UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa

by

Tsakani Nkiyasi Makwakwa

13269934

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MEd Education Management, Law and Policy

In the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

At the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor

Dr Talita M.L. Calitz

May 2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my family, my husband Johannes Makwakwa, my children Vutlhari and Nkateko Makwakwa, my mother Tintswalo Mabunda, my sister Cecilia Nkuna for the true love and support, through my long academic journey; I would not be who I am today without your unstoppable support.

DECLARATION

I, Tsakani Nkiyasi Makwakwa I declare that this research report, entitled How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa, is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of M. Ed Education Management, Law and Policy in the FACULTY OF EDUCATION At the UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA. It has never been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

....

Tsakani Makwakwa

May 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have gone the extra mile in supporting me through the process of this dissertation. Particular mention should be made of the following:

- Dr Talita Calitz for her ongoing support and her guidance as my supervisor for believing in me throughout and giving me the confidence to develop my ideas.
- My husband Johannes Makwakwa for his unconditional support throughout the entire process.
- My parents Samson Nkuna and Tintswalo Mabunda for their unconditional love and support.
- Vutlhari and Nkateko Makwakwa, my children who had to learn to live with their absent-minded mother.
- Last but not least, all learners for their willingness to participate in this study.

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to better understand how grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate their access to higher education institutions. Research has shown that low academic attainment and lack of resources are dominating South African schools located in informal settlements. Whereas many obstacles prevent learners in schools situated in informal settlements from accessing institutions of higher learning such as low socioeconomic levels and inadequate service delivery. These are a few of the problems that result in a lack of essential facilities like classrooms and libraries as well as other tools like textbooks and computers that would help learners improve.

To address the research questions, this study used a qualitative research approach to investigate the opinions and viewpoints of the learners in navigating their access to higher education institutions. In-depth interviews were used to interview 15 participants comprising eight males and seven females who were born and raised in Braamfischerville, Johannesburg West.

The results of this study showed that external variables, including socioeconomic problems, a lack of information about how to access institutions of higher education, financial aid, lack of resources and lack of infrastructure have substantial impacts on the teaching and learning process, ultimately determining the learners' degree of achievement.

As a result, this study suggests a method or model for schools in informal settlement areas that will help provide information on how to access higher education institutions and how to get funding for such institutions. Also, the government and higher education institutions need to give career exhibition priority in informal settlement schools to provide seminars or programmes to equip teachers on how to provide learners from these schools with the necessary information.

Keywords: higher education admission, informal settlement learners, barriers, institution of higher learning, higher education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

x

x

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CHE   –   Council on Higher Education

DoE   –   Department of Education

GCRA –   Gauteng City Region Academy

HEI –   Higher Education Institution

HESA –   Higher Education South Africa

HSRC –   Human Sciences Research Council

NDP –   National Development Plan

NSFAS –   National Student Financial Aid Scheme

UCT –   University of Cape Town

RSA –   Republic of South Africa

UJ –   University of Johannesburg

UNESCO –   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UP –   University of Pretoria

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The study explored how grades 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education. Qualitative research was used as the research methodology. In order to have a fairly balanced representation of the sexes, the study was done with fifteen participants in Braamfischerville, Johannesburg West District, with eight male and seven female. This study employed in-depth interviews to gather data through promoting conversation on how grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate their access to higher education institutions.

This research focused on policies that were put into place to correct the wrongs of the past and whether they have contributed to the development of the South African educational system (Moja,2016). Despite these policies, education in South Africa is still of questionable quality. While the socioeconomic level of learners is still a major factor in the partition of the South African educational system, it is no longer solely based on race as it was in the past. This is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of socially and economically developed areas have academically successful schools. The grades 11 and 12 learners in this research were learners from low-income families where the majority of their parents and community members do not work (Shepherd et,al, 2011). There are significant structural aspects that influence learners' aspirations of and access to higher education. According to Spaull (2014), the majority of the community members and parents lack basic education and youth from informal settlements are being disadvantaged by their inability to obtain higher education. Poverty continues to be concentrated in disadvantaged communities (Van der Berg, 2008). Many high school learners are unaware of the entry requirements for higher education, and some may pass Grade 12 yet fall short of the standards (Jacobs, 2018). Insufficient career advising at the school level, particularly in schools that are under resourced or understaffed, can jeopardise access to further education (Van Broekhuizen et al., 2016). Education is so important to the nation's economic prosperity; therefore, the government must give it top priority and financial support.

1

1.2 Inequality and Accessing Higher Education in the Global Context

Given the importance of education in learners' growth, access to higher education is a major policy goal on a global scale. More than a third of the world's population is now enrolled in post-secondary education according to global trends in access to higher education. These patterns clearly illustrate that global access to higher education has expanded over the past 20 years in all regions of the world. There are still large access gaps, especially when it comes to income categories, and this indicates that not all societal groups can take advantage of higher education equally. It was found that there is a rise in global inequality due to the differences between the global north and the south regions (Holmer et al., 2018).

This study emphasises the discrepancies between informal settlements and urban economic and social progress and the inequalities in resource access in informal settlement regions. In addition, evidence demonstrates that there are notable disparities between urban and informal settlement populations in South Africa (Graetz et al., 2018). This research examined these discrepancies by examining how informal settlements affect access to higher education. These gaps occur in a complex world that is characterised by disparities between urban and informal settlement populations within individual countries and those between the global South and North (Dados & Connell, 2012). Long-term discussions about access to higher education have been set against the backdrop of a global trend towards the massification of higher education systems. It was found that there are still persistent disparities in access to and success in higher education, even in systems with high participation rates (Maginson, 2016). This raises the issue of equity in the administration of opportunities for higher education and other factors that contribute to inequality both within and outside of higher education systems (Mintz,2021).

By implementing programmes to increase the enrolment of learners from underprivileged backgrounds, such as outreach initiatives in areas with low higher education participation rates (Archer, 2007; Burke, 2013), or by giving learners and their families the resources they need to mitigate the effects of their disadvantage, higher education becomes more accessible in a given country. Governments in various nations have implemented policies to remove known obstacles that prospective learners from lower-income strata or other groups of the population

2

© University of Pretoria

confront while trying to obtain higher education. Examples of these programmes include targeted scholarships and admission quotas (Long & Kavaxaniian, 2012).

According to Murrey (2019), special issues, such as lack of basic needs like water, food, shelter and electricity in disadvantaged communities highlight the disparities in resource access in informal settlement settings, the differences between informal settlements and urban economic and social transformation. In putting it together, researchers looked at both the global South and North to show that the differences between informal settlements and urban life may be more distinct in many global Southern contexts due to greater inequality (Murrey, 2019). Although having higher participation rates than Chile, nations like the United Kingdom and France also have significant socioeconomic inequalities. Widening participation measures and increased accessibility have increased the participation rates of lower-income groups, but stratification that accompanied the growth of both systems has prevented the gap with higher income groups in the attainability of the most lucrative qualifications from closing (Carpentier, 2018; Van Zanten & Maxwell, 2015).

As a result, the availability evaluated in terms of the total number of available spaces only provides a partial picture. Another important idea is attainability. According to a study by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2014) on the geographic distribution of higher education institutions in England and Wales, there are some significant "cold spots"; universities are important economic and social "anchors" in their local and larger communities because learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to travel long distances.

1.2.1 Poverty and its impact on higher education access

There is a difference in access to higher education between urban areas and informal settlements around the world. This mismatch fits with a global pattern of informal settlement dwellers' vulnerability and poor access to necessities. Regardless of where they reside or where they are from, people who live in informal settlement regions have less access to social, health and educational services and are more vulnerable than people who live in urban areas.

Universal access to higher education still faces significant obstacles. One crucial unfinished aspect of HE universal access is the involvement of underprivileged

communities. Even though access has increased over the past 20 years, research has demonstrated that marginalised groups especially those from low-income environments remain underrepresented in these institutions. Over the past two decades, policies in favour of universal access to higher education have grown, including new laws, funding plans and speciality universities created for underdeveloped learners. Yet, when evaluating universal access to HEIs, the enrolment vs graduation rates continue to be a crucial conundrum, and institutions must make sure that the learners they admit successfully complete their studies (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2020).

Participation in higher education, including enrolment and completion rates as well as the type and prestige of institutions attended, is strongly correlated with socioeconomic position in almost every country in the globe (Gladieux & Swail, 2000). Understanding the developments in higher education in South Africa requires taking into account the shifting global landscape of higher education. The knowledge-driven society is required for the rising demand for higher education. One tends to concur that higher education is significant in South Africa; a strong matric grade is the minimal condition for admission to a higher education programme relevant to one's field.

According to research, children and teachers in informal settlement schools face terrible living circumstances and a lack of resources (Timmis, 2020). Even when the Covid-19 pandemic was still present in 2020, about 95% of school-age children returned to regular attendance. The rotational system's arrangements had an impact on teaching and learning and created a significant content gap, posing a challenge to the entire education industry and highlighting discrepancies in access to higher education. Grade 12 learners living in informal settlements were and still are disadvantaged due to a lack of resources and infrastructure, such as electricity, technological access and connectivity (Timmis, 2020).

In South Africa, the vast majority of parents living in informal settlements are unemployed and lack matriculation credentials. This community is primarily reliant on government social grants as they cannot enter the labour market due to a lack of required skills and qualifications. Research has shown that Grade 12 learners living in informal settlements are significantly impacted by their poor living

conditions, such as limited money, food access and transportation (Walker, 2020). Access to higher education frequently gives Black learners from underprivileged homes a chance to enhance the quality of their lives and alter the socioeconomic condition of families (Machika & Johnson, 2015).

It was discovered that school grades and other relevant characteristics such as family history and race influence higher education (Kapp et al., 2014). In informal settlements, Grade 12 learners and their parents do not have access to more information about how to apply for higher education (Martinez-Vargas et al., 2019). It was observed that people who are around them have very limited ability to inspire Grade 12 learners (Martinez-Vargas et al., 2019). Parents and teachers of Grade 12 learners living in informal settlements are unaware of their options and admissions procedures. Most parents of Grade 12 learners in informal settlements are not familiar with the admission requirements and how to apply for financial assistance in universities. Lack of information for the Grade 12 learners living in informal settlements becomes a serious barrier and as a result, some of these learners take a gap year while trying to gather the information that will pave the ways for them to enrol in higher education learning.

1.2.2 Policy context for access to higher education

Nzwei and Kuye (2007, p. 201) make a strong case for the idea that policy analysis should be led by the idea of "addressing special local circumstances while keeping an eye on shifting global trends". Hence, policy analysis becomes a crucial part of development, particularly in the developmental state. Kuye (2007, p. 5) suggests policy targeting as a strategy to deal with the crisis because it "can be used as an implementation tool for poverty alleviation and help narrow the widening inequality gap". This is due to the extreme levels of poverty in Africa and the growing inequality gap in South Africa in particular.

The framework for reform is laid out in the White Paper, according to which the higher education system must be organised, regulated, and funded as a unified, nationally coordinated system. As a result, South African education will be able to overcome the fragmentation, inequality, and inefficiency that are the legacy of the past and build a learning society that unleashes the creative and intellectual energy of all our citizens in order to achieve the country's development and reconstruction goals.

The White Paper 3, (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1997) emphasises the need for effective policy execution to address the historically steered pattern of fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency. To accommodate a larger and more diverse student population, policy must be guided by the principles of increased access for previous disadvantage groups.

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA, 1996) was enacted by South Africa's democratically elected government. NEPA (1996) allowed for the creation of a single national policy that oversees the whole educational system for both education and training. Out of the 19 racially and geographically separated departments of education under the apartheid regime, the government was able to establish a single national department of education thanks to this Act. The government established an inclusive learning environment where admission is granted based on factors other than race, religion, creed, or culture.

The NDP envisions a state with a future that is only feasible because that state is rigorous in both its thinking processes and how it converts those processes into successful endeavours. The NDP's emphasis on following strict procedures in order to attain state objectives is crucial. It investigates and provides a vision of South Africa in 2030 that calls for a strict, effective, yet compassionate constitutional state.

South Africa's educational system is part of these long-term plans since it will provide better access to education for children from various backgrounds. For example, the South African Department of Higher Education and Training focuses on establishing policies for student financial aid, giving learners and teaching staff wider access to resources.

Admissions are defined by the Council for Higher Education (CHE, 2013) as the rules and procedures that an institution develops to manage student acceptance, selection and placement. Learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds have formal access to higher education (CHE, 2013). As stated in the Education White Paper 3, A Programme for Higher Education Transformation, the quest for equity and redress took centre stage (RSA, 1997). Various improvements and programmes in education have been implemented, such as the amalgamation of institutions of higher learning. The many qualifications or programmes offered by universities has extended access

to higher education. Most institutions have changed their admission policies after the introduction of the new National Senior Certificate in 2008. In the South African setting, learners can only access universities after being admitted through academic development programmes and extended programmes, which prolong the academic year's curriculum for learners with lower entry points. In contrast to the mainstream programme, which requires a minimum of 30 points, the extended programme in the commercial stream at the University of the Free State, for example, is required for learners with an admission point score between 25 and 29 and Grade 12 Mathematics at least at Level 3 (40%). To admit learners, certain universities use various approaches such as the national benchmark test and admission point score systems. According to a Higher Education South Africa agreement, universities allow learners with higher qualifications to enrol in bridging courses (HESA, 2014).

The National Development Plan (NDP), which acts as the government of South Africa's blueprint and specifies the 2030 aims for the country, expresses the goals and objectives of that government (National Planning Commission, 2011). The main principles driving the implementation of the NDP are to address inequality, unemployment and poverty. All societal sectors are covered by the NDP, as well as how the government should work to advance them to get them to a level where they can meet the requirements of all South Africans.

1.2.3 Inequality, finances and access to higher education in South Africa

It is well recognised that the socioeconomic background of the student affects their decision to attend institutions of higher learning; there is a direct correlation between having insufficient funds and enrolling in a university (Shange, 2018). The curriculum, physical access barriers, institutional policies and procedures, a lack of adequate student support services and the psycho-social climate of the institution are just a few examples of the barriers that may exist within an educational setting (Grant, 2015).

Governments have also acknowledged the need for universal access to higher education in the pursuit of development and social change. The international goals, plans and targets that have been established over the past two decades, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Millennium Development Goals, reflect this realisation. Universities in South Africa are waiving the application costs for both local and international learners, demonstrating that they recognise that access is

based on resources. The country's 26 public universities enrol roughly a million learners each year, putting them on track to fulfil the 1.62 million enrolment target established by the NDP by 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2011). However, this appears to be insufficient. Transforming higher education in South Africa necessitates a thorough grasp of the country's underlying socioeconomic issues, such as unemployment, poverty and crime (Spaull & Jansen, 2019).

The imbalance is not restricted to specific geographic areas. The Bantu Education programme was another relatively poor educational option offered by the apartheid regime to the Black population. The Bantu Schooling Act No. 47 of 1953 made this type of education legal and further imposed segregation and distinct development. Due to its extremely limited scope and subpar quality, Bantu Education ensured that "Blacks did not aspire to particular places in society and hence education for such employment was not required" (Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory, 2015, n.p.).

It has proven difficult to decrease disparities between different socioeconomic classes in higher education enrolment and throughput rates in democratic South Africa. Initiatives focused on decreasing these gaps can be strengthened by exploring regional discrepancies in access to post-secondary education information. Financial limitations have a significant impact on the susceptibility of learners from underprivileged families in research on access to and achievement in higher education. Apart from the importance of information or knowledge gained from higher education in making decisions, a deciding aspect is the availability of funds, whether from family income or bursaries. According to Farrell and Farrell (2003), learners experience financial hardships because some of them do not receive financial aid or bursaries at the first-year level.

1.3 Problem Statement

Understanding how knowledge affects a prospective student's readiness for higher education is crucial. Compared to their counterparts in informal settlements, the urban population often has faster and easier access to information. Because learners in urban areas have access to people who can provide them with career assistance, it could be argued that access to information is a serious problem in informal settlement schools. My interest was in how learners in grades 11 and 12 from South African informal settlements navigate access to higher education, especially given that these

8

learners are from the historically underprivileged Braamfischerville informal settlement in Johannesburg West region, which has very few resources.

1.3.1 Access to higher education

Access to higher education is closely related to the social and political environment in which institutions of higher learning operates, as they are everywhere else. This requires a historical perspective to be understood. The racialized educational system in South Africa has a long history of discriminating against and severely limiting possibilities for black pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged origins. This history is widely documented, and it is mirrored in the system's imbalances today. Student's achievement presents a significant obstacle, even if access to higher education is still an issue given the subpar quality of the educational system and the few post-secondary options available to learners. It was shown that, South Africa's access to higher education system is still inefficient and unequal (Letseka, 2008). The ability of society to solve issues, grow competitively, end poverty, and lessen inequality is significantly hampered in the absence of education, training, and innovation (NPC, 2011: 262).

In 2003, a new system of funding for government assistance to universities was established. Due to the high output value placed on research production, the financial mechanism is critiqued for being "biased towards rewarding research outputs at the expense of teaching" (DHET, 2012: 46). transformed system, as stated in the NPHE and the 1997 white paper. Although closely tied to finances, student housing and food access are acknowledged in South Africa as important variables in academic success (Jones et al., 2008).

Research has shown that socioeconomic difficulties are a significant barrier to higher education (Martinez-Vargas et al., 2019). It has also been mentioned that low-income Grade 12 learners may find it difficult to pursue further education since they may not have enough money for meals, tuition, books or transportation (Walker, 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, it was discovered that 5% of Grade 12 learners enrol in higher education (Njoko, 2018). The geographical area or the high school attended determines access to higher education (Atuahene et al., 2013). Access to higher education is also influenced by "the communication tactics employed by universities with potential learners" (Njoko, 2018, p. 176). Access to higher education is influenced

by the spread of post-secondary education information in urban and informal settlements, according to the study (Njoko, 2018). It was found that the majority of learners did not receive proper guidance when they made their subject choices in Grade 10. These learners only started to make their own career choices while doing their Grade 12. According to the DBE policies, a learner is not allowed to make subject changes in Grade 12; therefore, most Grade 12 encounter problems because career choices were not mediated to them in the lower grades.

Although most higher education institutions in the majority of countries was accessible in the small scale, it is clear from the facts that there have been changes in access in these nations, and growth has not been egalitarian (Carnoy et al., 2013; Chien & Montjourides, 2016; Salmi & Bassett, 2014; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). The socioeconomic disadvantage has a significant impact on access in South Africa, with poor schools for Black youth serving as a primary proxy metric. Race and economic disadvantage thus frequently go hand in hand. The majority of the time, fee-free public schools do not adequately educate pupils in selecting the appropriate subjects for Grade 10 (Walker, 2019). Therefore, these issues stand in the way of the ideal that all high school learners from rural areas have enough resources, adequate technology and the same opportunities as urban schools.

Accessing higher education remains a complicated issue and cannot be overlooked by focusing on school resources. Fine (2004) contends that outdated texts, insufficient supplies and decaying buildings all harm teachers' and learners' competence and self-esteem. Schools in informal settlements are under resourced, whereby they do not have access to computers and internet connectivity. Research has shown that the government is widening the gap between informal settlements and urban learners when it comes to accessing information (Department of Communication, 2015).

