at the HWU was to gain an experiential education along the way. Alfred said, "*I have been telling myself all these years that hardship is the best education ever. If you are willing to work for it, no matter how hard it can feel, it's just going to be worth it.*"

> *But through everything I have faced, I have learnt to just stay positive It's not always going to be dark, and through the tunnel there will be some light that you will see and that day will come, so one just has to be patient and be persistent and have perseverance to actually attain that goal that they want to and not let all these negative things around you bring you down, and just make you stop ... even if it's so tough and you don't know what to do or you don't know how to move. Crawl if you need to crawl, but just keep moving forward, don't stand still and just be defeated. (Lerato)*

The most prominent feature of the FGSs was their positive attitude and their determination to persevere through the difficulties they faced when entering the HWU. The

narratives ended with a hope of what is to come in their future. They acknowledged that the difficulties of the HWU would not be over then, but there was hope coming in their future. The narratives of the FGSs highlighted the invaluable experiential knowledge that they gained during their transition to the HWU.

4.7   Chapter Conclusion

The FGSs described their stories of transition to an HWU with a positive tone, highlighting their gratitude for being at an HWU and their personal growth despite the challenges they faced. The FGSs were motivated to study at the HWU due to the experiences of their parents, such as a lack of job opportunities due to not having completed a tertiary qualification. The FGSs expressed wanting to be able to support their families financially and aspired to provide a better life through having more opportunities. The FGSs appeared to enjoy the benefits and opportunities, while learning from the difficulties of the HWU. Difficulties that hindered transition to the HWU included unfavourable family responses due to their decision to enrol as full-time students, the financial burden that accompanied studying at the HWU, the significantly harder work and workload at the HWU, as well as the difficulties of social integration on campus. Furthermore, FGSs who had to travel or had dual responsibilities of helping their families also struggled with time and being able to meet the high expectations of the HWU.

In the presence of obstacles and challenges to their transition, the participants highlighted some aspects of the HWU that were particularly helpful in their transition. Themes emerged of the most significant helpful aspects being orientation week and social integration on campus. Although some FGSs were initially sceptical of the demographics of the HWU, they easily integrated and found that the curiosity within the diversity brought unity among students. Additionally, the FGSs felt more included in the HWU as they acknowledged that all the students, regardless of their backgrounds, had a common goal to get a degree. The FGSs' transition to the HWU was further benefitted by the positive attitude of the FGSs and their malleability to adapt to the expectations of the HWU. The FGSs' narratives explained that while they were making the transition to the HWU, they re-authored themselves to align with their future goals. Throughout the narratives, the FGSs expressed the importance of their family, by acknowledging their family in every decision they made and

being motivated to help their families. As a product of their transition to the HWU, the FGSs had developed significantly academically, emotionally, and socially.

5.   Discussion

The present research aimed to gain deeper understanding of FGSs' transition to an HWU. The discussion section begins with a discussion of the academic, social and emotional transition of FGSs to the HWU. The discussion is ordered to remain consistent with the previous literature regarding student transition (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Marsden, 2014; Petersen et al., 2009). Findings that emerged in the autobiographical narratives of the FGSs are discussed and compared with previous literature. Next, the importance of the findings of the present research are highlighted with specific reference to the South African context in which the research was conducted. A reflection on the researcher's interpretation of the interviews and findings is given, as well as limitations and recommendations for further research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the theoretical contribution of the research.

5.1   Discussion of Results

The present research findings reveal that FGS participants were able to manage the academic transition through their motivation to overcome the academic challenges and use the academic support and resources at the HWU. The emotional transition of the FGSs was underpinned by attending the orientation week of the HWU, which provided FGSs with a foundation for transition. Most of the FGSs were then able to develop a sense of belonging to the HWU, with only one of the FGSs reflecting previous literature indicating that FGSs may feel isolated. The FGSs that did not integrate socially experienced difficulties in making the transition to the HWU. The findings of the present research with reference to the findings of previous research are discussed in the next section, and the differences and commonalities are highlighted.

5.1.1   Academic transition. Emotional transition is focused on FGSs' motivation and ability to develop a sense of belonging within the HWU. From the findings in the autobiographical narratives of the FGSs, it is apparent that the FGSs' narratives align with the South African literature, as FGSs experienced a big difference between the academic expectations of high school and university (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Liversage et al.,

2017; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, there is a stark contrast in the attitude of the FGSs and that of participants in previous literature regarding the difference between the school and university (Nel et al., 2012). Previous literature in South Africa places the responsibility of preparing scholars for university on schools, blaming schools for not equipping scholars enough for the university context (Nel et al., 2012). The FGSs seemed to take responsibility for developing their academic capacity at the HWU and placed no blame on their school system. In the present study, the FGSs revealed a sense of self-pride in their increased academic capacity.

Another concern raised in previous literature is the lack of career guidance for FGSs (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2007). In the literature, the effect that a lack of career guidance and wrong career choice can have on the academic engagement and performance of FGSs is pointed out (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2007). From the narratives of the FGSs, it was confirmed that the FGSs did not have the opportunity for career guidance prior to arriving at the HWU and were not aware of all the careers options available. In the present study, the FGSs reported having the opportunity to receive sufficient guidance during the orientation week prior to the beginning of the HWU academic term. It seems fortunate that the FGSs' career choices did not deviate significantly from their initial choices, as they were able to change their degree with ease. However, there is a concern that orientation week might have been be too late for certain changes if the FGSs wanted to change their degree. With motivation due to interest in degree choice playing such a significant role in the academic transition of FGSs, it seems vital that mechanisms to facilitate correct career choices should be implemented. Additionally, the present study indicates that the opportunity to change degrees seemed beneficial and assisted the FGSs towards academic transition.

The FGSs appeared to prioritise their academic transition. From the literature, it is clear that the HWU has a number of resources and support services for academic transition. Such emphasis on academic transition could be the reason why it is reflected in the FGSs' priorities. The difficulty is that the FGSs who did not make the transition socially revealed that they lacked motivation for attending lectures and were reluctant to use the HWU resources because they felt dislocated from the HWU socially. Therefore, it seems that the efforts of the HWU to provide support for academic transition were counteracted by FGSs' lacking in social transition and not readily making use of such services. Carolissen and

Bozalek (2017) confirm such findings in research on HWUs, hypothesising that students that do not make the social transition effectively are more reluctant to make use of HWU support. Therefore, it is important that no single form of transition should be regarded as more important than the others are, as they complement one another. It is vital that FGSs must make the emotional and social transition effectively to facilitate their academic transition, as it was clear that the FGSs' motivation had a direct influence on academic transition.

5.1.2   Emotional transition.   Emotional transition focuses on FGSs' motivation and ability to develop a sense of belonging to the HWU. FGSs were motivated to enrol at the HWU with the desire to help their families financially in the future and create more job opportunities for themselves, which corresponds with research by Liversage et al. (2017). However, enrolment at the HWU presented financial concerns due to study expenses at the university, a problem also reflected in previous research (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015). The financial burden became an emotional strain, as FGSs felt pressure not to fail in lieu of financial repercussions, resulting in academic pressure to pass. Although the stressors and motivators discussed were the same as those mentioned in previous literature (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Liversage et al., 2017), it appears that the FGSs in the present study dealt with the stressors differently. The FGSs' narratives express their difficulties as attributes that assisted their personal development, rather than being challenges that contributed towards feelings of inadequacies, as found in previous literature (Pyne & Means, 2013; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Stebleton et al., 2014). The narratives show that when the FGSs faced challenges, they had a positive attitude and determination to succeed.

The narratives of the FGSs also show that the FGSs felt pride in developing a sense of belonging to the HWU. Therefore, the FGSs' narratives differed from those in previous literature, as they displayed flexibility in reconstructing themselves as university students, rather than the manner in which FGSs are displayed in literature, struggling with emotional transition (Marsden, 2014; Phinney & Haas, 2003; Pyne & Means, 2013). In the current study, only one FGS reported struggling to feel a sense of belonging to the HWU. It appears that the struggle in social transition was because of missing orientation week and not having sufficient available time to cultivate deeper friendships.

5.1.3   Social transition.   With regard to social transition, the ability and willingness of the FGSs to participate and integrate socially with the HWU is considered. Difficulties in

social transition were marked by feelings of isolation at the HWU. In the study one FGS reported being concerned about going to the HWU due to associating the HWU with a university for white Afrikaans students. Previous South African research also found that students reported feeling intimidated by the associations concerning HWUs (Booi et al., 2017; Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017). In practice, however, the FGSs found that the diverse demographics of students at the HWU became a platform for social integration, as curiosity was present in the students at the HWU that valued the diversity and sharing of each culture. Most of the FGSs experienced unity among the student population because all of them had a common academic goal and one common aspiration to obtain their degrees, regardless of students' differences.

Previous literature refers to the success of interventions to support students in university residences (Liversage et al., 2017) and by means of orientation programmes (McKay, 2016). However, in the current research, none of the FGSs was living in university residences, which prevented access to the support interventions. Stebleton et al. (2014) explain that FGSs typically do not live in university residences to save money by finding cheaper accommodation alternatives. The narratives of the FGSs repeatedly highlighted the importance of orientation week in social transition, as is reflected in Mckay's (2016) research. One of the FGSs that missed orientation week reported feeling disconnected from the HWU and did not have meaningful peer relationships at the HWU. The difficulties associated with missing orientation week prevailed, as there appeared to be no compensatory services or interventions for students who missed the orientation week. The FGSs that did attend the orientation week repeatedly referred to the important role it played in their career and subject choice, social transition, and motivation by highlighting the resources and opportunities available. The FGSs appeared to prioritise their academic transition. From the literature, it is clear that the HWU has a number of resources and support services for academic transition. Such emphasis on academic transition could be the reason why it is reflected in the FGSs' priorities. The difficulty is that the FGSs who did not make the transition socially revealed that they lacked motivation for attending lectures and were reluctant to use the HWU resources because they felt dislocated from the HWU socially. Therefore, it seems that the efforts of the HWU to provide support for academic transition were counteracted by FGSs' lacking in social transition and not readily making use of such services. Carolissen and Bozalek (2017) confirm such findings in research on HWUs, hypothesising that students that do not make the social transition effectively are more reluctant to make use of HWU support.