It has been noted that factors such as poor allocation of resources, lack of distribution of information on when to apply for enrolment, access to financial aid and unqualified teachers in schools function as roadblocks for learners trying to access higher education (Van Broekhuizen et al., 2018).

Poor quality of teaching and inadequate physical infrastructure, which are the two main characteristics of informal settlement schooling in Braamfischerville in Johannesburg

West region, are two reasons why the family-level disadvantage cannot be corrected at such institutions (Bokayev, 2016). Many schools in informal communities lack contemporary libraries or natural science labs and computers, internet access and heating infrastructure are all in short supply (Bokayev, 2016; Chankseliani, 2013). Due to inadequate heating and transportation, schools in this area have been associated with low student attendance during the winter months (Silova et al., 2007). The geographic isolation of informal settlement sites is also linked to a lack of community services like youth development programmes, extracurricular activities and libraries.

These learners have access to schools that are often under resourced, where the communities face poverty and there is a geographical divide due to apartheid infrastructure. "This imbalance prevents people from participating in society and denies them basic rights like the right to an education. However, access to and the quality of education have long been contentious issues in South Africa" (National Student Financial Aid Scheme [NSFAS], 2009, WangengeOuma & Cloete, 2008, p. 910). Racial segregation policies increased inequality in accessing institutions of higher learning (Fiske & Ladd, 2001). Poverty and lack of resources prevent learners from informal settlements from accessing higher education as they cannot afford to pay the application fee in some institutions (Spaull, 2014). However, equal treatment can continue to provide unfair results due to social class, economic condition, ethnicity or race, geographic origin, gender and other disadvantages (Neubauer & Tanaka, 2011; Noah & Eckstein, 1989; Zaida et al., 2006). Even though there is increased access to higher education, there are still imbalances between informal settlements and urban areas due to the uneven distribution of resources.

Therefore, my study focused on understanding this issue in more detail. This research explored Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners' understanding of access requirements to higher education. Grade 11 and 12 learners in informal settlements are facing the challenge of obtaining and understanding the information on how to access of institutions of higher learning, as their teachers do not have the skills, knowledge and resources that can assist their learners (Khumalo & Mji, 2014). Another challenge is the monetary requirements to travel to career exhibitions and the fact that learners have to travel long distances to

access the internet. It has been noted that lack of information and resources become barriers to accessing higher education (Khumalo & Mji, 2014).

Research has shown that after completing their secondary education, young people have a variety of alternatives, including going to universities at home or abroad, pursuing a career, enrolling in a trade school, learning skills on-the-job or through an apprenticeship or entering the workforce as unskilled labourers. This study's main area of interest was access to academic higher education. Choice patterns may be explained by social and cultural factors relating to applicants' social class and the type of school they attend, in addition to logical considerations of reputation and cost. Applicants from informal settlement areas, who are likely to have attended a small school with little support from private tutors, may not consider themselves as more suitable for prominent higher education institutions and competitive programmes than learners with experience in private education (Chankseliani, 2013).

This study aimed to contribute knowledge about the challenges and opportunities that face youth in informal settlements and to enhance their freedom to attain access to institutions of higher learning. This research study investigated how Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigated their access to higher education and how this knowledge could assist other learners to overcome the challenges and improve their access to higher education in future. It was noted that policy implementation has failed because of a lack of understanding of the causes of the problems (Tebele, 2016). Inequality prevails through the following series of relationships – economic, social and cultural – which impact educational progress in society. The government agency in charge of this industry's issues and activities in contributing knowledge and skills to the youth of South Africa is the Department of Higher Education and Training.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

1.4.1 Academic rationale

Research into higher education focuses on the vulnerable student once access has been attained (Leibowitz, 2012). Less is known about the trajectory of youth from informal settlements who aspire to access higher education while at school. This study explored learners' experiences of navigating aspirations and structural barriers and

opportunities in accessing higher education after matriculation. Finance limitations have a significant impact on the susceptibility of learners from underprivileged families on access to and achievement in higher education. The importance of information or knowledge on how to access higher education should be accessible to the learners, especially in the disadvantaged communities (Njoko, 2018).

Most studies on the growth and equity of higher education have concentrated on middle- and high-income nations, which typically exhibit tendencies that put them closer to a "mass" or "universal phase" of higher education. Comparatively, little study has been done on how access to higher education differs in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

1.4.2 Personal rationale

My experience of teaching in township schools, where there is little assistance available for learners planning to pursue higher education following matriculation, is that most of the learners are affected by their poor family backgrounds. Research has shown that even though there has been an improvement in infrastructure, lack of resources is still a challenge in many informal settlements (Hendricks, 2019). In my experience, Grade 12s in informal settlements do not have role models to motivate them to enrol in higher institutions of learning. As a former teacher at a public secondary school and still in constant contact with teachers, I was intrigued by the decision taken by the Gauteng Department of Education to form a strong partnership with the Gauteng City Region Academy (GCRA), where the top three learners from no fee-paying Gauteng-based schools would be awarded bursaries to study in HEIs in any field of study.

In this study, I looked deeper into the perceptions of Grade 12 learners from informal settlements to gain insight into how they navigated access to higher education. Higher education policies are often invested with enormous expectations for achieving equitable access in institutions of higher education (CHE, 2013). Grade 12 learners living in informal settlement are also catered for in this category by GCRA as a sector responsible for skills development by way of facilitating and coordination of bursaries.

1.5 Aims of the Study

This study aimed to investigate and comprehend how learners in Grade 11 and 12 from informal settlements in South Africa navigated access to higher education. This study aimed to achieve the following four objectives stated below.

The research had four objectives namely to:

1. Explore the challenges the Grade 11 and 12 learners faced in navigating access to higher education.
2. Understand what aspirations the learners had to access higher education.
3. Describe what resources, structural and community support systems the learners had to enable access to higher education.
4. Explore how the learners understood and perceived the admission policies of higher education institutions.

1.6 Research Questions

How do Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners within an informal settlement context navigate access to higher education?

The primary research question was supported by the following sub-questions:

1) What are the perspectives of Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements regarding how admission policies impact their access to higher education?

2) How do admission policies enable their access to higher education?

3) How do admission policies constrain their access to higher education?

4) According to informal settlement Grade 11 and 12 learners, where do these challenges originate from?

1.7 Clarification of concepts

Disadvantaged learners refer to students who are in disadvantageous situations. The term "unfavourable circumstances" in the context of this study refers to the

14

living conditions endured by people whose families are from low socioeconomic groups and who live in disadvantaged areas (Ngonini, 2004).

Higher education - according to the Higher Education Act of 1997, Higher Education Institution means any institution that provides higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis (Higher Education Act (RSA) of 1997).

Access to education is the ability of all people to have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their social class, race, gender, sexuality, ethnic background or physical and mental illness.

Admission policy means the school's or higher education policy detailing the entry requirements for the school as may be updated from time to time.

1.8 Structure of the research

This report is divided into six chapters: an introduction, a review of the relevant literature, a theoretical framework, a discussion of the research methodology, a presentation of the results, a discussion of the results with limitations, and a conclusion. The study is introduced in Chapter 1. The chapter attempts to give the reader a general picture of the research's emphasis by outlining the motivations for the investigation and its goals.

A overview of the literature on enrolment at institutions of higher education after 1994 is presented in Chapter 2. The review attempts to give a summary of the knowledge, theories, and studies that are currently available regarding the difficulties that learners from informal settlements have when trying to access higher education institutions. Chapter 3 gives the theoretical framework while chapter 4 focuses on the study's research methodologies, it gives a thorough explanation of the research design as well as the research questions that serve as the study's guiding principles. The in-depth interview method is examined while the participant characteristics are offered.

Both the method used to analyse the data and the process by which the researcher acquired access to the participants are described. The study's ethical concerns are discussed, and it is made clear how they will be handled. In Chapter 3, research results are presented and discussed; they are compared to pertinent literature and related to

the Social Capital Theory. To aid in a better comprehension of the data, it is first presented and organised into major topics before being analysed and debated in chapter 4. Chapter 5 discusses how participants perceived the difficulties or hurdles to entering institutions of higher learning. The main conclusions of the study are covered in Chapter 6, the study's limitations are discussed in Chapter 6 as well as recommendations and guidance for further research are provided.

The significance of this research in comprehending how grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate their access to institutions of higher learning has been explained in this Introduction chapter. Additionally, the chapter explained the goals of the investigation. The literature around this problem is discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Reviewing the works of a few chosen academics who have written about access to higher education is the main goal of this literature study. All obstacles that learners in informal settlements face in their pursuit of higher education will be further examined in the literature. This chapter will look more closely at the education system of the current government rule.

Higher education was purposefully directed to exclude a substantial portion of society during apartheid. The so-called "separate but equal" policy of the apartheid regime was carried out through the finance methods. Redressing the higher education policy in South Africa is a difficult task given the historical disparities in our educational system. Access to higher education is also hampered by the socioeconomic position of the majority of the population in this country. Higher education is necessary in the post-apartheid era to change the legacies of the past, increase access, improve quality, and respond to South Africa's larger societal and developmental goals.

A study of the literature on access to higher education in the global context finds that social status heavily influences learners' decisions about which universities to attend (Archer et al., 2003; Shiner & Noden, 2015). These studies demonstrate that low-income learners have few options when selecting institutions because of factors like inadequate financial resources and lack of information.

According to Van Broekhuizen et al. (2016), learners' decisions on which universities to attend depend on factors such as the type of school they attended, their race, gender, age and grade-level qualifications. In South African higher education, family and the university are some of the elements that allow learners to decide whether to enrol in institutions (Walker, 2020). Also, low-income learners may be prevented from making wise decisions by a lack of financing, the uncertainty of receiving a bursary before their application is approved and a delay in the transfer of the funds, such as through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (Gore & Walker, 2020).

When coming from a disadvantaged background, getting higher education in sub-Saharan Africa presents more general difficulties. This research focused on several, probably underappreciated problems: getting enough useful information on post-secondary education, poverty, quality of schooling and rurality. In this regard, there are unequal difficulties regarding the accessibility of resources, the presence of basic infrastructure and the socioeconomic status and background of learners in informal settlement schools as compared to those in urban schools. Due to their unfortunate circumstances, subpar service delivery and low socioeconomic status background, learners in informal settlement schools receive a poorer quality of education than their peers who have access to the majority of resources that support academic performance (Baloyi, 2020). The majority of learners do receive information on various aspects of the application and enrolment process, but many are unsure of how to use it. Similarly, they are unaware of how to apply them or what they cover when it comes to various bursaries, scholarships and especially NSFAS. They just know the names of these funding schemes. They bring their inquiries to their schools, which, as teachers have noted, have little information and there are no facilities like computers that could be used to acquire it (Njoko, 2018). These Grade 12 learners depend mostly on their teachers as their source of information. In very few schools, their Life Orientation teachers would organise an open day with relevant institutions to educate their leaners about career choices and how to access higher education. Due to the lack of relevant resources such as computers and connectivity, most Grade 12 learners are not aware of the entry points required to enrol for certain qualifications and how to apply for financial assistance. Most parents of these Grade 12 learners are unemployed, which makes it harder for parents to afford to buy gadgets such as cellular phones and data for connectivity for their children.

2.2 Global Research into Access to Higher Education

More than a third of the world's population now continues with some sort of post-secondary study, according to the global trends in access to higher education. This clearly demonstrates that higher education has become more widely available in parts of the world over the past 20 years. There are still major gaps, notably in terms of income groups, and this implies that all societal groups may not benefit equally from higher education (UNESCO, 2020).

Some factors that have contributed to increased access to higher education over the past 20 years include the expansion of private and distance learning institutions and general economic growth. On the other hand, obtaining universal access to higher education still faces significant obstacles. One crucial unfinished aspect of higher education universal access is the involvement of underprivileged communities. Although data indicates that overall access has increased over the past 20 years, marginalised groups, particularly those from low-income environments, continue to be underrepresented in these institutions (UNESCO, 2020). However, "despite its significance, higher education institutions in lower-income countries have generally been limited to small elite population due to restrictions on public resources" (Schendel & McCowan, 2016, p72). It is essential for every nation to have access to higher education. It serves as the foundation for a host of other crucial issues, such as lower unemployment which can reduce poverty. There are various obstacles preventing universal access, the most important and significant of which are poverty, crisis and emergency, expensive tuition cost, entrance exams, geographical mobility and prejudice. However, not every country can readily increase access to higher education. The following additional factors, many of which are infrastructure-related and restrict universal access, can also be mentioned: insufficient training programmes for teachers; teachers quitting their jobs; a lack of facilities like electricity, internet and computer access; a low budget; low aspirations in some contexts; and an insufficient number of classes. Hence, achieving universal access to higher education becomes a difficult goal that needs effective political tactics, enough time, and the right resources to overcome the obstacles. It is essential for every nation to have access to higher education.

2.3 Constraints to Higher Education Access

2.3.1 Poverty

Very few people from low-income families enrol in higher education in the global context. Inequality exacerbates wealth gaps, making it less likely for the poorest to pursue higher education. The widening access gaps between young men and women and between the wealthy and the poor in those nations where higher education is more widely available suggest that the privileged have profited most from the expansion of wealth (Sonia & Pauline, 2016).

Access to higher education can also be challenging in some cases because there may not be as many local institutions that offer this service in disadvantaged areas. Nevertheless, it goes beyond infrastructure alone. Those who live in informal settlements frequently earn less than the typical citizen and, in many nations, are more likely to be members of linguistic and ethnic minorities, both of which are frequently associated with limited access to higher education.

Research has shown that apartheid rule prevented parents from low-income households from enrolling their children in higher education institutions; therefore, they are unfamiliar with these institutions. These limit parents' capacity to encourage their children to continue their education and to offer advice on how to get into higher education institutions (Kros, 2010). Many learners from underprivileged origins and areas of informal settlements therefore worry about achieving better grades in order to compete with their parents for better jobs and support their suffering families.

A low level of education and geographic distance from markets and employment prospects are characteristics of the chronically poor. According to Finn and Leibrandt (2017), race, household size and labour market participation are significant factors in determining poverty status. According to the World Bank (2016), chronic poverty primarily affects African, single-parent, female-headed and rural households. The level of poverty in learners' households, which are typically headed by women, has a big impact on their academic performance. In South Africa, the majority of learners in neighbourhoods with informal settlements are considered low-income learners from households with limited financial resources. Very few scholars have looked into how learners' backgrounds affect their academic performance. It was found that many tactics were employed to help learners from single-parent households do better in class (Iwaloye, 2018).

2.3.2 Access to information

International studies have shown that the proper knowledge from the right sources, a strong education and supportive educators who mould and encourage higher education goals and parents who are aware of higher education all play significant roles in a person's ability to access university. Information must be accessible in order to apply for university admission. There seems to be less information about university open days and even less about what respective universities are doing through

community engagement and outreach programmes to increase access to their institutions for low-income youth. This is despite the fact that information on university websites regarding application procedures, admission requirements, tuition fees, bursaries and funding is easily accessible if you have a smart phone or internet access (Paul & Jenifer, 2018).

Research has shown that there are two layers of schooling: functional schools (25%) and dysfunctional schools (75%) (Spaull, 2014). It was noted that functional schools guide learners to choose the correct subjects while learners are in Grade 10 (Walker, 2019). Parents and schools do not have sufficient information regarding when to apply for admission and financial aid for learners who want to access higher education (Bitzer, 2009). It was also found that in South Africa, there is a gap between rich and poor when it comes to access of higher education (Van Broekhuizen et al., 2016).

The government's mandate for equal access to higher education is the following: "Ensure that by 2030, all women and men have equal access to high-quality, affordable technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university" (UNESCO, 2019. Access disparities to higher education have been associated with broader economic, political and social concerns as well as with aspects of the person, family and educational systems. Greater socioeconomic inequality restricts what education can accomplish because, in the words of Basil Bernstein, "education cannot compensate for society" (Bernstein, 1970, p. 344). Research also supports the critical role that individual agency plays in a variety of institutional settings (Marginson, 2016).

2.3.3 Geography

According to the research, some of the problems include discrepancies in service delivery between urban and informal settlements areas, various forms of prejudice and poverty. Communities with poor service may lack essential amenities like reliable transportation and primary healthcare facilities. For instance, learners who use wheelchairs may find it difficult to get around, and learners who have chronic illness may find it difficult to access healthcare (Grant, 2015). According to Altbach et al. (2009) geography is "frequently overlooked as a factor that contributes to unequal participation in higher education" (2009, p. 40). According to Atuahene and Owusu-Ansah (2013, p. 7), a learner's access to and participation in higher education "are significantly imp acted by the geographic area or region of the high school they attend".

21

The fact that people in informal settlements are often farther removed from higher education institutions than those who live in urban areas makes it more challenging to improve access for this group (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013).

2.4 Global Studies on Poor Learners' Access to Higher Education

According to research undertaken both nationally and internationally, socioeconomic background has a direct impact on access to higher education (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). According to research, barely "5% of the age cohort are admitted to higher education in sub-Saharan Africa" (Altbach et al., 2009, p. 38). "There are common features and challenges such as funding, resource shortages, gender imbalance, language barrier and growing youth population but generalizing about a continent as huge and diverse as Africa is challenging" (Tefera, 2004, p 21-50). Research has shown that the poor background of most learners becomes a barrier when it comes to access to higher education. These learners do not have the relevant information that will assist them to access higher education, such as admission requirements and financial assistance. The communities they live in are characterised by lack of basic resources such as water and electricity.

Informal settlements and urban school learners in these nations have different access options to higher education, and this disparity is projected to widen over time. The tuition rates at more prominent universities will likely increase as the difference between them and less prestigious higher education institutions widens.

2.5 South African Research into Access to Higher Education

In the context of South Africa, research on inequality and higher education has looked at the historical inequalities that have shaped the higher education landscape because of the apartheid legacy. The notion of equality necessitates equal opportunity to attend and thrive in higher education programmes. Applying the principle of equity, however, requires a critical evaluation of current disparities that are caused by laws, institutions and practices that discriminate against people based on their race, gender, or ability, among other factors as well as a transformation programmes with the goal of redress (Vivienne, 2014).

The sophisticated system of financial aid may be a key component of a strategy to equalise opportunities for learners in informal settlements. There are many different

forms of financial aid that nations and HEIs use to support learners who are underrepresented in higher education, including means-tested income support while attending an HEI, assistance with tuition repayments, deferred/income-contingent loan repayment plans and funding to help disadvantaged groups meet their needs while attending HEs. Harding (2011, p. 486) says: "Learners were more likely to withdraw early from their academic programs when they had financial difficulties". Some learners do not even have the option of dropping out because their families do not qualify to make loans, so they simply drop out when they are unable to pay their tuition and must choose between leaving their family in debt or dropping out. Letseka and Maile (2008) go on to state that recent data indicates that, on average, 70% of the studied households with children of higher education dropouts fell into the category of "poor economic status".