Therefore, it is important that no single form of transition should be regarded as more important than the others are, as they complement one another. It is vital that FGSs must make the emotional and social transition effectively to facilitate their academic transition, as it was clear that the FGSs' motivation had a direct influence on academic transition.

5.1.1 Academic transition. Academic transition focuses on the FGS ability to transition to cope with the academic expectation of the HWU. From the findings in the autobiographical narratives of the FGSs, it is apparent that the FGSs' narratives align with the South African literature, as FGSs experienced a big difference between the academic expectations of high school and university (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Liversage et al., 2017; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, there is a stark contrast in the attitude of the FGSs and that of participants in previous literature regarding the difference between the school and university (Nel et al., 2012). Previous literature in South Africa places the responsibility of preparing scholars for university on schools, blaming schools for not equipping scholars enough for the university context (Nel et al., 2012). The FGSs seemed to take responsibility for developing their academic capacity at the HWU and placed no blame on their school system. In the present study, the FGSs revealed a sense of self-pride in their increased academic capacity.

Another concern raised in previous literature is the lack of career guidance for FGSs (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2007). In the literature, the effect that a lack of career guidance and wrong career choice can have on the academic engagement and performance of FGSs is pointed out (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2007). From the narratives of the FGSs, it was confirmed that the FGSs did not have the opportunity for career guidance prior to arriving at the HWU and were not aware of all the careers options available. In the present study, the FGSs reported having the opportunity to receive sufficient guidance during the orientation week prior to the beginning of the HWU academic term. It seems fortunate that the FGSs' career choices did not deviate significantly from their initial choices, as they were able to change their degree with ease. With motivation due to interest in degree choice playing such a significant role in the academic transition of FGSs, it seems vital that mechanisms to facilitate correct career

choices should be implemented. Additionally, the present study indicates that the opportunity to change degrees seemed beneficial and assisted the FGSs towards academic transition.

5.1.4   FGSs' transition to HWU for the South African context. The present research asked the following question: "What are the narratives of FGSs of their transition to an HWU?" While the above-mentioned results and discussion thereof in relation to previous literature can discuss the answer to the research question, the answers also give valuable insight into understanding FGSs' transition. The following sub-theme aims to integrate the findings of the research within the context of the previous literature and highlight the importance of the findings within the South African context. Tinto (2014) emphasises the importance of university-based interventions to assist in student transition, particularly FGSs within South Africa. Tinto (2014) further elaborates that the interventions should be tailored specifically to the students and be contextually specific. Therefore, the current research can provide recommendations for developing tailor-made university-based interventions to assist the transition of FGSs at South African HWUs.

First, it was evident in the current research that the orientation week of the HWU benefitted the FGSs who attended. Through orientation, the FGSs were made aware of the HWU resources as well as career options, but perhaps the most beneficial aspect of the orientation week was that it facilitated the emotional and social transition of the FGSs. Therefore, from the following research findings, it can be deemed important that future students wanting to enrol at the HWU should attend the orientation week. Mechanisms should be considered to encourage FGSs to attend the orientation week.

Second, the current research informed the important role that social integration had on the transition of FGSs. Previous research emphasises the success of the university-based residence interventions developing social integration with the university. From the current research, it is clear that none of the FGSs benefitted from such interventions, as they were not part of the university residence system. Also apparent from the research is that the FGSs who were not socially integrated struggled to make the transition to the HWU. This suggests that students such as the FSGs who are vulnerable to struggling with social integration are not benefitting from the university intervention. Therefore, from the current research, the implementation of interventions throughout the year to promote social integration of FGSs who are not involved in the university residences can be recommended.

5.2   Reflection of Results

Narrative research values reflectivity, as it emphasises that narratives should be reflected on in their context. Therefore, the audience of the research will also affect the findings of the research significantly, as participants may have presented stories with the audience in mind. In the current study, the perceived audience is the researcher and readers of the mini-dissertation. The effect the researcher had on the interview, as well as the researcher's experience of the interview, was recorded in a reflective journal. From the reflexive practice, the following became apparent:

Previous literature on FGSs paints a picture of the vulnerability and uncertainty of FGSs. However, when the interviews were conducted, it quickly became apparent that the FGSs were actually resilient and proactive in their transition to the HWU. The FGS participants in the research did not present themselves as was expected from the findings of previous research. It was important for the researcher to separate prior assumptions when interpreting the narratives, as prior assumptions would have looked for struggles that the FGSs faced.

Additionally, the researcher is white and believes that the FGSs could have diverted from discussing the effect of the history of the HWU due to the racial difference. The racial difference between the researcher and some of the FGSs may have directed their answers to avoid discussing their perceptions of the institution. The researcher felt that she was viewed as an extension of the HWU. Being an older white student could be perceived by the participants that the researcher represented the HWU. The researcher reflects that it might have resulted in the repeated positivity shown towards the HWU and the reluctance of the FGSs to mention anything negative about the HWU. It also seemed as though the participants held themselves as ambassadors of the FGSs and wanted to report positive inspirational narratives. At times, the researcher felt that the participants presented the positive attributes of their transition more readily than the challenges, which resulted in the autobiographical narratives appearing more positive than representative of the FGSs' experiences in their transition to the HWU.

Although the FGSs gave the impression of a genuine positive attitude, it was considered that when viewed in a greater context, the FGSs only had the option to work hard, as not passing academically would result in severe negative consequences for both the FGSs and

their families. Alfred described the decision to come to the HWU as a "risk". The analogy of risk was present in the narratives of all the FGSs, as they acknowledged the financial implications of not passing their studies and the sacrifices their families had made to allow them the opportunity to study at the HWU. It seemed as though being demotivated or not persevering was a luxury that the FGSs could not consider. In the narratives was a heightened awareness of the need to pass, which may have translated into a positive attitude with determination to pass.

Therefore, the researcher believes that the autobiographical narratives lacked insight into the transition of FGSs specifically to the HWU. Content regarding the historical underpinnings of the university were negated or discussed only briefly. The research also recognised the overemphasis of the FGSs on being positive. Consequently, the results and discussion of the research have focused more on reflecting the FGSs' attitude than their experience. From the FGSs' reporting the positive aspects of the HWU, it is clear that the FGSs placed emphasis on having a positive attitude and being an inspiration to others, although it may not reflect an accurate representation of their transition. Therefore, the present research does not make claims regarding whether the FGSs made the transition to the HWU well or not. The aim of the research was to report how the FGSs narrated their transition to the HWU.

Although most of the FGSs narrated enjoying the process of becoming a student, it seems like the descriptions in their narratives included all first-entering students rather than FGSs specifically. The FGSs did not describe themselves as FGSs or refer to themselves as "FGSs" throughout the interviews. The categorisation of FGSs as a population in previous literature appears to be more distinguishing than it was experienced in the interviews with the FGSs. Previous literature points to FGSs as an important exclusive population (Liversage et al., 2017; Tinto, 2017), but the FGS participants in the current study appeared to identify with the first-year population without acknowledging a significance of their FGS status. Therefore, FGSs referred to developing a sense of belonging to the HWU alongside their first-year peers.

5.3 Limitations and Future Recommendations

During the research process, the researcher recognised the limitation that the research was conducted on a voluntary participation basis; consequently, the participants who volunteered were a population of students who were willing to engage in university activities.

Previous research clearly indicates that willingness to engage in the university contributes considerably towards transition (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). Therefore, it be assumed that the participants who volunteered to participate in the research were FGSs willing to participate in university activities and therefore had a higher level of engagement in the university. Consequentially, only narratives of FGSs who were willing to engage were collected. It would also be useful, if ethically permitted, to have random sample recruitment, as it will facilitate a representation of the FGS population that is more diverse.

The current research highlights the time divisions in which FGSs differentiated their transition. Future research could consider various time divisions in the process of FGSs' transition to the HWU. Data could be collected throughout the process of transition, for example by means of a narrative journal. Structured questions can guide narrative journal entries at scheduled divisions throughout the transition process. An account of the process of transition could then be recorded at the multiple stages of transition to the HWU.

Future research could also explore different contexts to consider different populations in order to gain broader understanding of FGSs' transition to HWU, namely FGSs at different HWUs, or FGSs in the university residences at an HWU. The current research also highlight the important role that the HWU orientation week plays in facilitating the transition of FGSs. Future research could explore exclusively the role of orientation week in FGSs' transition.

5.4   Conclusion

The current research highlights the importance of support for FGSs in emotional and social transition and the fundamental role that orientation week plays in facilitating FGSs' transition. Insight was gained regarding the usefulness of orientation week in career guidance and social integration as FGSs developed a sense of belonging to the HWU. For some FGSs, the perceptions of the HWU being predominantly accommodating for white Afrikaans students were initially worrisome. However, the FGSs soon enjoyed the demographically diverse student population and felt that the diversity facilitated social integration due to the curious and respectful interest in their cultures and language. The FGSs initially appeared nervous and uncertain of the expectations of the HWU. However, as soon as they were orientated and began to integrate socially at the HWU, they became excited and enjoyed the HWU. The research also highlights that FGSs enjoyed re-constructing their identities at the HWU towards their future goals, which also provided them with a sense of purpose and self-

pride. The FGSs' positive attitude and focus on motivating factors, such as goals and ability for help for their family in the future, were fundamental in their transition to the HWU. The attitude of the FGSs moved away from attitude tendencies reported in previous literatures to place blame on the school system for not equipping students for university, as the FGSs took responsibility for their own academic transition by consulting with resources at the HWU, such as tutors and mentors. It seems that as soon as the FGSs felt that they were part of the HWU and began to identify themselves as students with a sense of belonging, they were able to overcome the other challenges they faced at the HWU.

Tinto (2014) emphasises the importance of tailoring interventions to support the needs of the students. From the current research, it can be recommended that, to facilitate FGSs' transition to the HWU, it is important to encourage FGSs to attend orientation week and to facilitate social integration with the HWU. Social integration proved to assist FGSs feeling a sense of belonging to the HWU, which maintained their motivation and positive attitude towards the HWU. With the combination of developing a sense of belonging to the HWU and maintaining a positive attitude, the FGSs seemed ready to overcome the obstacles of the HWU. The findings of the research are vital for understanding the transition of FGSs to an HWU. It is recommended further that the research be repeated in different contexts to broaden understanding.