Research has shown spatial disparities as geographical manifestations of complex socioeconomic and educational gaps that disadvantage people from informal settlement areas on a group level. Learners from informal settlement areas are less prepared to compete on an equal footing with their urban peers for entry to higher education, which is at the root of the informal settlement disadvantage in higher education accesses. For instance, learners from urban areas can afford their tuition, whereas those from informal settlements cannot if they do not have a sponsor. This demonstrates how financial difficulty has a greater impact on the position of learners from disadvantaged communities in their educational lives and that their exclusion from higher education may even be permanent.

2.6 Poverty and Access to Higher Education

Poverty is now seen to be more than just a lack of resources or income to meet demands, both in the United Kingdom and abroad (Alkire & Foster, 2011; Dean, 2010; Tomlinson & Walker, 2009; Marlier et al., 2007). In addition to causing poor physical and mental health, limited social and economic mobility, social isolation and a sense of helplessness, poverty often takes the form of material deprivation (Walker et al., 2013). Walker demonstrates how the complicated interrelationships between social injustices, poverty, academic success, educational "choices" and life chances influence access to higher education. Walker points out that South African learners from disadvantaged families are less deterred by the immediate

costs of higher education because of the projected future gains, in contrast to research from other countries (Walker et al., 2014). An individual born into poverty competes with others from socioeconomically privileged backgrounds for entry to and achievement in higher education. Learners from rural and township areas typically attend underresourced schools without access to technology, struggle to find information and receive good advice about choosing and applying to universities and frequently cannot afford universities. Learners from underprivileged origins do, nevertheless, have access to higher education (Calitz, 2018).

Poverty and unemployment are quite widespread in informal settlements and there is a high reliance on government social grants (Tshishonga, 2016). This has an impact on the education system in these communities because when a community is poor, education suffers. Poverty in informal settlements has a variety of effects on learners. Instead of concentrating on their academics, learners in these places are expected to work in the surrounding suburbs in order to buy food. This leaves them with little time to focus on their homework and further reading. In this study, schooling is regarded to be highly essential and Black families prioritise it as a means of gaining or maintaining advantage (Southall, 2016).

The effects of poverty on schooling are profound. Since research indicates that learners in poverty are less responsive to conventional teaching approaches, the role of the educator has evolved. In response, school districts around the nation have developed and implemented frameworks for accommodating learners in poverty such as feeding schemes within their community, sports, dance and music (Walker, 2018).

One of the most pressing issues in the South African higher education system has always been access to higher education, especially for learners from underprivileged families (Walker et al., 2021). The institutions that work with underprivileged and historically disadvantaged pupils have felt the impact the most strongly. The Covid-9 pandemic brought attention to the fact that South Africa's higher education system is unstable and not always resilient (Essop, 2020). Research has demonstrated that the concept of resilience is key here, which emerged through the examination of approaches to technology in higher education that came to the fore as a result of Covid-19 and the attendant problems (Tadesse, 2022).

According to additional research conducted globally, people who live in poverty have had their basic human rights violated and it is the responsibility of the educational system to raise awareness and free them from these injustices (Dhillon, 2010). In South African schools, particularly those that are located in informal settlements and rural areas, there is a significantly high rate of academic underperformance. Poor access to basic resources including classrooms, libraries, tables, chairs, and teachers are other characteristics of these schools. However, circumstances like those mentioned above are rarely present in schools located in urban regions (Baloyi, 2020). In order to create an environment that fosters successful learning, educational institutions in high-poverty areas have made an effort to address the needs of their learners by implementing programmes that cater to their basic necessities such as reading, soccer and computers (Wilson-Strydom, 2015).

2.7 South African Studies on Learners' Experiences of Access to Higher Education

In South Africa, there is substantially less research on university access, with the primary concern being post-access university experiences. According to Van Broekhuizen (2016), many of the observed patterns of university access are substantially influenced by school performance, implying that the school system has a significant impact on who completes Grade 12 and earns a bachelor's degree. It was found that the goal of the research was to learn how young people choose universities, as well as what and who influences their decisions, through the voices of young people. One need to know and understand what problems and opportunities grade 12 learners experience, as well as how they adjust to university life and feel like they belong to the institutions of higher learning once gained access (Walker, 2019).

It is widely known that there are several issues that have a negative impact on the quality of schooling in rural and informal communities (Ferri et al., 2020). In addition, according to Du Plessis (2014), rural areas are underdeveloped and distant, have underfunded schools and a lack of amenities like electricity, water, roads and other forms of transportation as well as communication and information technologies. According to Langa (2015), Emerging Voices (2015) and Du Plessis (2014), the socioeconomic problems of informal settlement schools extend to their learners.

The literature suggests that the gaps in educational opportunity are getting wider (Subedi & Subedi, 2020; Williams et al., 2021). For instance, Montacute (2020) noted that pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were impacted by Covid-19 regulations, such as closing of schools. The divide between learners who have and do not have financial problems has widened as a result of insufficient internet resources and fundamental technological abilities.

Through improved curricula and teaching and learning techniques that value and are inclusive of learners' experiences and aspirations, learners can be encouraged to participate actively in the institution and become more than just observers. Their knowledge and experiences can be used to honour and embrace a variety of knowledges and advance quickly towards what Mbembe (2016) refers to as the "pluriversity" – a setting for higher education that celebrates epistemic diversity while working to be reciprocal in epistemology and, as a result, more equitable.

The issue of access to higher education institutions is still complicated and it cannot be fully understood by focusing solely on educational resources. A country's educational policy, the government, various higher education institutions, community stakeholders with whom learners regularly contact and other variables all have a role in learners' access. Therefore, one cannot solely concentrate on one factor and use it to justify why learners from informal settlement areas have inadequate access to higher education institutions when discussing the subject.

2.8 Barriers to Accessing Higher Education

International research reveals that a variety of obstacles inhibit individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes from enrolling in higher education. The impact of earlier cultural and educational experiences in the context of informal settlements on learners' higher education paths was also studied by South Africa and two United Kingdom partners (Naidoo, 2018). These aspects included a focus on feeling marginalised; a lack of recognition of the value of knowledge and skills acquired by communities in informal settlements and their relevance to higher education; a lack of resources, including technology access; and difficulties faced by learners from informal settlements (Naidoo, 2018).

Globally, through these paths young people experience their surroundings and the worlds of their schooling. As they exercise their ability to aspire in light of their educational and larger social activities, they gain an understanding of what they can become (Fataar, 2018). A significant portion of historically underprivileged learners participate in one or more community initiatives as a resource to help them in their academic endeavours. Different structures in society should come up with programmes such as soccer, computer training and others that will equip learners with the knowledge and skills required in their lives so that they can become globally competitive.

Research has shown that poverty and structural hurdles hamper access to higher education in South Africa which is difficult due to socioeconomic complications. Youth from low-income homes are less likely to be inspired to pursue higher education or to get enough advice on choosing subjects (Walker & McLean, 2013). Because of their admission point score, a greater number of learners in fee-free schools are denied admission to the degree programme of their choice (Walker, 2018). Some higher education institutions' admission policies, according to Mullen (2010), function as hurdles for some learners. This is because higher education institutions frequently select learners based on prior educational achievement (Walker, 2018).

In 2018, it was noted that in 36.4% of cases, learners in South Africa were more likely to live with their parents, or at least both of them (Stats SA, 2018). Furthermore, it has been claimed that parents who take an active role in their childrens' education are able to instil confidence in and motivate them to do better in school. This has an impact on their success at school (Cosser, 2002).

Segregation and racial subjugation have for many years predominated in South Africa. Thus, it is hard to discuss education in South Africa without bringing up apartheid practices and their effects on it (Van der Berg, 2008). These have had an impact on the children of those educated under the apartheid system as some of them are not active in their children's schooling because they cannot read and write, for example. Consequently, they find it challenging to motivate their children or assist them with their homework. This suggests that learners need to take charge of their education because their parents are unable to help them (Paul & Jenifer, 2018). In addition, it costs money to apply for admission, pay tuition and cover other expenses including

living expenses, food costs and textbook costs – higher education institutions are not easily accessible. The ability of learners to access higher education institutions is affected by all these elements, which must be taken into consideration as significant determinants (Cardak & Givon, 2004).

In order to understand why learners from informal settlements regions have such inadequate access to higher education institutions, democratic government policies such as the national qualification framework must be addressed. One of the reasons why fewer learners from informal settlements are enrolling in higher education institutions could be attributed to the inadequate distribution of resources in the education sector. When the Department of Basic Education failed to provide books at the start of the 2012 school year, learners in Limpopo province suffered. Eight months into the calendar year, some of the schools received books, while others received none at all (Variava, 2013). Limpopo is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, with more than 80% of the population dependent on social subsidies. The majority of schools lack adequate infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories and libraries (Mandela Foundation, 2005). In addition to undermining the nation's constitution, the department's inability to furnish textbooks places learners in situations that make studying very challenging.

To summarise, access to higher education is essential for any nation's development. When access to higher education is limited or restricted to a particular group of people in society, there may be an increase in unemployment and the perpetuating of poverty, a rise in crime and a shortage of skilled workers, among other outcomes. Due to certain institutions failure to recognise the variety of their learners' populations, particularly those from previously underserved communities, participation has frequently been difficult despite the increase in access for learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Swartz et al., 2018). Learners may therefore have access to universities, but it is crucial to consider whether the playing field has been levelled sufficiently for them to engage in active participation in higher education.

According to the literature study, South Africa is working to break free from apartheid's restraints, particularly in education, and provide equal opportunity for all people. The government has spent a lot of money on programmes to alter the school system. This is especially true of Black learners' increasing access to higher education institutions.

University education has been referred to as a merit good by other scholars, although typically a merit good refers to anything that society believes should be required of all citizens, such as primary school. It is obvious that coercion at the tertiary level is unrealistic. There is a strong case that the beneficiaries should pay back some or all of the benefits because this leaves higher education as primarily a private good (Van Broekhuizen et al., 2016).

However, little progress has been accomplished in terms of learners from informal settlements and underprivileged communities gaining entry to higher education institutions. As a result, South Africa cannot talk about progress unless marginalised people are properly recognised and participate in decision making. As a result, the goal of this study was to learn about the barriers that informal settlement learners experience when trying to gain entry to higher education institutions, in the hopes of informing changes in the educational system that would lead to genuine reform.

Despite these drawbacks, the analysis offers vital data on access disparities to higher education that are necessary for tracking the SDGs' achievement. In order to develop a more comprehensive picture of inequalities and highlight the need to look at education inequalities across the system rather than for individual levels within the system, researchers have looked into the connections between wealth and gender-driven access gaps at primary and secondary levels and those in higher education (High Educ, 2016).

There is very little research on the experiences of socioeconomically vulnerable high school learners seeking access to higher education, particularly those from informal settlements. The goal of this study was to fill that vacuum and add to the current literature on socioeconomically disadvantaged high school learners seeking access to higher education in South Africa. In the context of being physically positioned within informal settlements, my research focused on student views on the problems and opportunities they encountered when aspiring and obtaining admission to higher education.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Social Capital Theory

For historically underprivileged informal settlement learners who want to access higher education, this study looked at agency as a way to negotiate school practices. This chapter draws on Putnam's social capital theory and emphasises the general framework of the theory in keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of the research. With the goal of attempting to transform society, I used this theoretical framework as a lens in this study to identify power structures. I concentrated on the social capital theory, which can be defined as a person's network of relationships (Putnam, 2000). Social networks tie to one another and within them are referred to as social capital in sociology (Imandoust, 2011). Social capital is said to as "the glue that keeps societies together, without which society at large would collapse" (Acar, 2011, p456-461). Social capital theory is increasingly being applied to education as a precondition for academic success (Acar, 2011).

In this chapter I will be discussing social capital theory as my theoretical framework. This theory is related to my study because it promotes networking within communities and encourages relationships among families, churches and other community organisations such as schools, universities and other institutions. These types of relationships are based on trust and other values that are required on a day-to-day basis. Through the social capital theory, grade 12 learners could have easy access to higher education as the strong networks within communities can make it possible for these grade 12 learners to access the required information to enrol in institutions of higher learning.

3.2 The Background of the Social Capital Theory

On the concepts' antecedents, there is no universal agreement. The theory of social capital is one of the "most prominent and well-linked theories to emerge in the social sciences during the past 20 years", according to Baranovic et,al (2016, p. 83).

The term "social capital" has probably been used more frequently than any other over the past 10 years in both international sociology and at the nexus of sociology and educational studies. Since social capital is an experimentally based concept, it is appropriate to start with Lin's (1999, p. 467) operational description of it as "the resources contained in social networks accessed and employed by actors for action". This approach emphasises that social capital is used by individuals but that it originates in social networks rather than within individuals. All of the major theoretical contributions of Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam, and Lin agree that social capital is a component of interpersonal interactions, but they have different views on how social capital should be used. Coleman (1988) focuses on how social capital is used by individuals, Bourdieu (1986) on how different social groupings use it, and Putnam (2000) on how it serves communities. While Coleman emphasises the use of social capital for educational objectives, Bourdieu and Lin emphasise the use of social capital in business, in the quest for employment and in determining social standing.

3.3 Who Used the Social Capital Theory?

According to the social capital theory, individuals from the same socioeconomic class and background are more likely to develop social capital (DeLuca, 2013). However, individuals from different socioeconomic classes and backgrounds should surround themselves with those from different socioeconomic classes and backgrounds in order to experience social mobility and occupational attainment leading to a change in social class (Breen & Jonsson, 2005). Bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000) is a phenomenon that can connect people to resources they otherwise would not have. Programmes aimed at improving socioeconomic status can assist in connecting persons living in poverty with resources and opportunities that can help them grow and better their situation (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995).

By "social capital," Coleman (1988) meant aspects of social life such as networks, norms and trust that allow people to work together more successfully to achieve common goals. Within a network, particularly one made up of people of low socioeconomic level, the network will lack access to a number of resources (Hassan & Birungi, 2011) and quality education that can aid in breaking the cycle of poverty (Tilak, 2002). One of the major drivers in repeating this cycle, according to Hassan and Birungi (2011), is social capital. Access to fresh opportunities is limited due to a

lack of diversity in membership. As a result, belonging to a network that lacks diversity and resources would not benefit individuals in their efforts to break the cycle of poverty. Putman (2000) contends that one way that social capital raises our lot is through increasing our understanding of the numerous connections between our fates. People who are disconnected from others are unable to evaluate the accuracy of their own opinions, whether through informal discussion or more rigorous deliberation. Without this chance, people are more inclined to succumb to their baser instincts. The networks that make up social capital also act as channels for the flow of beneficial information that aids in reaching our objectives.

In relation to my study, this mean that people in a specific community must come together and share ideas and information and be willing to assist one another. For instance, parents with children that have been enrolled in grades 10–12 must come together and look for people who can be role models and offer career guidance to their children. By doing so, it will assist their children to know the career choices while they are in the lower grades and how to source funding for their future career path. It will also enable the community to create social networks with relevant stakeholders that can assist their children with the relevant information to access higher education. For example, in the Johannesburg West District, each year an awards ceremony is organised for the grade 12 top achievers. Sponsors come in numbers to sponsor the top achievers with money and laptops – basic items required when they start their studies in higher education.

3.4 Intention to Use the Social Capital Theory

Due to their delicate and frequently complex relationships, social and economic resources – also known as "socioeconomic" resources – tend to impact and reinforce one another when used together. For instance, O'Shea et, al (2016) discovered in his study that successful learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds had little understanding about selecting a university, making financial decisions and scheduling classes. Despite their relevance and significance for community development, socioeconomic resources are commonly underdeveloped in South African informal settlement communities. The main topic of this study will be social capital as a social resource and a filler for a variety of human needs. Learners from informal settlements could accomplish this, for instance, in the context of a university by developing ties

with mentors and lecturers who can give them access to the knowledge, direction and emotional support they need to succeed academically.

The idea of social capital has been reconceived in the context of this study. A review of the social capital literature demonstrated that economic needs continue to rule both theory and the actual usage of social capital in development initiatives. Therefore, it would seem that the social capital model is unbalanced in that it does not explicitly address the satisfaction of the wide range of demands that individuals, especially those in informal settlement communities, frequently face. The idea of social capital is advised to be expanded to include the fulfilment of a larger range of requirements using a resource-orientated approach (Baloyi, 2020). For instance, learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may not have access to all amenities that learners from middle-class backgrounds do; yet, they still have the agency necessary to build supportive relationships and networks that can provide them access to the tools necessary for success at university. This is true because these communities do not have equal opportunities and similar resources because they live in two different environments.

Poor counsel and information discourage learners from enrolling in higher education institutions (Cosser, 2002). Learners may experience considerable anxiety as a result of lack of information, leading them to perceive higher education as a strange and frightening realm. When applied in a secure and beneficial atmosphere, social capital has the ability to impact a community by uniting people from all walks of life (Osterlund & Seippel, 2013). Parents, for example, can volunteer to clean the school or even cook for the learners. For the purpose of their children's education, they can provide these services for free. For instance, young people who develop social mobility typically come from close-knit homes where parents support and encourage their children as they progress through school. These families are likely to be deeply ingrained in a community, perhaps centred on a church or other organisations, where social interactions reinforce shared values and views. People who live in such communities tend to be helpful to one another, have a high level of faith in government institutions and share parental responsibilities.

The findings of this study are useful for both teachers and learners in South African schools and their parents in their communities. The significance of this research rests

33

in the specific description of how social capital may be employed as a resource for the best possible schooling and for the development and support of learners to access higher education in a South African environment.

3.5 Criticism Levelled Against the Theory

Analysis of social capital requires not just quantifying the resource's quantity but also investigating how it is created and used. Learners from urban areas and informal settlements may perform differently in school as a result of diverse social capital usage strategies. When social capital is viewed as an individual's resource, one should inquire about the calibre of the network of social contacts between members of particular families and communities. What resources do people and their families have in the form of social connections, relationships of mutual recognition and obligations? What financial and cultural resources may they access thanks to the aforementioned connections? What methods are employed to create the aforementioned networks and how is the aforementioned capital created? If learners from disadvantaged areas have full access to necessary resources similar to their counterparts in urban areas, effective and functional efforts will improve the wellbeing of society (Gestur et al., 2012).

3.6 The Gaps in Social Capital Theory

Since 2020, I have served as curriculum adviser for the Johannesburg West District. During my trips to the classrooms of the teachers I oversee and support, I have repeatedly noticed an apparent gap between teachers themselves as they lack adequate contact, cooperation and trust. In addition, it appeared that the learning environment does not support teaching and learning because both teachers and learners frequently lack clarity about what is expected of them. My perception as a result was that the teachers and learners frequently do not collaborate towards a unified objective.

Despite the acknowledged benefits of social capital in enhancing educational results (Dika & Singh, 2002), I was unable to locate any examples of support programmes for developing learners in terms of accessing higher education where social capital was explicitly used in the literature or in the programmes I was exposed to. This exposed a research and practical gap. This study tried to fill these gaps.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGIES

4.1 Introduction

An overview of the research techniques used in the study is provided in this chapter. It gives details about the study's participants, including who they were, what their backgrounds were, and how their samples were chosen. The study's goal and the factors that led to the design's selection are discussed by the researcher. The methods utilised to carry out this investigation are also presented, along with a description of the equipment used for data collection. The methods utilised to analyse the data are also covered by the researcher. Last but not least, the process' ethical considerations are also explored.