References

Altschuler, J. (2006). Racialization and migration- blurring the boundary between family, Country, and the environment. *Studies in gender and sexuality, 7*(1), 31-47.

Altschuler, J. (2008). Re-remembering and re-imagining relational boundaries: siblings of migration. *Annual review of Critical Psychology,* (6), 26-44.

Bernstein, A. (2007). *Doubling for growth: Addressing the maths and science challenge in South Africa's schools.* Johannesburg: Centre for enterprise Development.

Bitzer, E. M. (2009). Academic and social integration in three first-year groups: A holistic perspective. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 23*(2), 225-245.

Booi, M., Vincent, L., & Liccardo, S. (2017). Counting on demographic equity to transform institutional cultures at historically white South African universities? *Higher Education Research & Development, 36*(3), 498-510. doi:10.1080/07294360.2017.1289155.

Briggs, A. R. J., Clark, J., & Hall, I. (2012). Building bridges: Understanding student transition to university. *Quality in Higher Education, 18*(1), 3-21.

Carolissen, R., & Bozalek, V. (2017). Addressing dualism in student perceptions of a historically white and black university in South Africa. *Race ethnicity and education, 20*(3), 344-357. doi:10.1080/13613324.2016.1260229.

Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). Education and identity (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

~~Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.~~

Clandinin, D. J., & Murphy, S. (2007). Looking ahead: Conversations with Elliot Mishler, Don Polkinghorne, and Amia Lieblich. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 623-650). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Collier, P. J., & Morgan, D. L. (2008). Is that paper really due today?: Differences in first-generation and traditional college students' understandings of faculty expectations, *Higher Education, 55*(4), 425-446. doi:10.1007/s10734-007-9065-5.

Cooper, D. (2015). Social justice and South African university student enrolment data by 'race', 1998-2012: From 'skewed revolution' to 'stalled revolution'. *Higher education quarterly, 69*(3), 237-262. doi:10.1111/hequ.12074.

Council on Higher Education (2014a). *Framework for institutional quality enhancement in the second period of quality assurance*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Council on Higher Education (2014b). *Quality enhancement project. The process for public higher education institutions*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Council on Higher Education (2013). *VitalStats public higher education 2011*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Covarrubias, R., & Fryberg, S. A. (2015). Movin' on up (to college): First-generation college students' experiences with family achievement guilt. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 21*(3), 420-429. doi:org/10.1037/a0037844.

Cross, M. & Carpentier, C. (2009). 'New students' in South African higher education: Institutional culture, student performance and the challenges of democratisation. *Perspectives in Education, 27*(1), 6-18.

Crossley, M. L. (2000a). *Introducing narrative psychology: Self, trauma and the construction of meaning*. Buckingham: Open University.

Crossley, M. (2000b). Narrative psychology, trauma and the study of self/identity. *Theory & Psychology, 10*(4), 527-546. doi:10.1177/0959354300104005.

Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The counseling psychologist, 35*(2), 236-264.

du Preez, J., Beswick, C., Whittaker, L. and Dickinson, D. (2010). The employment relationship in the domestic workspace in South Africa: beyond the apartheid legacy. *Social Dynamics*, *36*(2), 395-409.

Department of Education. (1997, 15 August). Education White Paper 3: A programme for higher education transformation. *Government Gazette*, no. 18207. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printers. Retrieved from http://www.unisa.ac.za/contents/projects/docs/ white%20paper%203.pdf Elliot, J. (2005). *Using narrative in social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* London: Sage.

Erasmus, Z. (2010). Confronting the categories: Equitable admissions without apartheid race classification. *South African journal of higher education, 24*(2), 244-257.

Grayson, D. (2014). Vincent Tinto's lectures: Catalysing a focus on student success in South Africa. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 2*(2), 1-4. doi:10.14426/jsaa.v2i2.65.

Heymann, L., & Carolissen, R. (2011). The concept of 'first-generation student' in the literature: Implications for South African higher education. *South African journal of higher education, 25*(7), 1378-1396.

Ishitani, T. T. (2003). A longitudinal approach to assessing attrition behavior among first-generation students: Time-varying effects of pre-college characteristics. *Research in Higher Education, 44*(4), 433-449. doi:10.1023/A:1024284932709.

Jacobs, M., & Pretorius, E. (2016). First-year seminar intervention: Enhancing first year mathematics performance at the university of Johannesburg. *Journal of student affairs, 4*(1), 77-86. doi:10.14426/jsaa.v4i1.146.

Kamper, G. D., & Steyn, M. G. (2011). Black students' perspective on learning assets at a former white university. *Journal of Asian and African studies, 46*(3), 278-292. doi:10.1177/0021909610396172.

Krugell, W. (2014). The spatial persistence of population and wealth during apartheid: comparing the 1911 and 2011 census. *Economic history of developing regions, 29*(2), 336-352.

Liversage, L., Naudé, L., & Botha, A. (2017). Vectors of identity development during the first year: Black first-generation students' reflections. *Teaching in Higher Education, 23*(1), 63-83. doi:10.1080/13562517.2017.1359159.