4.2 Research Design

This study, which aims to investigate how grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate their access to higher education, is exploratory in nature. Since their subjective judgements served as the study's main source of data, an exploratory approach to the issue was required. For the purposes of this study, a qualitative research paradigm was used, which included semi-structured interviews, as will be covered later in the chapter. According to Aspers and Corte (2019), qualitative research is predicated on the idea that first-hand experience yields the most insightful data. Additionally, it is thought that qualitative data provides substantial amounts of high-quality data from a small group of individuals. It aims to comprehend the world of participants from their frame of reference (Walker, 1985).

Qualitative research is a type of systematic empirical investigation into meaning in which the researcher attempts to comprehend how others make sense of their experiences" (Shank, 2002, p. 5). The social constructivist model, which emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality, is commonly coupled with the qualitative method. According to Aspers and Corte (2019), the knowledge of the person and the explication of the environment around them are given priority. As a result, the

constructivist paradigm's essential principle might be summarised as follows: reality is socially constructed (McLeod, 2019). Research is a process that "involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (Haradhan, 2018, p. 2) but theory comes after research, not before it. Qualitative research allows participants' individual experiences to be evaluated in-depth and information to be gathered from a variety of perspectives.

4.3 Selection of participants

Gathering data from the whole population of a study is impossible due to time and resource constraints, therefore, there is a need to have a manageable number of participants. For this reason, every research involves a sample selection. Babbie (1990) defines sampling as the process involved in selecting people or things from the population. McMillan and Schumacher (2012) describe a sample as selected participants from whom data is collected.

The selection of a representative sample is a fundamental component of research design and needs preplanning of the knowledge of the population being sampled and meticulous selection procedures (Maxwell, 2013). There are many different sampling methods used depending on the research paradigm and approach. The sampling method selected also depends on factors such as time and money. Sampling methods can be categorised into probability and non-probability techniques. Probability sampling involves a methodical way of selecting participants (Shenton, 2004). Non-probability sampling is more applicable for qualitative data and the sample frame is selected in an irregular way (Setia & Panda, 2017).

Regardless of the method used, however, it is imperative to detect sources of prejudice to ensure the sample is representative (Patton, 2015). In the framework of this research where qualitative research methods were employed, non-probability sampling methods will be discussed. Among non-probability sampling methods is purposive sampling. Non-probability sampling involves selecting participants on condition of willingness and availability. This method is quick and easy; however, it is susceptible to substantial volunteer bias (Setia & Panda, 2017).

4.3.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a judgemental sampling procedure whereby participants are selected based on specific characteristics (Patton, 2015). According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling is used for identification and selection cases rich in information for the maximum effective use of inadequate resources in qualitative research. Besides the experience and information, Bernard (2002) acknowledges the significance of accessibility and the will to partake, and capability to communicate experiences and thoughts in an eloquent, demonstrative and thoughtful way. The use of purposive sampling is strategic as the researcher uses a sample from a population with a particular purpose in mind (Ames et al., 2019). In this study, I sampled Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements and researched their perceptions on trying to gain access to higher education. This is in disparity to a random sample, where participants are chosen in a random fashion, and also in discrepancy with a convenience sample, where the researcher picks participants based on some convenient factor (for example learners who happen to be in your class that day).

Purposive sampling is the method of sampling that was used for this study. It is a non-probability sampling method which takes place when "features chosen for the sample are selected using the researcher's judgement" (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016, p. 130). Researchers believe that a representative sample can be obtained by using sound judgement which saves money and time (Saunders et al., 2012). The total number of individuals chosen in accordance with a set of criteria is referred to as the research population. Participants in this study were in Grade 11 and 12 and had been born and raised in Braamfischerville. These criteria were required to meet the research's objectives.

The study included 15 participants, eight males and seven females. Participants needed to be at least 16 years old. Learners from three secondary schools in Braamsfischerville, Johannesburg West District, were chosen for this study. Only this research used the data collected from this study, and it was handled with the highest secrecy possible. The sample size made it possible for me to gain in-depth insights that answered the research questions. However, the sample size was not projected to be illustrative of the larger population and participants were selected to allow for the generation of data (Macha & Kadakia, 2017).

4.4 Research Participants

To choose participants, the study used a non-probability sampling technique. This approach was taken in order to include people who were easily reachable. However, it is also a practical and useful method for finding volunteers (Babbie & Mouton, 2004).

A study population is the total number of people that meet a set of criteria and are chosen for the study. To accomplish the goals of this research, there were some inclusion criteria used to participate in this study:

- Participants in this study had to be enrolled in Grade 11 and 12 and been born and raised in Braamfischerville.
- participants had to be at least 16 to 18 years old.
- The reason I chose participants between 16 and 18 years of age is because majority of learners in this age group are in grade 11 and grade 12 in terms of schooling.
- These types of learners are the one looking for the information about access to institutions of higher learning.
- Participants had to be learners from secondary schools in Braamfischerville, Johannesburg West District.
- Again, they have to be born and know the history of the Braamfischerville informal settlement where the research was conducted.
- By virtue of being born and raised in Braamfischerville it will enable them to talk about their experiences and what they aspire.

Eight male and seven female volunteers (15) were chosen as this study's participants. Table 4.1 shows the biographical details of the participants.

Table 4.1: Sample description

Learner	Gender	Age	Residential area	Family structure
1	Female	19	Braamfischerville	Mother, uncle, and siblings

2	Female	18	Braamfischerville	Mother and father
3	Male	18	Braamfischerville	Mother, uncle, and siblings
4	Female	18	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
5	Male	18	Braamfischerville	Grandmother and siblings
6	Male	18	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
7	Female	18	Braamfischerville	Mother and siblings
8	Male	18	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
9	Female	19	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
10	Male	19	Braamfischerville	Mother, father, and siblings
11	Male	18	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
12	Male	17	Braamfischerville	Mother and siblings
13	Female	17	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
14	Male	18	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings
15	Female	17	Braamfischerville	Father, mother, and siblings

According to the information collected from the participants, 20% said their parents were not employed, 25% said that both parents were employed, and 55% said only one of their parents had a job. The structural issues of unemployment and a lack of skills are intimately related to poverty; poor households are more negatively impacted by unemployment. According to this study, hunger is still a widespread trait among South Africa's poor people.

4.5 Research Methods

This section presents the methods that were followed in this study.

4.5.1 Data collection methods

The procedures used to get the data are described in this section. This component is crucial since the validity of the study is affected by procedural specifics (Devlin, 2006). Data collection is defined as a way of gathering data for examination so as to address the questions raised in the study. It is critically significant in any research of any type (Cohen et al., 2017).

Data can be classified as primary or secondary data. Secondary data sources include use of official documents such as policy guidelines, the NDP and curriculum documents to explain a phenomenon. According to Ranney et al. (2015), the usage of more methods of collecting data may increase the trustworthiness of the study. Collected primary data is factual and original and answers a specific research question (Ajayi, 2017). The current study was based on primary data.

Data can be either qualitative or quantitative. The data collection in this study was qualitative. There are many methods of collecting primary data in qualitative research. These consist of observations, interviews and focus group discussions (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). In this study, I used interviews. The forms of interviews include unstructured, structured and semi-structured. This study used semi-structured interviews to gather data from key informants; these interviews explored the fifteen participants personal beliefs, morals, perspectives and experiences which were relevant and enriching. Semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to understand complicated issues and learn more about background issues which direct specific personal experiences (Sewdas, 2017). The major challenges in using interviews as a

data collection method is that they are time consuming, costly and have limited sample size (Ranney et al., 2015).

4.6 Data Analysis

According to Ranney et al. (2015), data analysis is a process of assessing data using rational thinking to study each element of data delivered with the notion of discerning the implication and representational content of it (Setia, 2017). Depending on the approach used, there are different methods of data analysis. Narrative analysis focuses on experiences and reflections of people and the researcher tries to retell issues based on different contextual backgrounds.

To stimulate and explore the themes from the data obtained, thematic analysis was employed as a data analysis method. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a way of detecting, analysing and reporting patterns within data. The thorough organising and description of data is aided by this tactic. I transcribed the recorded interviews in order to protect the participants' anonymity which helped me gain a better understanding of the information needed for analysis. There were no alterations made to the original transcripts of the interviews.

The first step in analysing the themes that arose from a study, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is becoming familiar with the data, which took place as I transcribed the data. Potential themes were discovered using words, phrases and ideas that emerged from the transcription of the interviews and the literature review. These were systematically coded across the data set. By obtaining data pertinent to the issue, the codes were organised into probable themes. In relation to my study, these themes related to the social capital theory and social networks such as social capital within the family, community, religion and state or government.

4.7 Researcher Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a crucial component of qualitative research and, when used properly, may help people understand both the phenomenon being studied and the research process as a whole (Watt, 2007). Flexibility and the capacity to react to the interview's direction as the participants took it were made possible by the qualitative interviewing. This method focuses on comprehending the participants' subjective perceptions of their social realities, including their culture and background. Research and its results,

according to Breuer et al. (2002), depend on the qualities of the people participating, including their biological, mental, social, cultural and historical background. Maso (2003) invites the researcher to reflect on and knowledge their own subjective experiences. During this study, I acknowledged my experiences as a crucial component of the study process because they were equally valuable to those of the participants (Watt, 2007).

4.8 Ethical Considerations

I requested and received ethical permission from the University of Pretoria Human Research Ethics Committee. EDU 063/21 was the protocol number provided for the ethics clearance. After receiving approval, the research project got under way. Permission was secured from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the principal of the selected school through the information sheet, which outlined the nature of the research and the involvement of the learners. The learners' permission was obtained via the participation information page. All participants were required to sign a letter of informed consent. Because the study involved humans, participants were made aware that they were under no obligation to take part and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, with or without a reason, even after agreeing to do so. This was done to uphold ethical research methods.

Since no identifying information was needed for the interview, all data and personal information have been kept private. Participants had the option to refuse to respond to any question they thought upsetting and were not required to answer. The interviews were recorded, and participants were asked to sign the consent form confirming that their answers would be transcribed. The supervisor has secured all recordings and transcripts at the University of Pretoria.

The University of Pretoria's ethical guidelines for research involving human participants were followed. These conditions include: the researcher must consider any potential effects of the research and publication of the study's results and the research subjects must be under the researcher's care and must not suffer any physical, social or psychological harm. Participants' privacy and dignity were respected. I attested that participants understood the study's objectives and the need to maintain their privacy by using pseudonyms. For transparency, every monitoring tool including the tape recorder used in the study was disclosed to participants, who

had the option to refuse their use. In exchange for their participation, participants were not given anything.

4.8.1 Ethics gaining permission from the Department of Education

The Johannesburg West District of the Department of Education granted authorisation to conduct the interviews at this institution. This was done both in person and through the mail. The letter described the investigation's rationale and goals, guaranteed anonymity and requested written consent to continue the study. it was handed to me in person together with the research proposal. I received a letter of approval from the department's head.

4.8.2 Ethics gaining access to participants

In Braamfischerville there are three secondary schools and the study took place at these three secondary schools in Gauteng's Braamfischerville District. These schools serve the community of Johannesburg West. This schools were picked since they do not charge school fees. In order to have an equitable representation of the sexes, the study was conducted with 15 participants in informal settlements in Gauteng Province; eight of them were female and seven, male.

Permission from the school principals was obtained by direct contact with them. The principals received a letter detailing the research's rationale and goals and a request for written permission to perform the study at the schools. The learners were approached with the support of the principal after the approval from the Department of Education Johannesburg West District. The principals invited learners who were interested in participating in the study, particularly those in Grade 11 and 12 who were 16 years or older. A meeting with the learners was scheduled at a time that was convenient for both the schools and the learners.

I used a participation information sheet to describe the research's goal to the learners at this meeting. This information sheet informed possible participants of the following: (a) the length of the intended interview; (b) the fact that the interview would be tape recorded to guarantee that the details of the discussions were accurately documented; and (c) that the nature of participation would be voluntary; and d) that their anonymity was assured as no participants' personal information would be shared. The first 15

43

learners who replied to the call for volunteers were then interviewed for the study (see Appendix D).

Each learner was given an informed consent form to complete before participating in the study. The principals contacted me to schedule a time to begin the study as soon as the completed consent forms were presented to the school.

I discuss the quality criteria for qualitative research in more detail below.

4.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness

I established the credibility and dependability of this research report by getting to know the participants and consulting with them. Long-term interaction between the myself and the participants was essential since it fostered mutual trust (Shenton, 2004).

4.9.1 Dependability

Consistency and reliability in research studies deals with the issue of dependability. It seeks to explain or affirm that the same result may be attained with the same people and environment (Cypress, 2017). To ensure this, the research design and processes have been detailed and the design of the research explicitly explains what was planned and implemented on a strategic level (Shenton, 2004; McLeod, 2019).

4.9.2 Confirmability

Confirmability is the ability of the researcher to show that the statistics reflect the participants' replies and not the researcher's prejudices or opinions (Polit & Beck, 2018). According to Cope (2014), the researcher can show confirmability by explaining how conclusions and interpretations were reached and providing evidence that the results were drawn directly from the data. In this sense, I recorded the interviews to serve as documentation of the fieldwork results.

4.9.3 Transferability

The degree to which results can be generalised or applied to different locations or groups is indicated by its transferability (Houghton et al., 2013). In order to ensure transferability, I provided a thorough explanation of the research methodology used, the context and the setting to be researched so that the reader will have enough knowledge to assess whether the study's findings are applicable to other settings.

44

4.10 Limitations of the Research

According to McLeod (2019), study limitations signify weaknesses in a research design that may influence outcomes and deductions of the inquiry. Because of time and resource constraints to finish this research, it could not encompass all schools and therefore findings cannot be generalised. Also, the research was limited by not interviewing all learners from the selected school although the selected sample represented the learner populace.

The scope was delimited and also focused on unpacking conceptions of how admission requirements affect access of Grade 12 learners living in informal settlements rather than focusing on the whole education curriculum and experiences of youth already at higher institutions. The study only involved learners from three secondary schools in Braamfischerville.

4.11 Conclusion

The research approach and techniques employed in this study have been described in this chapter. The chapter gave a summary of the data collection methods followed, the data analysis method, the researcher's reflexivity, and the ethical considerations made while carrying out this research project.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the research findings that were obtained through in-depth interviews with the learners in Grade 11 and 12 who attended three schools in an informal settlement in the Johannesburg West District in the Gauteng Province. Participants in this study were 16 years old and above attending three schools in Braamfischerville, consisting of eight males and seven females.

The research's findings were analysed, evaluated and related to pertinent prior material. The data and conclusions from this investigation will be theoretically discussed in the chapter. The analysis produced topics that were investigated further and will be thoroughly covered, the most prevalent themes and sub-themes have been outlined in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Prevalent themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub - themes
Perceptions of educational factors as constraints to higher education	• *Resources at schools* • *Teachers' skills* • *Access to educational information* • *Admission requirements for universities*
Perceptions of economic factors as constraints to higher education	• *Basic resources at home* • *Privacy and quiet places* • *Access to free education* • *Parents' and guardians' expectations* • *Aspirations and ambitions*
Perceptions of sociocultural factors as constraints to higher education	• *Culture in higher education* • *Parents support of their children*

5.2 Aim and Objectives

5.2.1 Aim of the study

This study aimed to investigate and comprehend how learners in Grade 11 and 12 from informal settlement schools in South Africa navigated access to higher education. This study aimed to achieve the following four objectives stated below.

5.2.2 Obectives of the study

The research had four objectives namely to:

1. Explore challenges that Grade 11 and 12 learners faced in navigating access to higher education.
2. What aspirations do these learners have to access higher education.
3. Describe what resources, structural and community support systems do these learners have to enable access to higher education.
4. Explore how learners understand and perceive admission policies to higher education.

5.3 Demographic Information

Table 5.2: Demographic information

Learner*	Gender	Age	Residential area	Grade
1	Female	19	Braamfischerville	12
2	Female	18	Braamfischerville	12
3	Male	18	Braamfischerville	12
4	Female	18	Braamfischerville	12
5	Male	18	Braamfischerville	12
6	Male	18	Braamfischerville	12
7	Female	18	Braamfischerville	12

8	Male	18	Braamfischerville	12
9	Female	19	Braamfischerville	12
10	Male	19	Braamfischerville	12
11	Male	18	Braamfischerville	11
12	Male	17	Braamfischerville	11
13	Female	17	Braamfischerville	11
14	Male	18	Braamfischerville	11
15	Female	17	Braamfischerville	11

*These learners are referred to as participants in the discussion of the findings.

5.4 Main Themes Arising from Data Collection

The various themes that emerged from the research findings are described in the chapter's following sections. The research revealed three key topics, which included perceptions of educational, economic and sociocultural issues. To acquire a thorough knowledge of the elements influencing the capacity of learners in informal settlements in the Johannesburg West District to enter higher education, these themes will be examined in more detail below and related to the social capital theory.

5.4.1 Perceptions of educational factors as constraints to higher education

Socioeconomic factors have a variety of effects on educational outcomes; they may make it more difficult for someone to attend better schools but can also make it easier for them to access an effective educational system (Poole, 2004). It was shown that study participants were acutely conscious of the fact that their school is one of the less advantaged and more underfunded ones. Social capital does, in a very basic sense, play a significant contextual role in the discourse of the educational system in informal settlement regions. Using human resources for educational objectives is a practical

illustration of Bourdieu's theory that social capital may be converted into other forms of capital, according to Sun (1999). Because their public school offers free education to all learners, none of the participants in this study had to pay fees. Participant 1 said her school is non-fee-paying and is of poor quality.

> *I am aware that schools that are not charging school fees tend to underperform. I therefore know that I don't want my children to live in these circumstances. The majority of individuals will say that everything is free, including universities and with universities it might not be the case.... I believe it does for me since I am aware that something given away will not be worth paying for. Let say we get everything for free, there will be no worries, but the question is are we putting effort to sustain whatever goods and services we receive for free. I strongly believe in working hard to make a transformation [Participant 1].*

Participant 5 noted:

> *Even though I attend school at no fee-paying school, I believe that my teachers are there to support me to get my top three performance in school. I am going to work very hard so that I get bursary, I know that I can compete with learners from fee-paying schools [Participant 5].*

For the creation and growth of social capital, education offers an institutional setting. There are several forms of education but the needs of formal education appear to be the most difficult for emerging nations. The official educational system in Africa, according to Kellerman (1997, p. 88), "need much to be desired."

The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 allows wealthy individuals to establish independent or private schools (RSA, 1996a). This approach has, however, led to a situation in which state schools have either maintained a "privileged" status or a poor status, with the latter status being held by the majority of schools in informal settlements (Chisholm, 2005). This is the case because parents who can afford to do so enrol their children in schools with better access to the staff and better infrastructure and other learning resources required for knowledge development. The study's findings revealed that participants' views on whether their schools had insufficient resources were divided. Some participants believed that they had not at all been well

prepared by the institution. The response that follows reflects how Participant 1 felt about the subpar teaching and learning at her school.

I have to do additional work because our science teacher is not very good and occasionally does not even show up for the class. In the past, it was a struggle to understand the concept, but now I am trying my level best [Participant 1].

Participant 3 from another school commended his teacher for coming up with a brilliant idea. He said:

My Science teacher invites a retired teacher who was working at the top performing school to come and do the reinforcement, I am going to use this opportunity to my advantage because I am having two teachers bringing different skills and expertise to make sure that I excel in my studies [Participant 3].

This suggests that while some participants believed their school was trying to help them, others believed it was a barrier to their admission to institutions of higher education. As most informal settlement schools in South Africa are of poor quality and lack amenities like well trained teachers, libraries and adequate infrastructure, one could argue that this is true of the country as a whole (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005).

5.4.1.1 Resources at school

It can be challenging for learners to enrol in higher education due to resources at their schools. The research participants stated that their school's ineffective resource management prevented them from enrolling in higher education institutions. Like most informal settlement schools, the participants' school had a library, but having access to materials that would enable them to enrol in a higher education institution was the least of their concerns. Participant 5 stated that not all of the Grade 12 learners could use the laptops in their computer lab.

Eish! We don't have computers or other equipment for study, we do, however, have laptops, but we rarely utilise them. They are for us, but most of the time they claim to be busy. As a result, they must schedule a time for you to come use them, I believe they are either 17 or 21 [Participant 5].

The fact that social capital depends on interpersonal ties established with a specific goal suggests that social capital's advantages can be consciously produced. When working with underprivileged areas, these relationships and networks have the potential to be "dynamic bundles of assets" (Murphy & Cunningham, 2003).

5.4.1.2 Teachers' skills

Teachers were identified as the most crucial source for participants in this study when it came to getting into higher education institutions. When asked how they thought their school had prepared them for higher education, participants gave varying answers. Participant 1 said:

> I have to do extra work since our science teacher isn't that great; sometimes he doesn't even show up in class. In the past, understanding the notion was difficult, but today I'm doing my best [Participant 1].

When Participant 1 was asked what she did to improve her performance, she said that she had managed to improve by going to outside facilities such as Black child Tutoring Services and Kutlwanong tutoring services initiated by Investec. Participant 1 noted that "*at least 20 of us are part of a programme at Kutlwanong and they are the ones who support us because our science teacher is not very competent*". However, Participant 3 cited his school's teachers as being crucial in helping him prepare for further studies.

> I had teachers that care of me, they talk to me on regular basis and trying to show me the right way and correct me if I do something out of order. There are many errors I have made along the way that they have pointed out, but I also had teachers who treated me like their own child, who took me and guide me [Participant 3].

Unqualified teachers may make it more difficult for learners to enrol in higher education institutions. Because the majority of them received their training during the apartheid administration, which promoted substandard education for Black people, some teachers in South Africa lack expertise (Cosser, 2002).

It was also thought that having access to technical resources would help participants get better grades and get into more prestigious universities. Participant 5 said that *"it was a good thing that the school was providing them with computers so they could conduct research and submit applications to institutions"*. When it comes to using these computers in school, there was a problem:

> *We don't have computers or other equipment for study, we do, however, have laptops, but we rarely utilise them. They are for us, but most of the time they claim to be busy. As a result, they must schedule a time for you to come use them, I believe they are 21 laptops [Participant 5].*

> *The school occasionally provides laptops for us to use when researching and applying at institutions of higher learning [Participant 5].*

> *We are 140 in this school doing Grade 12 but only 21 computers available and they could only be used by appointment [Participant 5].*

One could contend that having 140 learners who have appointment only to access to 21 laptops creates a barrier to attending a university. The bureaucracy in public schools makes it more difficult for impoverished learners to access these resources, despite the government's best efforts.

4.5.1.3 Access to educational information

Poor counsel and information discourage learners from enrolling in higher education institutions (Cosser, 2002). Lack of information can make learners very anxious and make them think of higher education as a strange, scary place.

"Obligations, expectations and norms" are three types of social capital identified by Coleman (1988). Coleman argues that while obligations and expectations depend on how trustworthy the social environment is and how well social structures can transmit information, norms come with consequences. Inherent in the social relationships of rational agents, social capital serves as a foundation of action as well as a means of acquiring and disseminating information (Coleman, 1988). Poor information dissemination may have learners uncertain about the best time to apply to institutions, how to do so and notably how to get financial aid or bursaries. Lack of knowledge can

give learners the idea that higher education institutions are unattainable and out of their price range.

All the participants doing Grade 12 in this study had applied to one or two universities. Despite claiming to be aware of the NSFAS, they lacked sufficient knowledge about how to pay for their studies. Participant 2 stated that the only knowledge she had of universities was that which was contained in the prospectuses of the universities she had been able to obtain but Participant 6 stated that he was aware of the admission requirements:

> *Most of my knowledge comes from prospectuses that we receive from our Life Orientation teacher and from browsing the internet on my phone to learn more about the degrees and careers I am interested in. I have my phone therefore I can say that information [Participant 2].*

> *I know about entrance requirements but none of the people around me are familiar with bursaries [Participant 6].*

Participant 2 also mentioned that she was aware of other bursaries but had not applied for NSFAS for the following reason.

> *If I apply for Absa and NSFAS at the same time, the standards they require are not similar; NSFAS settles for far less than those other ones. Its conditions are really, really different from other bursaries. They do this because they are aware that doing otherwise means settling for less [Participant 2].*

The NSFAS does not have a threshold exclusion criterion when it comes to learners' passing marks, which leads to the belief that the aid is stigmatised among learners. The NSFAS funding carries the stigma that anyone who uses it is not smart. Instead, even if they received a passing grade of 50%, learners would still get aid from the fund.

Participants reported having limited access to information on universities. This problem is not new. The majority of South Africans living in informal settlement areas before 1994 were unaware of higher education institutions. This phenomenon is still there 28 years later. This study found that only the minority still has access to institutional knowledge. The participants in this study lacked sufficient knowledge on

higher education's admission standards, available courses and content of such courses.

Due to their legal exclusion from these institutions during the apartheid era, Black people were unable to obtain this information. Information is the most crucial element in gaining entry to higher education institutions. Information-related social capital and social support are particularly pertinent in the context of higher education. Learners moving from high school to universities encounter challenges in their social, academic, and personal contexts (Eggens et al., 2008). For many learners, this means leaving their existing residence, their family and friends, and settling in a strange environment. Here, learners are expected to establish new acquaintances, adjust to more independent study learning methods and deal with the responsibilities of both academic and economical life (Eggens et al., 2008; Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). Learners' abilities are influenced by the knowledge and encouragement they receive from their relatives, friends and teachers. Once more, the kind of social capital, whether it is informational or supportive, depends on learners' social situations and the make-up and traits of their networks.

This is true because, armed with knowledge, a person may make an informed decision about which high school topics to select and which courses to apply for that match those subjects. They will also be aware of the prerequisites for that particular course, and most significantly, they will know when and how to apply to universities. They will also know how to apply for funding in institutions of higher learning. The fact that this knowledge is not distributed fairly has continued to be a barrier for informal settlement learners. The changing demographics and rising participation rates at higher education institutions have been facilitated by significant legislative changes. However, this study found that these improvements have not resulted in an equal representation of all facets of our communities because not all learners in informal settlements and rural communities have access to information about higher education institutions.

4.5.1.4 Admission requirements for universities

People in informal settlements lack access to information about the entrance requirements in the new South Africa (post-1994). As a result, entrance requirements

become a barrier to entering higher education institutions. Despite knowing the standards for admission, study participants said they were unsure about bursaries. Participants 4 and 10 provided a thorough response regarding the admission criteria's point requirements:

> *I am aware that 36 points are required at Wits (University of the Witwatersrand), 27 points are needed for Bachelor of Education program at the University of Johannesburg, while 35 points are needed for other program, which takes four years to complete [Participant 4].*

> *Yes, I used my phone to Google about the prerequisites, then I Googled about the ESKOM bursary and then I applied [Participant 10].*

In South Africa, admission to universities is now available to anyone regardless of race, religion or culture. Institutions have, however, raised their entry standards. One could argue that this is the case because South African higher education institutions cannot accommodate the large number of learners as access is free to all. This is true since a learner can receive a 33% per grade in Grade 12 and still receive a bachelor's degree pass that will allow them to enrol in any university. Jansen (2011) claims that the 33% pass rate is adversely affecting the calibre if graduates.

5.4.2 Perceptions of economic factors as constraints to higher education

The primary objective of this study was to look into the factors that participants claimed made it challenging for them to enrol in higher education institutions. In South Africa, social inequality is exacerbated by the societal problem of poverty (Breier, 2010). The current unemployment rate of 34,5% is closely tied to the causes of poverty (Statistical Analysis, 2022). Only four of the 15 people interviewed had two working parents; in three other cases, both parents were unemployed, and in the remaining eight cases, only one parent was employed.

Participants in this study who were interviewed had to deal with the harsh reality of having to manage their finances when their parents were not working, as evidenced by their responses. They indicated that they considered financial concerns to be a significant barrier to enrolling in higher education institutions. Learners evaluated direct and indirect costs before deciding whether they would be able to access institutions of higher learning, in accordance with the economic model they used to make that determination.

Learners from low-income families with parents who were either unemployed or making very little would not be able to access institutes of higher learning, according to Cardak and Givon (2004). Social capital is understood inside these relational networks of family members. The moulding of these ties to give them social meaning, however, is thought to be the result of private family processes like socialisation (Du Toit et al., 2010). The case studies by Du Toit and Neves (2010) on informal social protection in post-apartheid migrant networks provide excellent illustrations of these social dynamics. Their work illustrates how social capital affects poor people's decision making about economic activities, resource flow and resource allocation. Each story illustrates many connections and patterns that families might have, from "relatively integrated networks to the effects of marginalisation to helplessness" (Du Toit & Neves, 2010, p. 14).

Despite the fact that education appears to produce some forms of social capital, it also depends on other forms of social capital to be successful. Regarding the economic benefits of education, there are several strong arguments that demonstrate how resources, infrastructure and poverty affect a society's capacity to generate skilled workers and vice versa. Social evidence, on the other hand, is weaker.

Financial constraints were cited by the study participants as a barrier to entering higher education institutions by participants who had one parent employed as well as those whose parents were both employed. Participant 13 stated:

> *Maybe, I don't know what to say but most of us live in poor communities this might affect most of us, so when we move to those institutions we don't have anyone to finance us, even though we might get someone to finance us I don't think it will be enough because life out there is very expensive especially education and other social stuff, so I think it is the financial part that will prevent us [Participant 13].*

Participants in the study described how lack of resources in their families and communities prevented them from enrolling in higher education institutions, which lends credibility to my findings. The acquired data was coded, then compared to the relevant theme. Below follows my discussion of the sub-themes for this category.

5.4.2.1 Basic resources at home

It is crucial to have the fundamental tools necessary at home for a learner to concentrate on their studies. Most of the participants in this study claimed that their living conditions did not promote academic success.

> It is hard to study at home because there is no table and chair for me to sit and study. Each time I study while sleeping and I just fall asleep so easy [Participant 15].

> It is difficult to study at home because I share a room with my siblings, sometimes they make noise for me. I cannot concentrate on my studies while they are awake. I wish I have a study room [Participant 6].

When one considers the unequal distribution of money and resources in society, described by Gelderblom (2014, p. 6) as "unlevel playing grounds," it is possible for the marginalised and vulnerable to have substantial social capital yet still have restricted access to resources.

Inequality has an impact on how people in society progress with their education through a web of economic, social and cultural interactions. Similar to educational gaps in society, relative poverty can only be understood in light of others' advantages in that society. When some people in a society have access to resources, income, wealth and power that are different from other people in that society that enables them to make use of the chances offered by education in a relatively effective way, that creates inequality in that society. The social capital theory, defined as a person's network of relationships (Putnam, 2000), means that individuals can gain emotionally from these relationships by developing a sense of belonging (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007) and building social norms and trust (Lin, 2001).

5.4.2.2 Privacy and quiet places

It was determined that not every participant had access to private study space in their homes. Some claimed that their houses were too small to provide them with a peaceful and private space to study.

A few of the participants discussed the number of people living in their home and the level of noise in the neighbourhood. When it comes to their studies, learners sometimes run into difficulties at home which can make it difficult for them to enrol in higher education institutions. Participant 7 said the following:

> *There are difficulties at home because there is not a study area, my family is large, and the rooms are cramped. As a result, I have to wait until everyone is asleep so that I may study because there is nowhere to do so [Participant 7].*

This participant showed that it was difficult to study at home, even if they had the option of waiting until everyone was sleeping so they could carry on. Many participants would not have much of an option except to learn in the classrooms, where they were allowed to do so. Some of the participants, however, claimed that they lived too far away to be able to access the school after hours.

Others gave examples of their struggles with finishing their coursework. Participant 4 showed how challenging it was to study at home because of the responsibilities she had after school, whereas Participant 5 talked about challenges he had in the classroom. Due to the errands they had to run, including picking up their siblings from childcare, participants in this study indicated the following:

> *I have a lot of responsibility at home, including cleaning, dishwashing, and cooking. I cannot come to school to learn because of how far I live [Participant 4].*

> *I have a responsibility to fetch a child at day care, I have to walk long distance from my school to day care, when I arrive home, I am tired. This really affect my studies because is everyday routine [Participant 2].*

> *When I arrive home, I have a responsibility to assist my siblings with their homework's, it consumes lot of time because they don't understand maths [Participant 13].*

58

It seems like people here at school are not serious. They simply approach you and start conversing with you, distracting you. The building work that is being done at the school is another matter. When you are studying, it makes you distracted. You must wait till your parents or even siblings have finished watching TV if you want to study while is quiet at home [Participant 5].

For the majority of the study participants, barriers at school were a significant factor. Participants described how, for example, the neighbourhood and other learners could serve as a barrier to entering higher education institutions, among others.

At home, I don't have any difficulties but here at school, whether during morning or afternoon studies, there are some learners who have a poor attitude. It almost seems like they don't know what their end objective is. It is really challenging to study in such a noisy environment because they don't want to learn, they make noise, and they occupy all your attention. Those difficulties are the ones that can make it harder for me to study. The community makes decisions at home, and they have power to decide to play their radio all night long with speakers outside, which has an impact on us all, but especially on me [Participant 9].

Since I lives next to a bar, if there is a party or other event that requires me to give up my time for them, I may have to take a break or go to bed since the noise makes it difficult for me to concentrate [Participant 8].

My Uncle will come home with his friends and play music while drinking alcohol until late in the evening, I cannot concentrate on my studies because of the noise level. I have to wake up at 3 am for me to catch up with the schoolwork [Participant 14].

Our house is situated near main road, the movement of cars, some will be hooting. The level of noise is unbearable especially on Fridays and weekends and sometimes there are accidents. It is so traumatising I must say Participant 12].

In high-stakes situations, anxiety and stress reduce academic performance, which may make it more challenging for these learners to enrol in higher education institutions (Masi et al., 2000). In 2005, the Nelson Mandela Foundation found that informal settlements and rural learners valued housework over studying. This was largely because the majority of informal settlement families were not working. This

study indicated that these tasks were barriers to enrolling in higher education institutions.

Poverty or a lack of enough money was found to have a range of effects on participants' access to institutions of higher learning. It is one of the features associated with informal settlement regions. It has been shown that for some learners, paying for an application form was a barrier to their first step in applying for admission to higher education institutions (Ebrahim, 2009). As stated by Participant 11: "*Just because of the application cost, because some universities seek R100 and R300 and our backgrounds are different",* the application fee is a barrier to entering higher education institutions.

Participants responses demonstrated the significance of the initial step of paying the application fee for entering higher education institutions. In addition, the failure to pay the application fee had a detrimental effect on the participants' general success. Some were living with parents who were not working so they may not be able to give them guidance. Participant 15 said: "*If our parents are not working, it means that I won't have access to those things that would help me pass well to get to university or even having the money to apply for admission".*

Participant 10 explained:

> *Due to the worry that some learners have applied and had their letters answered, it can help my studies, but I cannot even study well. If my friends tell me that they have received communication from university of Mpumalanga or University of Johannesburg and that they are only waiting on final results. I am saying this because I might not have money to enrol in institutions of higher education or secure any bursary due to my low grades [Participant 10].*

Higher education institutions are exepensive. Participants admitted that not having enough money would prevent them from enrolling in higher education institutions. Participant 8 noted: "*Lack of cash, as not all of us will be able to meet the requirements for bursaries, making it difficult for some of them to continue their studies.... South Africa has poverty, particularly in informal settlements areas".* Participant 3 stated that the main obstacle to entering higher education institutions was poverty.

Number one, in my opinion, is poverty; for one, my mother is uh, let me put it this way. The majority of the information may be located in internet cafes; thus, my mum currently cannot afford. Therefore, poverty becomes a barrier since I do not think I would succeed if I were not as serious as I am. Most of the time, poverty causes us to close our eyes, kind of like the donkey. We fail to see that there are others who can assist us.in most cases, you see learners concentrating on their personal lives, which eventually brings them back [Participant 3].

Poverty becomes a barrier when it prevents learners from enrolling in higher education institutions even after performing well on their matriculation exams because they lack the funds to pay the application fee, even though they might have been eligible for a bursary or financial aid had they applied. Participants acknowledged that poverty was a barrier to attending higher institutions, but they also said that the expensive tuition did not bother them. Instead, this encouraged them to work harder on their studies.

Yes, I do, via the prospectus, for instance, I can see from a prospectus for Wits I have at home that rates are higher. This encourages me to work hard in my studies in order to receive a bursary that will pay for everything as I am aware that my mother cannot afford it [Participant 3].

Participant 5 expressed a similar opinion, saying: "*The costs are substantial, especially at Wits. I must work hard to secure a bursary to pay for my studies because I am aware that my parents cannot afford it*".

According to the neoliberalism regime, poverty and inequality are essential for society because they spur innovation (Alcock, 2009). Based on the findings of the current study, it was`` clear that these individuals were motivated by poverty to put long hours in order to secure their futures. Some participants noted the following.

All I know is that they are very expensive, and I am aware that my parents cannot afford to send me to university. However, all I hope for is that I pass with very high marks in order to be eligible for bursary that will enable me to pursue my profession [Participant 6].

All I know is that continuing your education is expensive, and that only drives me to work more in the classroom to earn a scholarship to protect my future [Participant 8].

61

By saying when one is suffering, some get the spirit to motivate them so that they may work hard to alter the situation so that in future I do not suffer and the following generation does not suffer too.... poverty could lead to better outcomes. Others, on the other hand, accept the circumstances, wear it as their reality, and live by it without giving it a second thought. They believe that this is the end of life and cannot envision any other positive outcome [Participant 4].

Based on this research, one might draw the conclusion that while poverty presents a problem to the majority of South Africans, in some situations it inspires people to pursue greater chances in an effort to escape its clutches.