Luescher, T. M. (2009). Racial desegregation and the institutionalisation of "race" in university governance: The case of the University of Cape Town. *Perspectives In Education, 27*(4), 415-425.

McKay, T. M., (2016). Do tutors matter? Assessing the impact of tutors on first-year academic performance at a South African University. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 4*(1), 53-64. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.14426/jsaa.v4i1.144.

Mabokela, R., O. (2000). We cannot find qualified blacks: Faculty of diversification programmes at South African universities. *Comparative Education, 36*(1), 95-112.

Maree, J. G. (2016). Planning a research proposal. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in Research* (*2nd ed.,* pp. 25-47). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Marsden, L. M. (2014). The transition to college of first-generation freshmen. *Insight: River academic journal, 10*(2), 1-7.

McMillan, W. (2015). Identity and attribution as lenses to understand the relationship between transition to university and initial academic performance. *African Journal of Health Professions Education, 7*(1), 32-38.

Modipane, M. C. (2011). Initial experiences of first entering students at the University of Limpopo: Implications for coping with academic work/studies. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 25*(8), 1592-1607.

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counselling psychology. *Journal of Counselling Psychology, 52*(2), 250-260.

Mouton, N., Louw, G. P., & Strydom, G. L. (2013). Present-day dilemmas and challenges of the South Africa tertiary system. *International Business & Economics Research Journal, 12*(3), 285-300.

Murray, S. B. (2003). Childcare work: Intimacy in the shadows of family-life. *Qualitative sociology, 21*(2), 149-168.

Naidoo, A., & Lemmens, J. (2015). Faculty intervention as support for first-year students. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa 3*(2), 17-32. doi:10.14426/jsaa.v3i2.133.

Nel, C., Troskie-de Bruin, C., & Bitzer, E. (2009). Students' transition from school to university: Possibilities for a pre-university intervention. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 23(5), 974-991.

Nieuwenhuis, F. J. (2016). Qualitative research designs and data-gathering techniques. In J. G. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in Research* (2nd ed., pp. 71-102). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Orbe, M. P. (2004). Negotiating multiple identities within multiple frames: An analysis of first-generation college students. *Communication Education,* (53), 131-149. doi:10.1080/03634520410001682401.

Pascarella, E. T., & P. T. Terenzini. (2005). *How college affects students, Vol 2: A third decade of research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Perry, W. G. (1970). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme.* Austin, Tex: Holt, Reinhart & Winston.

Petersen, I., Louw, J., & Dumont, K. (2009). Adjustment to university and academic performance among disadvantaged students in South Africa. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology, 29(1)*, 99-115. doi:10.1080/01443410802521066.

Phinney, J. S., & Haas, K. (2003). The process of coping among ethnic minority first-generation college freshmen: A narrative approach. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 143*(6), 707-726. doi:10.1080/00224540309600426.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007) Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative inquiry, 13*(4), 471-486. doi:10.1177/1077800406297670.

Pyne, K. B., & Means, D. R. (2013). Underrepresented and in/visible: A Hispanic first-generation student's narratives of college. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 6*(3), 186-198. doi:org/10.1037/a0034115.

Ramos-Sánchez, L., & Nichols, L. (2007). Self-efficacy of first generation and non-first generation college students: The relationship with academic performance and college adjustment. *Journal of college counselling, 10*(1), 6-18.

Rood, R. E. (2009). Driven to Achieve: First-Generation Students' Narrated Experience at a Private Christian College, *Christian Higher Education, 8*(3), 225-254. doi:10.1080/15363750802708494.

Saleh, M., Menon, J., & Clandinin, D. J. (2014). Autobiographical narrative inquiry: Tellings and retellings. *LEARNing Landscapes: Inclusive Education: Socially Just Perspectives and Practices, 7*(2), 271-283. doi:665-1-434-1-10-20170227.

Schreiber, B., Luescher, T., & Moja, T. (2016). The first-year experience, student transitions and institutional transformation. *Journal of student affairs in Africa, 4*(1), 2307-6267. doi:10.14426/jsaa.v4il.140.

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

Snell, T. P. (2008). First-generation students, social class, and literacy. *Academe, 94*(4), 28-31.

Spiegler, T., & Bednarek, A. (2013). First-generation students: What we ask, what we know and what it means: An international review of the state of research. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 23*(4), 318-337. doi:10.1080/09620214.2013.81 5441.

Squire, C. (2008). Experience-centred and culturally-orientated approaches to narrative. In, M. Andrews, C. Squire and M. Tamboukou (Eds.), Doing Narrative Research (pp. 41-63). London: SAGE.

Stebleton, M. J., Soria, K. M., & Huesman, R. L. (2014). First-generation students' sense of belonging, mental health, and use of counselling services at public research universities. *Journal of College Counselling,* (17), 6-20. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1882.2014.00044.

Stephens, N, M., Fryberg, S. A., Markus, H. R., Johnson, C. S., & Covarrubias, R. (2012). Unseen disadvantage: How American universities' focus on independence undermines the academic performance of first-generation college students. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 102*(6), 1178-1197.

Steyn, M., & Van Zyl, M. (2001). *Like that statue at Jammie Stairs: Student perceptions and experiences of institutional culture at the University of Cape Town*. Cape Town: Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies of South Africa, University of Cape Town.

Stieha, V. (2010). Expectations and experiences: The voice of a first generation first-year college student and the question of student persistence. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 23*(2), 237-249. doi:10.1080/09518390903362342.

Swartz, L., De la Rey, C., Duncan, N., & Townsend, L. (2008). *Psychology: An introduction*. (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University.

Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., & Painter. (2006). *Research in practice* (2nd ed.). Rondebosch: UCT Press.

Thayer, P. B. (2000). Retention of students from first-generation and low income background. *Opportunity Outlook: The Journal of the Council for Opportunity in Education,* (May), 2-8.

Thorne, S. E. (2009). Is the story enough? *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(9), doi: 1183-1185. 10.1177/1049732309343951.

Tinto, V. (1982). Limits of theory and practice in student attrition. *The Journal of Higher Education, 53*(6), 687-700.

Tinto, V. (2014). Tinto's South Africa lectures. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 2*(2), 5-28.

Tinto, V. (2017). Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 19*(3), 254-269.

Tucker, G. C. (2014). First generation. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education,* 24-28.

Van Schalkwyk, S., Young, G., Ruiters, J., & Farmer, J. (2012). Early assessment: Part of a bigger plan towards first-year success? *South African Journal of Higher Education, 26*(1), 36-50.

Walker, M. (2005). Rainbow nation or new racism? Theorizing race and identity formation in South African higher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(2), 129-146. doi:10.1080/13613320500110501.

Walker, M. (2008). *Working with college students & student development theory primer*. Retrieved from http://uncw.edu/studentaffairs/pdc/documents/StudentDevelopment TheorybyM.Walker.pdf

Ward, K. (2013). Stereotypes and their effects on first-generation college students. *Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado, 3*(2), 100-112.

Warham, K. (2012). Engaging with young people through narrative co-construction: beyond categorisation. *Educational & Child Psychology, 29*(2), 77-87.

Young, D. (2016). The case for an integrated approach to transition programmes at South African higher education institutions. *Journal of Student Affairs, 4*(1), 17-32. doi:10.14426/jsaa.v4i1.142.

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

University of Pretoria
Department of Psychology
Dear First year Psychology Students

ATTENTION: First Year First Generation Psychology Students

My name is Caitlin Barford and I am currently studying my Masters in Counselling Psychology at the University of Pretoria. I am looking for first year psychology students to volunteer to participate in my research.

My study focuses on the stories of first year, first generation students' transition into the University of Pretoria. This includes:

1. Students in their first enrolled year at university
2. Any students whose parents have not attended or been educated at tertiary institutions.

If you meet both criteria for the selection of participation, then you are eligible to volunteer to participate in the research. The research consists of one tape recorded interview. During the interview you may refuse to answer any of the questions you feel sensitive towards or do not wish to disclose and have the right to discontinue the research at any point.

The research project has been approved by the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee and is under the supervision of Dr Nishola Rawatlal and Dr Neo Pule in the Psychology Department at the University of Pretoria (contact number: 012 420 2329). The interviews will take place in the Psychology Department and participants must be willing to be tape recorded for transcription purposes. All recordings will only be used by the researcher for transcription purposes and will be destroyed thereafter. All information disclosed will remain confidential and participants will not be identifiable from the study. The research is being performed in partial fulfilment of the MA Counselling Psychology course.

If you are willing to participate or have any queries please contact me on cabarford@gmail.com

Please note that participation in the following study is voluntary. You may choose not to reply to the email request. Choosing not to volunteer for the research will have no negative consequences.

Many thanks,

Caitlin Barford

Counselling Psychology Masters Student

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Introduction:

Good day and thank you for volunteering to participate in the research. The research aims to collect the narratives of first generation students' (FGS) transition into a Historically White University (HWU), namely the University of Pretoria. The interview is therefore structured to get your experience of being a FGS. A FGS is defined as a student whose parents did not attend or complete a qualification (degree, diploma or certificate of higher education) through a tertiary institution. The interview will start with some short introductory questions and then move into the open-ended questions to hear your story of transition into to university.

Introductory questions:

Gender:

Age:

Home Language:

Year of grade 12:

If not 2017, what did you do between high school and University?

Which town/City do you come from?

While studying, where do you live?

Are you enjoying what you study?

Structured interview questions:

1. As a FGS, Can you tell me what made you decide to study at this university?

2. What was it like for you as a FGS when you first came to this HWU?

3. When you think of your story from arriving at this university until now, what changes have you experienced?

4. As a FGS, when or at what times was your transition into university more difficult?

a. What made it more difficult for you?
b. And how did you cope with these difficulties?

5. Can you tell me about the times that you felt your transition into the HWU more enjoyable/easier?

a. What made it more enjoyable?

6. As a FGS what has assisted you in adjusting to university?

7. If you could, what advice would you give to yourself on you first day of university?

Closing:

This concludes the interview questions. Thank you for participating in the research, your participation and sharing of your personal story is appreciated.

Appendix C: Consent Form

University of Pretoria

Department of Psychology

RESEARCH STUDY: **Narrative experience of first generation students' transition into a Historically White University**.