4.6.3 Access to free education

Universalising education is an aim that South Africa is pursuing. Every South African will receive free education under this policy. Contrarily, the SASA gives citizens the right to open their own schools, provided they can secure the funding needed to operate them (RSA, 1996a). Therefore, by charging greater tuition and enticing the best teachers, colleges with higher standards during the apartheid era were able to maintain them (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The free education policy and how it affected their ability to enrol in higher education institutions were both acknowledged as sources of annoyance by study participants.

I am aware that schools that are not charging school fees tend to underperform. I therefore know that I won't want my children to live in these circumstances. The majority of individuals will say that everything is free, including universities and with universities it might not be the case [Participant 1].

I believe it does for me since I am aware that something given away will not be worth paying for. Let say we get everything for free, there will be no worries, but the question is are we putting effort to sustain whatever goods and services we receive for free. I strongly believe in working hard to make a transformation [Participant 1].

Fiske and Ladd (2004) claim that schools with tuition requirements are better resourced than free public schools, which typically have underqualified teachers and poor facilities of learning – this supports Participant 1's perspective. Therefore, for the majority of learners at such schools, free education becomes a barrier.

62

The vast majority of study participants agreed that public education should be free. In addition, not having to pay for school fees served as motivation to work harder and find sponsors:

> *The fact that I can alter my home circumstances for free and that attending school is the sole option to do so greatly drives me. This encourages me to work hard in my studies so that I can qualify for a bursary the following year [Participant 3].*

> *These days, having money or not having money is not a problem because there are bursaries that can help learners to further their studies. Similar to how the government supports our education here, all we need to do is to study very hard [Participant 6].*

> *No, it does not, because I received everything at no cost to me. Therefore, there are no obstacles in the way of what I want to accomplish. Since the government takes care of everything for us, even my poverty is invisible [Participant 7].*

> *It doesn't because whether or not you pay school fees, in order for us to be at university it all depends on our hard work, said Participant 8 when asked whether accessing institutions of higher learning was contingent on paying school fees or not [Participant 8].*

> *Not having to pay school fees is a good thing, some parents can't afford them because we are different. So, if we pass our matric with flying colours, we might end up earning bursaries and that will result in us not paying any expenses in universities [Participant 10].*

According to Quinn (2010, p. 45), "social groups including clubs, associations, and civic networks serve as the foundation of communities". Strong horizontal linkages between homogenous in-group members and diverse individuals outside the group, as well as vertical ties with the heterogenous others within outside the community, are other characteristics of these social networks (linking social capital). According to Narayan (1999), cross-group linkages in the form of connecting and bridging social capital are crucial for giving members of weaker or excluded groups access to economic possibilities. He contends that these connections also foster social cohesion which is essential for long-term social stability and economic prosperity.

By providing possibilities for improvement, the free education policy seeks to alleviate the burden on the poor. Participant 9 underlined this point by stating that he believed that receiving a free education allowed him to worry less and concentrate more on his studies.

> *To me, being unable to pay my tuition means I have more time to study since I don't have to worry about money. I will have to stay at home if my parents cannot afford to pay for my tertiary expenses since those who will earn more and do better. So, for me, not having to pay school fees motivates me to go to school and learn [Participant 9].*

Free education, according to Participant 4, is elaborating. She could unwind and not worry as much about her academics as she did not pay the fees.

> *I know that even I am not studying I am not wasting my parents' money, it's the government's money. I don't feel any discomfort because everything is free, textbooks free and get food for free and attend school for free, but if I paid, I would feel like I had to put in a lot of effort to make the money my parents are paying for something worthwhile [Participant 4].*

Only two of the study's 15 participants thought that not having to pay tuition had a negative impact on their willingness to enrol in higher education institutions. The vast majority of participants thought that providing free education was a good idea. On the other hand, the remaining 13 felt that this endeavour helped relieve some of the stress that comes with being poor, especially for parents worried about their children's education. This is a human right, according to the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996c). Despite South Africa's lack of widespread access to universal education, not having to pay fees presently addresses some of the problems that were meant to be addressed, such as reducing stress levels for the underprivileged.

5.4.2.3 Parents' and guardian's expectations

Ebrahim (2009) claims that many low-income families, especially in the current global economic context, are forcing their high school learners to contribute to the family budget. But in this study, all 15 participants were keen to do well in school and advance in their education, and it was discovered that their parents were involved in conversations about finances and job choices.

My parents even asked me what I want to do after matriculation. When it comes to my job possibilities, they just inquire about what I want to study. Since I want to pursue engineering in my first year while studying, they understand and are supportive of my decision [Participants 13].

The achievement of learners in poverty must be improved by increasing family participation, learner concentration and strengths, and exposing the pupils to challenging coursework that requires higher-order thinking. According to research, learners who are exposed to learner-centred curricula have a lower truancy rate than learners who are exposed to lower-order instructional tactics. Based simply on socioeconomic condition, learners in poverty who are perceived to have intellectual deficits are less likely to succeed in school. To boost the chance of improved learner performance, unbiased instructional support is required (Gorski, 2013).

My parents asked me about the type of job I want when I finished my tertiary studies. I said that I wanted to be a mechanical engineer, and they questioned me if I know the type of qualifications required for the position. I told them that it will require maths and science to be accepted in institutions of higher learning. They promised to assist me with an extra classes tutor [Participant 14].

The participants thought the conversations with their parents were beneficial. Concerning conversations with her parents, Participant 7 said: *"they give me confidence, they give me hope that I can succeed, and sometimes they tell me how they behaved when they were still young, so it gives me bravery"*.

Participant 5 noted the following:

They help me because they advise me how to behave so that I can obtain those things that I seek. Additionally, they help me to resist panicking, feeling ignored or threatened by my peers. Many learners at the university have attitudes, both positive and negative, so they advise me to be responsible.... I am aware that life at university is an independent, individual one where you can select the companions and lifestyle you prefer. most of such discussions aid in my determining what I want and how to behave responsibly [Participant 5].

Participant 8 said that because his parents were uneducated, they did not talk to him about finances or career options. He claimed that if they had been educated, they could have offered him advice because they "*would be able to provide me with all the resources or information that need for a certain career that I set myself*" [Participant 8].

One of poverty's detrimental repercussions is the dissolution of families, which frequently results in poor academic performance or student dropout rates. This implies that children also miss out on the rules and trustworthy relationships (Loury in Coleman, 1990). A strong parental presence is a crucial asset for influencing behaviour patterns and academic performance and stable, healthy family relationship patterns and academic performance – stable, healthy relationships are significant sources of social capital for young people. Thus, social capital inside the home can be considered a valuable educational resource, as was discovered in a study by Israel and Beaulieu (2004) that assessed the availability of social capital within the family, school and community.

5.4.2.4 Aspirations and ambition

The 15 participants said they were interested in pursuing a variety of fields following Grade 12. This demonstrates the capacity for aspiration and ambition displayed by these participants. However, Participant 6 identified his friends' lack of ambition as a reason that would prevent them from enrolling in higher education institutions: "*Most people don't want to become anything at all; we are not that ambitious. Actually, we have tendency to only think about having fun; we don't worry about schoolwork at all*".

Feelings of wellbeing are strongly influenced by one's financial situation, whether it be personal or familial. It is challenging to inspire oneself to pursue goals when one does not feel well. Then, concerns for survival take the place of ambition and aspirations for successful careers (Goldman, 2005). It was evident from the study participants' resilience despite their challenging financial circumstances. This standard was their only path to a future and would enable them to qualify for bursaries to cover their tuition.

Learning is a psychological process that involves psychological energy that is communicated by feelings, emotions, attitudes and motivations, or what psychologists refer to as a psychodynamic process (Illeris, 2002). According to the results of the current study, the learning environment had an effect on learners' aspirations and motivation. As a result, the community, teachers and parents of the learners also had an impact on entry to institutions of higher learning. In addition, economic status and poverty had an effect on how learners perceived higher education institutions. It was discovered that learners' aspirations and attitudes towards higher education were impacted by poverty, which is brought on by South Africa's high unemployment rate.

5.4.3 Perceptions of sociocultural factors as constraints to higher education

The environment in which children are raised affects their outlook, understanding of the world and drive for success (Cosser, 2002). According to the findings of this study, learning environments have an impact on learners' worldviews and their motivation to pursue further learning.

Participant 5 said that being in an informal settlement area motivated him to put forth extra effort in his studies and achieve success, which would allow him to leave the area.

> *Everyone in this place wants to leave the countryside and go to a region with a higher quality of life. You have access to everything somewhere. Therefore, I believe that my decision to remain in informal settlement area has motivated me, for the fact that most political and corporate leaders come from informal settlements area [Participant 5].*

5.4.3.1 Culture in higher education

Seepe (2004) argues that institutions of higher learning in South Africa need to adapt their institutional cultures in order to provide access for those who were previously underprivileged. He continues by saying that South African settings and issues are not represented in the curricula of South African higher education institutions. This does not only make entry challenging but also contributes to the high dropout rate at South African universities and the lack of a sense of belonging among learners. Participants in this study believed that historically underprivileged universities continued to be marginalised, both in terms of resources and academic offerings.

This study showed that the institutional culture in South African higher education institutions serves as a barrier for learners. Seepe's (2004) contention that South African universities do not accurately reflect African values and beliefs, which influences learners' intentions to enrol in these institutions, lends further credence to this.

Some of the participants felt that higher education institutions are not accommodative and supportive financially and in their programmes. Participant 8 cited that they did not have much information about how institutions of higher learning operate.

> *I think lack of information about higher education, the entry requirements and poverty can prevent leaners to access higher education. I feel personal that I did not choose subjects correctly because of lack of information and proper guidance. Again, in order for us to be at university it all depends on our hard work. All I know is that continuing with your education is expensive, and that only drives me to work more in the classroom to earn a scholarship to protect my future [Participant 8].*

Participant 5 indicated the following: "*I am aware that life at university is an independent, individual one where you can select the companions and lifestyle you prefer. most of such discussions aid in my determining what I want and how to behave responsibly*".

5.4.3.2 Parents support of their children

Parents that are involved in their children's education are able to set objectives and motivate them to perform better (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Participants in this study believed that having their parents support them academically improved their performance. Participant 11 emphasised how helpful and encouraging his parents were of his academic endeavours: "*They always encourage me and are very supportive. They also make sure to praise me if I perform very well. They always contact my educators to check on how I am doing*" [Participant 11].

According to Participant 6, her parents support came from their desire to prevent her from being like them. "*They are really supportive, especially because they are not educated, therefore, they don't want their children to be like them*" [Participant 6].

One might infer from this participant's statement that parents were more motivating and inspiring to their children than teachers. Participant 4 laid down this information:

I believe that my parents support is the finest since they give me information about the things, they observe in me. Therefore, my educators are unfamiliar with me and my vulnerabilities. My parents tell me straight out if you do this you will get this [Participant 4].

The purpose of this study was to better understand what impediments to higher education informal settlement learners in Grade 12 believe exist by learning more about their day-to-day experiences. These perspectives were organised into three themes discussed in this chapter. These themes suggested that participants were aware of the barriers preventing them from enrolling in higher education institutions.

The perceptions of the participants revealed a variety of obstacles, including inexperienced teachers. This suggests that the government may need to test the teaching abilities of the teachers it chooses. Participants also mentioned that they had little access to information regarding universities which could be another barrier.

5.5 Challenges Informal Settlements Learners Face When Accessing Institutions of Higher Education.

5.5.1 Barriers to education

The years of apartheid are responsible for the poor level of education in South Africa today. One of the issues that came out of the investigation was the calibre of education.

Because they were not paying for their education, the participants thought that private institutions offered a higher quality of education. Participant 1 noted:

I know anything for free won't be worth what you pay for. I will thus not want my children to live in this circumstance. One could claim that this is accurate because free services are typically of low quality or standard, especially when the same kind are given elsewhere [Participant 1].

Finding out what challenges the participants were now experiencing or anticipated having if they chose to pursue higher education was one of the study's objectives. The participants cited a shortage of computers and skilled professors as obstacles preventing them from achieving outstanding results at their schools, which would allow them to enrol in institutes of higher learning.

The effectiveness of instruction, classroom learning and learners' attitudes towards a subject were all found to be impacted by teachers' attitudes. Participants believed that this limited their potential to produce the kinds of outcomes that higher education institutions and bursary providers were looking for. Participant 1 explained: "*Our science teacher is not excellent, occasionally, he even misses class, so I have to do additional work. I did not pass it very well in the previous years*". It can be stated that teachers who are qualified and knowledgeable are able to explain subjects in a way that is understandable to learners, and this can lead to learners attaining better grades so they can enter institutions of higher learning.

The parents of most participants had little to no knowledge about and experience with higher education institutions. As a result, participants generally depended on the information and guidance offered by their Life Orientation teacher, employment advice, and whatever information they were able to find on their own. Several academics claim that language is a barrier to enrolling in higher education institutions (Bohlmann & Pretorius, 2002). Even though English was their second language, study participants felt that language had no bearing on whether or not they were able to access institutions of higher learning.

In order for learners to advance academically, libraries are crucial since knowledge is acquired through books. Participants in this study reported that neither their school nor their neighbourhood had a library. However, this was never mentioned as a problem or obstacle to entering higher education institutions. Despite not having access to resources like libraries, research done by the Nelson Mandela Foundation in 2005 showed that learners in informal settlements typically performed better than learners in fee-paying schools.

5.5.2 Economic obstacles

The study's goal was to discover where informal settlement learners believed these difficulties originated. As Participant 8 noted: "*Lack of cash, because not all of us would be able to achieve the standards needed for bursaries,*" participants indicated that poverty was one of the barriers preventing them from accessing institutions of higher learning.

Participant access to higher education was impacted both directly and indirectly by poverty and limited financial resources available to families. The participants' families experienced poverty and a high unemployment rate, which led to families prioritising fundamental necessities like food over educational needs when spending money. It was discovered that most participants' parents were unemployed and unable to give resources, such as money for the application fee to higher education institutions. This presents a significant barrier because paying an application fee is a prerequisite for enrolment at all higher education institutions. Even if a learner receives excellent grades, they would not be able to enrol in a higher education institution without applying.

However, one may contend that being poor can both make it difficult for learners to enrol in higher education institutions and serve as motivation for them to do so. Poverty was highlighted in this study as a barrier, but it was also further identified as an encouragement to escape the cycle of poverty. Participant 3 stated: "*I know that the only way to alter my family condition is to go to school, which suggest that while poverty can make it difficult to enrol in higher education institutions, education can be a path out of it*".

The participant believed that because their school was in an informal settlement area without necessary resources and other organisations that could provide financial aid, they were underprivileged. The participants believed that learners in metropolitan areas were fortunate since they could physically apply to universities and had access to organisations that could finance their education. For instance, people staying in Pretoria and Johannesburg are close to institutions that may fund them; they can simply contact those organisations and ask about bursaries. Therefore, one can contend that living far from financing sources and educational institutions can make it difficult to enrol in higher education.

Participants also believed that urban residents were better off because they had strong jobs, which allowed them to finance university studies. This was believed to be the case because a solid financial situation was necessary to maintain the standard of living in metropolitan regions. The participants said that because of their poverty and their small homes, they did not have the luxury of privacy for study. The participants said it was challenging to study alone. They needed the room and privacy to study, so they had to wait until everyone else had gone to bed.

This is a barrier that prevents individuals from achieving the high grades necessary to enrol in higher education institutions. People stayed up until late, which gave these learners little time to study after school, and in the event that they spent the entire night studying, they would arrive at school tired. Their capacity to focus during the day would be impacted by this.

According to Participant 7:

> There are difficulties at home because there is no study area, my family is large, and the rooms are small. A place that is conducive to studying is necessary to allow one to focus on their studies, however, lack of privacy can cause stress and depression, which further contribute to poor performance. As a result, there is no place to study, and I have to wait for everyone to go to bed so that I can study. Therefore, it can be argued that informal settlement learners are concerned about the settings in which they will learn. Therefore, while considering the experiences of informal settlement learners, these issues cannot be discounted or disregarded [Participant 7].

All of the interviewees said they had applied to one or two universities except for five learners who were currently in Grade 11. They believed that getting good grades would provide them entrance to universities through study loans and bursaries. This shows that, despite poverty being a barrier to entering higher education institutions, there are other options that give those who are less fortunate the chance to pursue their education.

5.5.3 Sociocultural obstacles

Investigating the factors that influence whether or not informal settlement learners choose to continue their studies in higher education institutions was one of the research's main goals. The surroundings, institutional culture and family support,

according to the participants, all had an impact on their ability to enrol in higher education institutions. The environment in which children grow up affects their view of and drive for success, according to Cosser (2002). When taking into account Putman's (1993) and Coleman's (1988) respective views of social capital as mutual duties and trust and as a social structural resource, families in the Braamfischerville informal settlement can be seen as a source of social capital. One may infer how learners profited from the closeness of trustworthy and reciprocal connections within families; social capital enables family members to combine resources to manage and be robust to face daily shocks and vulnerabilities (Vermaak, 2006).

Any civilization, modern or traditional, Putman (1993, p. 173) claimed, is "characterized by a mixture of horizontal and vertical networks of interpersonal connection and forms of transaction". These interactions are inextricably linked to social networks of friends, family and neighbours as well as associations, both formal and informal. These relationships contain valuable social capital that can be drawn upon during times of need, crisis or weakness, used as a safety net or exploited for pleasure or financial gain (Woolcock & Narayan, 1999).

Participants also mentioned that if the neighbourhood decided to start having noisy parties and playing loud music, it may seriously affect their ability to enrol in higher education institutions. One of the participants mentioned that the noise he faced from the neighbourhood bar forced him to forgo his study time. This is a barrier because it would prevent learners from concentrating on their studies which would allow them to get better grades and gain admission to higher education institutions.

The ideas and objectives that communities set for their children may also be argued to be crucial. Children's hopes and ambitions may be positively impacted if they grow up in a setting that values education. A community's residents may also come to accept criminal activity as usual if it predominates there. Participants believed that one obstacle to entering higher education institutions was their parent's lack of knowledge about them. Although many theorists and authors see social capital as essentially heartwarming networks of social ties, examples like the informal settlement of Braamfischerville illustrate that assumptions about social capital's role in explaining the chilly reality of social inequality are unfounded (Bourdieu, 1986).The story

illustrates the opposite of the adage "it's not what you know, it's who you know," which means that social capital can be a tactic used to prevent those who are perceived as outsiders from entering certain groups.

Participants believed that their parents would have been able to encourage them more effectively if they had gotten formal education and had been convinced to continue their studies until they had a degree or a diploma. This is supported by Fiske and Ladd (2004), who claim that parents who are actively involved in their children's schooling are better able to impose discipline and establish expectations. In addition, participants in this study thought that, despite the fact that poverty was identified as motivating factor on its own, the lack of inspiring things in their immediate environment served as a hindrance.

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to ensure that residents and members of lower socioeconomic categories, like the study's participants, are fairly represented in institutions of higher learning. Schools have a role to play as well; participants said that throughout their Life Orientation learning period, they could only discuss some institutions of higher learning and how to contact them. Therefore, the entire curriculum only covers a portion of the topic of higher education institutions. Since 1994, the government has put in place a number of initiatives to make it easier for people from historically disadvantaged groups to enrol in higher education institutions (Chisholm, 2005).