I _____(Participants Name) agree to participate in this study investigating my experience of entering university.

Understanding that:

1. The research is being performed in partial fulfilment of the MA Counselling Psychology course.

2. The research project has been approved by the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee, and is under the supervision of Dr Nishola Rawatlal and Dr Neo Pule in the Psychology Department at the University of Pretoria (contact number: 012 420 2329).

3. The research focuses on my experience of transition into the University of Pretoria. My involvement in the study will require me to participate in one audio recorded interview.

4. I consent to being audio recorded during the interview for transcription purposes for the exclusive use of the researcher, after which the recordings will be destroyed.

5. I have the right to discontinue the study at any time. Withdraw from the research will not result in a negative consequence.

6. Should I feel distress arise because of my participation in the study, I have direct access to the Student Support Centre at the University of Pretoria for further support (contact number: 012 420 2333).

7. I have the right to refuse to answer questions of a sensitive nature or that contain content I do not wish to disclose.

8. All information shared in the interview will be treated with sensitivity and remain confidential. I will not be recognised by the readers. Furthermore, the names and locations disclosed within the study will be replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect my identity and those mentioned in the interview.

9. All information from the interviews will be stored in accordance with the recommendations of University of Pretoria Psychology Department. Therefore transcriptions will be securely stored for a period of 15 years.

10. For any further information or queries regarding the research, I can contact Caitlin Barford (Researcher) at cabarford@gmail.com

☐ I consent to being audio recorded for transcription purposes.
☐ I have received a copy of the consent form with relevant information and contact details.
☐ The information in the interview can be archived and used for future research purposes.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Name : _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Place: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Extract of Second Step of Narrative Analysis

5. Can you tell me about the times that you felt your transition into university more enjoyable/easier?	THEMES, IMAGERY and TONE:
Orientation. It was more pleasant and VERY enjoyable. When I saw the schedule I was like. It looks like there is going to be a lot of free time there and what's going to be happening in the free time, you know. And when I got there, I was like *(big smile)*. You know the information explosion. I was mind blown. I was like WOW. I never knew at university there were these other things that are there and these other opportunities that are open for everyone, you know. It's a, it's a, big platform. whenever you are there in the rural areas, because I consider where I come from a rural area, you never consider the amount of, I would say transition, the amount of information that's out there, the opportunities that's out there, the careers, the diversity that out there, until you eventually get there. In a way you are not prepared for it. As much as you can tell yourself, I know I am going to university in the next two days, I know I will be prepared for it. But then when you get there... you are like wow... I never knew it was like this. And meeting up with my new friends *(laughs)*. That's one thing I really enjoyed. Cos most of them are from different cultures. So I keep on telling them I really need to learn a new language by the end of this year. Guys!!! Whenever you are with me, PLEASE let's not speak about English. Speak in your mother tongue, even if I bite myself a couple of times, but I know I will eventually get there.	Role of orientation Opportunities imagery Opportunities in university Imagery of platform- opportunities Opportunities available at university No career counselling POSITIVE TONE REGARDLESS OF LACK OF CAREER COUNSELLING Enjoy social integration Enjoy different cultures and languages Learning new languages HOPEFUL TONE

Appendix E: Extract from Fifth Stage of Analysis

Alfred	Lerato	Caroline	Ayanda
Family inspiration behind decision to study further: Motivation to improve situation at home	Motivation for studies from family. Better opportunities and salary	Learnt from parents experience.	Decision not made by her.
Older than most first year students:	Worried, but then excited for university	Motivated to have a better life	Learnt from family experience of not having a degree. More work opportunities.
Family first response against university: Mothers shock: Change in mothers response: Apology to mother: Guilt for delays	Worried about having white people. Pleasantly surprised interacting with white people. Open minded	Ambivalent feelings towards university	Education opens opportunity
Risk of quitting job: Financial implications of failing	Value for opportunities. University resources.	Degree more important than which degree or career	New environment. Anxiety on entry to university
Enjoyed the difference from school to university: Role of orientation week: No career counselling: Opportunities	Failing or changing waste of money	Importance of orientation.	Different from school and gap year. Lack of time management and self-regulation
Reconstructing self: Difference from past self to future self	New identity construction, Friends recognising positive changes. Inspiration to friends	Time pressures. Workload- continuous study. Physically waking up early. Handling workload better. University academic expectations of academic work. Workload, academic expectation	Missed orientation. Role of orientation on emotional and social transition. Feeling alone. Social integration lacking.
High workload, little time: Sleepless nights, workload, Hardwork	Focus on goals. Positive attitude. Proud of self	Different from school- Being teaching methods. Academically different from school.. Different routine from school.	Enjoy being a student. Sense of purpose
Self-motivation, Emotional transition imagery, Positive attitude	Enjoy cultural differences and diversity. Story with lecturer. Family metaphor.		Financial strain
Enjoy social integration. different cultures and languages Bubbly	Personality role in social integration. Unity in same goal	Developed social skills to make friends. Developed competence.	Transport time consuming and physically draining. Dual responsibilities of being at home and university. Family do not understand the demands of university
		Assistance from university resources.	Gratitude to be at university