5.6 Conclusion

In summary, one can draw the conclusion that entrance to institutions of higher learning depends on more than just a student's total academic performance from the three themes that emerged from the research. It is crucial to have access to information on higher education schools, including how to apply, when to apply and what is required to get in at each university. With the use of this knowledge, learners can make informed decisions about their access to institutions of higher learning. One can draw the conclusion that informal settlement towns like Braamfischerville in Gauteng, where access to higher education is restricted, lack this essential information.

It was found that because of the high cost of tertiary education and the widespread poverty in South Africa, learners are not only worried about how they will pay for tuition. In addition, learners are concerned about how they will pay the application cost to apply to universities as well as where they will stay, what they will eat and how they will generally support themselves while attending the university if they are accepted. The cost of attending higher education institutions is a concern not just in South Africa, it affects people all over the world. By making sure that the opportunities that higher education affords are accessible to all those who have the potential to benefit from them, regardless of their background, education must be a force for opportunity and social justice, not for the entrenchment of privilege. However, this is not always the case because of financial limitations that result in learners being financially excluded, i.e. because government only has a certain amount of funding packages available to help individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Due to the aforementioned, there would be distributive injustice affecting society's class system or economic realm (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).

However, Breier (2010) makes it clear that in the context of South Africa, what is frequently referred to as "financial issues" includes actual "poor" and "socioeconomic disadvantage." Compared to learners in many other countries, who frequently struggle simply to cover the high expense of education but typically have their most basic requirements addressed, this is a different situation.

There is not a much published on how learners from low-income communities, in this case those living in informal settlements, might access higher education institutions. Additionally, information on the demographics of college and university students are accessible. The literature on how and what these students or communities feel about higher education institutions is, however, scarce. Members of marginalised groups must be involved in the process, according to Freire, for radical transformation to occur and be effective (Freire, 2002). The demands that informal settlements or disadvantaged communities have in accessing higher education institutions may therefore be better understood by understanding how these populations feel and think about higher education institutions. By doing so, policy makers and relevant entities can receive the information they need to improve access to higher education equal and fair for all South Africans.

The following chapter concludes the study and includes the limitation of the study, research directions for the future, recommendations and final thoughts.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore and understand how Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlement schools navigated access to higher education in South Africa. The research's findings will be summarised and suitable suggestions will be made in this chapter. The chapter will go through some of the study's shortcomings and conclude by highlighting the need for additional research on South African's perceptions of access barriers to higher education institutions.

The research study intended to gain a better understanding of the difficulties young informal settlement learners encounter when choosing their academic prospects and professional routes by looking into the experiences of leaners in informal settlements. This study intended to help determine whether the viewpoints of these learners were connected to some of the barriers mentioned in the literature review.

Learners in Grade 11 and 12 from three secondary schools in Braamfischerville in Johannesburg West District were interviewed for the study. These learners were born and raised in Braamfischerville. Three main topics concerning their perceptions of the factors and hurdles or impediments to accessing institutions of higher learning emerged from the interviews. It was discovered that sociocultural, economic and educational factors combined to support disparity in access to higher education institutions. By setting the limits within which decisions are made, communities, schools, families, the government and institutions of higher learning all contribute to the disparities that exist in society. Even though everyone in South Africa has equal access, participation is uneven due to differences in economic and social development of informal settlement and urban areas. Nevertheless, learners from informal settlements are resilient; they persist in getting into higher education institutions because they think that getting an education will improve their lives.

The economy of South Africa is growing, but unemployment is also rising quickly. Currently, South Africa (33.9%) has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world (Statistics SA, 2022). Due to the country's high unemployment rate, the majority of residents in rural and informal settlements in South Africa receive social assistance (Kelly, 2014). This demonstrates the necessity for the government to support and give

resources for informal settlement communities and schools so that these learners acquire a better education, which will in turn enhance participation in higher education institutions and improve their economic future. The government aims to increase not merely access to higher education but also the quality of that education and its associated intellectual and financial advantages (CHE, 2001). South Africa's higher education policies have long recognised the value of student financial aid in enabling low-income learners to enrol in university programmes and fostering equity. Learners from low-income and working-class families who would not have otherwise been able to access universities have benefited greatly by the NSFAS's offer of financial help to the neediest learners.

When applying to higher education institutions, information is crucial. The study discovered that the participants did not have easy access to information on entrance and point requirements. The participants also lacked sufficient knowledge about potential funding opportunities. All of the participants said they wanted to get good grades so they could apply for bursaries. It was found that poverty and inequality are essential for society because they spur innovation (Alcock, 2009). Based on the findings of the current study, it is clear that these individuals were motivated by poverty to put long hours in order to secure their futures. Participants in the study described how lack of resources in their families and communities prevented them from enrolling in higher education institutions, which lends credibility to my findings.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite the participants' claims that they felt comfortable communicating in English, it turned out that unclear understanding and poor question interpretation precluded thorough answers to interview questions. This was done in an effort to fully comprehend how Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlement schools in South Africa navigate access to higher education. Another negative was that the interviews happened at the school where people were working. The noise level from the construction and other learners during the study bothered me and the subject of the current interview. The study used a small sample, which is typical for qualitative research; nonetheless, this restricted generalising the results from the sample under study.

6.3 Research Directions for the Future

The study emphasised the changes that have been made in access to higher education since 1994 while also emphasising how learners in South Africa's informal settlements continue to face barriers to enrolment in these institutions. The conclusion is that the inability of learners from informal settlements to enrol in institutions can be seen as a failure to address the socioeconomic problems the nation is currently facing, which may be connected to the lack of communication between government representatives and communities like Braamfischerville. As this research demonstrates, policies are decided by a small number of people, and the delivery of services, inequality and poverty are complicated issues that both directly and indirectly affect equal access to and participation in institutions of higher learning.

Thus, future qualitative research that involves not just learners but also community members, parents and teachers in different South African informal settlement locations would be a stronger study because the connections among higher education, society and the economy are more intricate than is typically realised and might be used to guide and advise policy development in that country. It could be argued that since they have the knowledge and experience of living their own daily lives, community members should be interested and engaged. By concentrating on only one aspect of the access to higher education problem, it is impossible to find a solution. Instead, in order to incorporate everyone, it calls for a comprehensive socioeconomic and societal strategy. A bottom-up approach to problem solving is necessary for democratic development since solutions to issues must originate from the impacted populations.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Educational recommendations

The community's involvement is crucial since it is their duty to ensure that their schools are operating as intended. One of the things that worked as a barrier for these individuals to enter higher education was said to be access to information. In order to close the information gap between urban and informal settlement areas, the government, which is responsible for the nation's education, must invest in outreach programmes that enlighten learners in informal settlements. In addition, these initiatives must involve all South African institutions of higher study. These learners are not only at a disadvantage when it comes to access to institutions of higher

learning, they also lack any local sources of knowledge. As a result, the government must construct libraries in remote areas that are accessible to all residents.

It is further urged that the government and institutions of higher learning engage in intense interaction with these communities in order to generate genuine transformation through the knowledge and lived experience of these groups. Furthermore, in order to preserve quality and reduce the disparities between schools in urban and informal settlements, teachers' progress towards achieving the curriculum standards must be tracked.

As was already mentioned, some of individuals have not benefited from these programmes. What went wrong then becomes the question – what actually went wrong given the numerous policies in place. It is impossible to address the barriers to higher education by focusing solely on a family or a single school. In addition, schools and school governing bodies must ensure that teachers hired are qualified to teach the subjects for which they are hired. The study's participants reported that some of their teachers lacked the training necessary to teach important subjects like science and maths.

It has been claimed that South Africa's high unemployment rate results from the government's inability to generate new jobs. As the majority of those employed lack the necessary skills or qualifications, other academics contend that cadre deployment is to blame for high unemployment rate. Others contend, however, that there is a major skills crisis in South Africa and that there is not a sufficient number of skilled individuals willing to fill the open positions (Kraak, 2006).

One could contend that the underrepresentation of learners from informal settlement areas in higher education contributes to the skills gap. Furthermore, the minority that is admitted to institutions of higher learning frequently drop out of their programmes of study, with the majority being intellectually and financially excluded; this raises the dropout rate in a nation that already produces few graduates. Dropout rates have a significant negative effect since many learners return to their impoverished households, perpetuating the cycle of poverty (McWhirter et al., 2007).

6.4.2 Economic considerations

The biggest issue in South Africa's informal settlement communities is poverty. Poverty was identified in this study as a barrier to entering higher education institutions. Unemployment is a contributor to poverty. Therefore, the government must provide jobs for the majority of South Africans in order to eliminate the economic disparities that already exist. The state would have more money to spend on education if there were more jobs created for people living in disadvantaged communities since fewer individuals would be dependent on social grants. In additiony, these populations would have access to more expensive higher education.

6.4.3 Sociocultural recommendations

Participants indicated uncertainty about relocating from their homes or community to strange environments. The participants said that they were more inclined to enrol in uninteresting classes at a nearby university, such as the University of Johannesburg's Soweto Campus, as a result of this worry, than to go other universities to study more desirable courses. Thus, the government needs to increase support for historically Black universities, especially those in remote areas so that they will be able to compete with universities that were once majority White.

This study discovered that the community's activities and values can act as barriers to entering institutions of higher learning. Therefore, it is crucial for community members to encourage learners and refrain from endorsing lifestyles that could harm learners. Lifestyles such as substance abuse and drinking of alcohol. The interviewees stated that one barrier to obtaining a higher education qualification was the use of drugs and other substances. Drugs and substance addiction in South Africa is a crisis that needs to be addressed because it not only hinders learners' ability to learn but can also result in their death (WHO, 2015).

The Gauteng Province in South Africa currently has the highest rates of criminal activity (Statistics SA, 2022). Some of the greatest universities in Africa are located in this province. For the participants in this study, access to those institutions is hindered by the criminal activity taking place in this province.

6.5 Final Thoughts

This study looked at potential barriers that were highlighted in the literature analysis in an effort to better understand how informal settlement learners navigated their access to higher education institutions. Government agencies and higher education institutions have put policies in place to make access easier since 1994.

However, many people have not been successful in engaging in higher education, especially those who live in areas with informal settlements. While the majority of people living in places with informal settlements have little to no access to information about institutions of higher learning, a minority still does. As a result, informal settlement areas have poor enrolment rates for higher education. In South Africa, inequality persists in almost every aspect of daily life. The opportunities experienced by people of various social classes as well as society as a whole are impacted by all of these economic, educational and social challenges.

South Africa's informal settlement areas have high rates of unemployment and the majority of households rely on social grants to make ends meet (Kelly, 2014). This suggests that these populations would not be able to finance higher education. By increasing employment, these towns' poverty levels could be reduced as well as their unemployment rates. Therefore, reducing social inequality could result in equal access to institutions of higher learning in communities like Braamfischerville. The participants' barriers must be acknowledged if higher education institutions are to fulfil their obligation to produce qualified and talented graduates who will contribute to the expansion and maintenance of South Africa's social and economic wellbeing.

REFERENCES

Acar, E. (2011). Effects of social capital on academic success: A narrative synthesis. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *6*(6), 456-461.

Ajayi, V., (2017). *Primary sources of data and secondary sources of data.* https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24292.68481

Alcock, P. (2009). *Poverty and social exclusion.* Blackwell.

Alkire, S. (2010). Human development: Definitions, critiques, and related concepts. *Human Development Research Paper 2010/01*. UNDP.

Ames, H., Glenton, C., & Lewin, S. (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 19*, 26. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4

Archer, L. (2003). Social class and higher education. In L. Archer, M. Hutchings & A. Ross (Eds), *Higher education and social class. Issues of exclusion and inclusion* (pp. 5–20). RoutledgeFalmer.

Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research. *Qualitative Sociology, 42*, 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2004). *The practise of social research.* Oxford.

Baloyi, M. E. (2020). *An analysis of how socioeconomic issues affect the performance of learners in rural schools: A case study of Ga-Sekgopo High Schools Grade 8-10 learners* [Unpublished master''s thesis]. University of Johannesburg.

Baranović, B., Jugović, I., & Puzić, S. (2014). Važnost obiteljskog podrijetla i roda za uspjeh iz matematike i odabir srednje škole. *Revija za Socijalnu Politiku*, 21(3), 285–307.

Bernard, H. R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Alta Mira Press.

Bohlmann, C. A., & Pretorius, E. J. (2002). Reading skills and mathematics. *South African Journal of Higher Education,*16(3), 196–206.

Bokayev, B. (2016). *The improvement of quality of primary and secondary education in Kazakhstan.* https://hdl.handle.net/1813/45565

Boughey, C. (2010). *Academic development for improved efficiency in the higher education and training system in South Africa*. Development Bank of South Africa.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). Rethinking the state: Genesis and structure of the bureaucratic field. In P. Bourdieu (ed.), *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Polity Press.

Bozalek, V., & Boughey, C. (2012). (Mis)framing higher education in South Africa. *Social Policy & Administration, 46*(6), 688–703.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 153-200.

Breen, R., & Jonsson, J. O. (2015). Inequality of opportunity in comparative perspective: Recent research on educational attainment and social mobility. *Annual Review Sociology, 31*, 223243. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.31.041304.122232

Cardak, B. A., & Givon, D. (2004). *Why the poor don't go to university: Attainment constraints and two-staged education.* www.economics.adelaide.edu.au/workshops/doc/cardak.pdf/

Carnoy, M., Chisholm, L., & Chilisa, B. (2012). *The low achievement trap: Comparing schooling in Botswana and South Africa*. HSRC Press.

Carpentier, V. (2018). Expansion and differentiation in higher education: The historical trajectories of the UK, the USA and France. *Centre for Global Higher Education Working Papers, No.33*. UCL Institute of Education.

Chisholm, L. (2004). Introduction. In L. Chisholm (Ed.), *Changing class. Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa* (pp. 1-28). Human Sciences Research Council Press.

Chisholm, L. (2005). The state of South Africa's school. In *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005.* HSRC Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Cohen, S. (2002). *Moral panics as cultural politics.* Routledge.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94,* S95-S120.

Cope, D. G. (2014). Methods and meanings: Credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 41*(1).

Council of Higher Education (CHE). (2008). *Performance indicators in South Africa Higher Education, 2000 - 2008.* CHE.

Council on Higher Education (CHE). (2013). *Higher education participation, 2011.* CHE.

Council on Higher Education (CHE). (2019). *VitalStats, public higher education, 2017.* CHE.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Sage.

Cypress, B. S. (2017). CCRN rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives, Strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations, *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing, 36*(4), 253-263. https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253

Dados, N., & Connell, R. (2012). The global south. *Contexts, 11*(1), 12–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 1536504212436479

De Luca, J. R. (2013). Submersed in the social segregation: The (re) production of social capital through swim club membership. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *37*(4), 340-363. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0193723513498605

De Vos, A., Strydom, H., & Fouche, C. (2005). *Research at grass roots for social sciences and human services professions* (3rd ed). Van Schaik.

Department of Communication. (2015). *Community broadcasting support scheme: Sustaining community employment.* Department of Communication.

Devlin, N. (2006). *A qualitative study of the reasons Australian university learners plagiarise* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Parkville University.

Dika, S. L., & Singh, K. (2002). Applications of social capital in educational literature: A critical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(1), 31–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569042000236952

Du Plessis, P., & Mestry , M. (2019). Teachers for rural schools – a challenge for South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *39*, 112–121. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1774

Du Toit, A. (2010). Social justice and post-apartheid higher education in South Africa. In D. L. Featherman, M. Hall & M. Krislov (Eds.), *The next 25 years. Affirmative action in higher education in the United States and South Africa* (pp. 87–109). University of Michigan Press.

Eggens, L., Van Der Werf, M. P. C., & Bosker, R. J. (2008). The influence of personal networks and social support on study attainment of learners in university education. *Higher Education, 55*(5), 553–573.

Emerging Voices (2015). *A report on education in South African rural communities,* Nelson Mandela Foundation, HSRC Press. https://allafrica.com/download/resource/main/main/idatcs/00010408:544727799aa_bb1b071a31c7619ed7220.pdf

Essop, A. (2020). *The changing size and shape of the higher education system in South Africa, 2005-2017*. University of Johannesburg. https://www.uj.ac.za/ faculties/facultyofeducation/ali-mazrui-centre

Farrell, K., & Farrell, W. (2008)*. The tertiary awareness program-Transition from secondary school to university. An Australian experience in student transition.*

Fataar, A. (2018). *From the shadows to the university's epistemic centre: Engaging the (Mis) recognition struggles of learners at the post-apartheid university.* Paper presented at Higher Education Close Up Conference 2018, Cape Town.

Ferri, F., Grifoni, P., & Guzzo, T. (2020). Online learning and emergency remote teaching: Opportunities and challenges in emergency situations. *Societies*, *10*, 86. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc10040086

Fine, M. (2004). *Off white: Readings on power, privilege and resistance*. Routledge.

Finn, A., & Leibbrandt, M. (2017). The dynamics of poverty in the first four waves of NIDS. *SALDRU Working Paper Number 174/ NIDS Discussion Paper 2016/1*. Cape Town.

Fiske, E. B., & Ladd, H. F. (2004). *Elusive equity: Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa.* Brookings Institute Press.

Freire, P. (2002)*. Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.

Gelderblom, D. (2014). *The landscape of social capital: Bridging the micro-macro gap.* Sociological Paper presented at the University of Johannesburg Seminar, 17 September 2014.

Gladieux and Swail, (2000) Beyond access: Improving the odds of College Success.

Goldman, R. (2005). *Fathers' involvement in their children's education.* National Family and Parenting Institute.

Gore, O. T. & Walker, M. (2020). Conceptualising (dis)advantage in South African higher education: A Capability Approach perspective. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, *8*(2) (Forthcoming).

Graetz, N., Friedman, J., Osgood-Zimmerman, A., Burstein, R., Biehl, M. H., Shields, C., & Mosser, J. M. (2018). Mapping local variation in educational attainment across Africa. *Nature, 555,* 48–53. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25761

Grant, M. J. (2015). *Institutional barriers to learning: A case study of a university in KwaZulu Natal* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of KwaZulu Natal.

Greenstein, T. M. (2003). *Methods of family research.* Sage.

HEFCE. (2014). *Memorandum of assurance and accountability between HEFCE and institutions: Terms and conditions for payment of HEFCE grants to higher education institutions* (HEFCE 2014/12). https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1785845

Haradhan, M. (2018). Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects. Published in: Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People, Volume 7, no. 1 (31 March 2018) pp.23-48:

Harding, J. (2011). Financial circumstances, financial difficulties and academic achievement among first-year undergraduates. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *35*(4), 483-499.

Hassan, R., & Birungi, P. (2011). Social capital and poverty in Uganda. *Development of Southern Africa, 28*(1), 19–37. https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/16368/Hassan Social(2011).pdf;sequence=1

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher*, *20*(4), 12–17. Http://crnl.hct.ac.ae/events/archive/tend/kent.htm.

Imandoust, S. B. (2011). Relationship between education and social capital. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *1*(12), 52–57.

Israel, G. D., & Beaulieu, L. J. (2004). Investing in communities: Social capital's role in keeping youth in school. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, *34*(2), 35–57.

Jacobs, L. (2018). Reflecting on a university partnership project in underprivileged South African schools. *Education in Modern Society, 16*, 38–44.

Jansen, J. (2011, December 1). Results don't add up. *Times Live.* www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/article847919.ece/Results-dont-addup?service=print

Jones, B, Coetzee, G, Bailey, T, and Wickham, S, 2008, *Factors that Facilitate Success for Disadvantaged Higher Education Students: An Investigation into Approaches Used by REAP, NSFAS and Selected Higher Education Institutions*, Cape Town: Rural Education Access Programme.

Kapp, R., Badenhorst, E., Bangeni, B., Craig, T., van Rensburg, J., Le Roux, K., Prince, R., Pym, R., & van Pletzen, E. (2014). Successful learners negotiation of township schooling in contemporary South Africa. *Perspectives in Education, 32*(3), 50–61.

Kellerman, A. (1997). Introduction to development studies. In H. Swanepoel & F. de Beer (eds), *Health and development*. International Thompson Publishing Incorporated.

Kelly, G. (2014). *Everything you need to know about social grants*. SASSA.

Khumalo, B., & Mji, A. (2014). Exploring educators' perceptions of the impact of poor infrastructure on learning and teaching in rural South African schools. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5*(20), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss. 2014.v5n20p1521

Kuye, J. O. (2007). A decade review of higher education in South Africa. *African Journal of Public Affairs, 1*(4), 2–13.

Langa, P. (2015). *Roundtable discussion on Rural education: Addressing the challenges held on 18 November 2015, in collaboration with the Catholic Institute of Education*. https://www.cplo.org.za/roundtable-discussion-on-rural-education-addressing-thechallenges-held-on-18-november-2015-in-collaboration-with-the-catholic-instituteof-education/

Leibowitz, B. (2012). Introduction: Reflections on higher education and the public good. In B. Leibowitz (Ed.), *Higher education for the public good – views from the south* (pp. xviii–xxvii). Sun Media.

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

Lin, N. (1999). Social networks and status attainment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *25*, 467–487.

Long, B. T., & Kavazanjian, L. (2012). *Affirmative action in tertiary education: A meta-analysis of global policies and practices*. World Bank Report.

Macha, W., & Kadakia A. (2017). *Education systems profiles. Education in South Africa.* World Education News +Reviews. https://wenr.wes.org/2017/05/education-south-africa

Machika, P., & Johnson, B. (2015). Postgraduate learners' experience of poverty and academic success at a university of technology in South Africa. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *29*(6), 167–181. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC191482

Marginson, S. (2016). The worldwide trend to high participation higher education: Dynamics of social stratification in inclusive systems. *Higher Education*, *72*, 413–434.

Martinez-Vargas, C., Walker, M., & Mkwananzi, F. (2020). Access to higher education in South Africa: Expanding capabilities in and through an undergraduate photovoice project. *Educational Action Research*, *28*(3), 427–442.

Maso, I. (2003). *Necessary subjectivity: Exploiting researchers 'motives, passions and prejudice' in pursuit of answering 'true' questions*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage.

Mbembe, A. J. (2016). Decolonizing the university: New directions. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 15*(1), 29–45.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, J. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (7th Ed.). Pearson.

Mintz, S. (2021) How to stand up for Equity in Higher Education.

Mhlanga, D., & Moloi, T. (2020). *COVID-19 and the digital transformation of education: What are we learning on 4IR in South Africa?* Education sciences, MDPI.

Moja, T. (2016) Education in South Africa: can it right or wrong of the past?

Mullen, F. (2010). *Barriers to widening access to higher education.* SPICe Information Centre.

Murphy, P., & Cunningham, J. V. (2003). *Organising for community controlled development. Renewing civil society.* Sage.

Murrey, A. (2019). "'When spider webs unite they can tie up a lion'. Anti-racism, decolonial options and theories from the south. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & P. Daley (eds), *The Routledge handbook of south-south relations* (pp. 59–75). Routledge.

Naidoo, R. (2018). *World-class systems rather than world-class universities.* http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20180417162622337

Narayan, D. (1999). Bonds and bridges: Social capital and poverty. *Policy Research Working Paper 2167.* The World Bank.

Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory. (2015). *1935 Bantu Education Act.* https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv018 28/05 lv01829/06lv01859.htm

Nelson Mandela Foundation. (2005). *Emerging voices: A report on education in South African rural communities.* HSRC Press.

Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Qualitative and quantitative sampling in social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Njoko, M. B. 2018. The impact of access to post-secondary education information on "rural origin" learners' access to higher education: A case of three schools in Ntabamhlophe, Kwazule-Natal. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 32*(5). https://doi.org/10.20853/32-5-2591

National Planning Commission, 2011, *National Development Plan 2030: Our Future - Make It Work*, Pretoria.

Nzwei, O. I., & Kuye, J. O. (2007). The developmental state band conceptual interpolations: A comparative policy – targeting for South Africa within a global context. *Journal of Public Administration*, *43*(3).

O'Shea, C., McKenna, S., & Thomson, C. (2019). 'We throw away our books': Learners' reading practices and identities. *Linguistics and Education*, *49*, 1–10.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (14th ed.). Sage.

Polit, D., & Beck, S. (2018). The concept of cost related tuition and its implementation at the University of Minnesota. *Journal of Higher Education*, *58*, 276–305.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone - The collapse and revival of American community.* Simon and Schuster.

Putnam, R. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy.* Princeton University Press.

Quinn, R. (2010). *Learning communities and imagined social capital: Learning to belong.* Continuum Publishing Group.

Ranney, M. L., Meisel, Z. F., Choo, E. K., Garro, A. C., Sasson, C., & Morrow, G. (2015). Qualitative research in emergency care part ii: Data collection, analysis results reporting. *Acad Emerg Med*, *22*(9), 1103-1112.

Republic of South Africa. (1996a). *South Africa School Act No. 84 of 1996.* Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. (1996b). *National Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996.* Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. (1996c). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108*. Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. (1997). *White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation.* Government Printer.

Salmi, J., & Bassett, R. M. (2014). The equity imperative in tertiary education: Promoting fairness and efficiency. *International Review of Education*, *60*(3), 361–377.

Schendel, R., & McCowan, T. (2016). Expanding higher education systems in low- and middle-income countries: The challenges of equity and quality. *Higher Education*, *72*, 407411.

SEEP-AIMS. (2000*).* Learning from clients: Assessment tools for microfinance.

Setia, M. S., & Panda, S. (2017). Summary and synthesis: How to present a research proposal. *Indian Journal of Dermatology*, *62*(5), 443–450. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijd.IJD_405_17

Shenton, A. K. (2004). *Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. Education for information.* IOS Press.

Shepherd, D., Spaull, N., Taylor, S., van Broekhuizen, H., & van Fintel, D. (2011). *Low quality education as a poverty trap*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch

Southall, R. (2016). The coming crisis of Zuma's ANC: The party state confronts fiscal crisis. *Review of African Political Economy, 43*(147), 73–88.

Spaull, N. (2014). *Education in SA – Still separate and unequal.* https://nicspaull.com/2014/01/12/education-in-sa-still-separate-and-unequal-extended-ver sion-of-citypress-article/

Spaull, N., & Jansen, D. J. (Eds) (2019). *The South African schooling: The enigma of inequality. A study of the present situation and future possibilities*. Springer.

Statistics South Africa (2022). *Labour force survey data.* Pretoria: StatsSA.

Swartz, S., Mahali, A., Moletsane, R., Arogundade, E., Khalema, N.E., Cooper, A., & Groenewald, C. (2018). *Studying while black: Race, education and emancipation in South African universities*. HSRC Press. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11910/11891

Tebele, M. M. (2016). *Problems and challenges related to public policy implementation within the South African democratic dispensation: A theoretical exploration* [Unpublished master's thesis]. North-West University.

Terre Blanche, M &Durrheim, K. (eds). 1999. *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences.* University of Cape Town Press.

Tilak, J. B. G. (2002). Education and poverty. *Journal of Human Development*, *3*(2), 191–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649880220147301

Timmis, S. (2020, March 30). *Alone together? Digital inequalities and the 2020 student experience of higher education.* https://heltasa.org.za/alone-together-digitalinequalities-and-the-2020-student-experience-of-higher-education/

Tshishonga, N. (2016). *Are institutions of higher learning caught in the vortex?*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). (2020). *Global education monitoring report, 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all.* https://es.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion

Van Broekhuizen, H. (2016). Graduate unemployment and higher education institutions in South Africa. *Stellenbosch Economics Document De Travails*, *8,* 16.

Van Broekhuizen, H., Van Der Berg, S., & Hofmeyr, H. (2016). Higher education access and outcomes for the 2008 national grade 12 cohort. *Stellenbosch Working papers 16/6*. University of Stellenbosch.

Van der Berg, S. (2008). *Poverty and education*. UNESCO.

Van der Sandt, S., & Nieuwoudt, H. D. (2003). Grade 7 Teachers' and Prospective Teachers' Content Knowledge of Geometry. *South African Journal of Education*, *23*(3), 199–205.

Vermaak, N. J. (2006). *A reconceptualisation of the concept of social capital: A study of resources for need satisfaction amongst agricultural producers in Vhembe, Limpopo* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of KwaZulu Natal.

Walker, R. (1985). Applied Qualitative Research, Gower, Aldershot, 203 pp.

Walker, M. (2018). Dimensions of higher education and the public good in South Africa. *Higher Education.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0225-y

Walker, M. (2019). The achievement of university access: Conversion factors, capabilities and choices. *Social Inclusion*, 7, 1. https://doi.org/10.17645/si. vXiX.1615

Walker, M. (2020): Student decision-making about accessing university in South Africa. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 1–17.

Walker, M., & McLean, M. (2013). *Professional education, capabilities and the public good: The role of universities in promoting human development*. Routledge.

Wangenge-Ouma, G., & Cloete, N. (2008). Financing higher education in South Africa: Public funding, nongovernment revenue and tuition fees. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 22*(4), 906–919.

Watt, D. (2007). On becoming a qualitative researcher: The value of reflexivity. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(1), 82–101.

Whitehead, D., & Whitehead, L. (2016). *Sampling data and data collection in qualitative research.* Sage.

Wilson-Strydom, M. (2015). *University access and success: Capabilities, diversity and social justice.* Routledge.

Woolcock, M., & Narayan, D. (1999). Social capital: Implications for development.

World Bank. (2016). *Data. Sub-Saharan Africa (developing only).* http://data.worldbank.org/region/SSA.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance certificate

Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee

22 April 2022

Dear Mrs TN Makwakwa

The application for ethical clearance for the research project described below served before this committee on 20 April 2022:

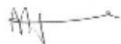| Ethics Protocol No:	EDU063/21
Principal investigator:	Mrs TN Makwakwa
Student/Staff No:	13269934
Degree:	Masters
Supervisor/Promoter:	Dr ML Calitz
Department:	Education Management and Policy Studies

The decision by the committee is reflected below:

Decision:	Approved
Comments:	
Period of approval:	Two years

The approval by the Ethics Committee is subject to the following conditions being met:

1. The research will be conducted as stipulated on the application form submitted to the Ethics Committee with the supporting documents.

2. Proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research must be submitted where relevant.

3. In the event that the research protocol changed for whatever reason the Ethics Committee must be notified thereof by submitting an amendment to the application, together with all the supporting documentation that will be used for data collection namely; questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules, for further approval before data can be collected. The changes may include the following but are not limited to:

   • Change of investigator,

   • Research methods any other aspect therefore and,

   • Participants.

The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.

Best wishes

Prof Funke Omidire
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

Room 3-63, Level 3, Aldoel Building
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20
Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 5656
Email edu.ethicsadmin@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

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

Faculty of Health Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences **Research Ethics Committee**

4 July 2022

Endorsement Notice

Dear Mrs TN Makwakwa

Ethics Reference No: EDU063/21
Title: How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa

The **New Application** as supported by documents received between 2022-04-29 and 2022-06-29 for your research, was approved by the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 2022-06-29 as resolved by its quorate meeting.

Please note the following about your ethics approval:
- Ethics Approval is valid for 1 year and needs to be renewed annually by 2023-07-04.
- Please remember to use your protocol number (EDU063/21) on any documents or correspondence with the Research Ethics Committee regarding your research.
- Please note that the Research Ethics Committee may ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification, monitor the conduct of your research, or suspend or withdraw ethics approval.

Ethics approval is subject to the following:
- The ethics approval is conditional on the research being conducted as stipulated by the details of all documents submitted to the Committee. In the event that a further need arises to change who the investigators are, the methods or any other aspect, such changes must be submitted as an Amendment for approval by the Committee.

We wish you the best with your research.

Yours sincerely

_____
On behalf of the FHS REC, Dr R Sommers
MBChB, MMed (Int), MPharmMed, PhD
Deputy Chairperson *of the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, University of Pretoria*

The Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee complies with the SA National Act 61 of 2003 as it pertains to health research and the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 and 46. This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes, Second Edition 2015 (Department of Health).

Research Ethics Committee
Room 4-60, Level 4, Tswelopele Building
University of Pretoria, Private Bag x323
Gezina 0031, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 356 3084
Email: deepeka.behari@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

Fakulteit Gesondheidswetenskappe
Lefapha la Disaense tša Maphelo

APPENDIX B: Permission letters from the GDE and the district

GAUTENG PROVINCE
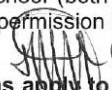Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	19 July 2022
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2022– 30 September 2022 2022/315
Name of Researcher:	Makwakwa T.N
Address of Researcher:	1 Pamela Street
	Horison View
	Roodepoort
Telephone Number:	073 138 1001
Email address:	Tsakane.Makwakwa@gauteng.gov.za
Research Topic:	How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa.
Type of qualification	MED
Number and type of schools:	3 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Johannesburg West

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

19/07/2022

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Making education a societal priority

1

1. The letter would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.

3. **Because of the relaxation of COVID 19 regulations researchers can collect data online, telephonically, physically access schools, or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate.**

4. **The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all times, Social distance at all times, Provide a vaccination certificate or negative COVID-19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanitise frequently.**

5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

6. A letter/document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs, and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.

7. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers, and learners involved. Persons who offer their cooperation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school program is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.

10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.

12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones, and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers, and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

14. On completion of the study, the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.

15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings, and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a summary of the purpose, findings, and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Mr. Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 19/07/2022

2

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enq: Rachel Molale
Tel No: 011 831 5525
Email: Rachel.Molale@gauteng.gov.za

TO: THE PRINCIPAL
CHAIRPERSON: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
SIYABONGA SECONDARY SCHOOL

FROM: MR. STRINIVASEN NAIDOO
CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST
INFORMATION SYSTEM AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 03 AUGUST 2022

SUBJECT: APPROVAL IN RESPECT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Principal

Ms. Tsakani Nkiyasi Makwakwa has been granted permission to conduct research in the Johannesburg West District. The permission is subject to the following:

- All materials will be borne by the researcher.
- The researcher does not compromise contact time in any way.
- All logistical issues will be dealt with at the convenience of the official/school.

Yours in Education.

MR STRINI NAIDOO
CES ISSP
DATE: 03/08/2022

MR LEHLOHONOLO RAMOKHOASE
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: JW
DATE: 03/08/2022

Johannesburg West District (D12)
Tel: (011) 831 5480
20 Goldman Street, Florida, 1710 I P. O. Box 1995, Florida, 1710
www.gautengonline.gov.za I Hotline: 08600 11 000

101

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enq: Rachel Molale
Tel No: 011 831 5525
Email: Rachel.Molale@gauteng.gov.za

TO: **THE PRINCIPAL**
CHAIRPERSON: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
IKUSASALETHU SECONDARY SCHOOL

FROM: **MR. STRINIVASEN NAIDOO**
CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST
INFORMATION SYSTEM AND STRATEGIC PLANNING
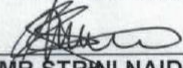
DATE: **03 AUGUST 2022**

SUBJECT: **APPROVAL IN RESPECT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Dear Principal

Ms. Tsakani Nkiyasi Makwakwa has been granted permission to conduct research in the Johannesburg West District. The permission is subject to the following:

- All materials will be borne by the researcher.
- The researcher does not compromise contact time in any way.
- All logistical issues will be dealt with at the convenience of the official/school.

Yours in Education.

MR STRINI NAIDOO
CES: ISSP
DATE: 03/08/2022

MR LEHLOHONOLO RAMOKHOASE
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: JW
DATE: 03/08/2022

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enq: Rachel Molale
Tel No: 011 831 5525
Email: Rachel.Molale@gauteng.gov.za

TO: **MS. TSAKANI NKIYASI MAKWAKWA**

FROM: **MR. STRINIVASEN NAIDOO**
              CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST
              INFORMATION SYSTEM AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: **03 AUGUST 2022**

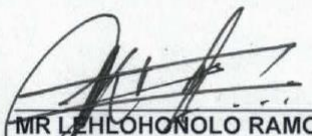**SUBJECT:**   **APPROVAL IN RESPECT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Dear Ms. TN. Makwakwa

The **District Director** has granted you approval to conduct research in the **Johannesburg West District** subject to the following:

1.   Your research will not impact on contact time in the schools in any way.
2.   The principal has the right to make necessary arrangements for the research.
3.   No cost will accrue to the department for your research, i.e. no photo copies.
4.   The researcher will upon completion of the study supply the District Director with a copy of the thesis to gain insight into the outcome of the study.

Yours in Education.

MR STRINI NAIDOO
CES: ISSP
DATE: 03/08/2022

MR LEHLOHONOLO RAMOKHOASE
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: JW
DATE: 03/08/2022

Johannesburg West District (D12)
Tel: (011) 831 5480
20 Goldman Street, Florida, 1710 I P. O. Box 1995, Florida, 1710
www.gautengonline.gov.za I Hotline: 08600 11 000

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enq: Rachel Molale
Tel No: 011 831 5525
Email: Rachel.Molale@gauteng.gov.za

TO: **THE PRINCIPAL**
      CHAIRPERSON: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
      KGATELOPELE SECONDARY SCHOOL

FROM: **MR. STRINIVASEN NAIDOO**
      CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST
      INFORMATION SYSTEM AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: **03 AUGUST 2022**

SUBJECT: **APPROVAL IN RESPECT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Dear Principal

Ms. Tsakani Nkiyasi Makwakwa has been granted permission to conduct research in the Johannesburg West District. The permission is subject to the following:

- All materials will be borne by the researcher.
- The researcher does not compromise contact time in any way.
- All logistical issues will be dealt with at the convenience of the official/school.

Yours in Education.

_____
MR STRINI NAIDOO
CES: ISSP
DATE: 03/08/2022

_____
MR LEHLOHONOLO RAMOKHOASE
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: JW
DATE: 03/08/2022

Johannesburg West District (D12)
Tel: (011) 831 5480
20 Goldman Street, Florida, 1710 | P. O. Box 1995, Florida, 1710
www.gautengonline.gov.za | Hotline: 08600 11 000

APPENDIX C: Informed consent form for participants in this study

Learners letter of consent

How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa.

Dear Learner

I am Tsakani Makwakwa a Masters student at the University of Pretoria. The tittle of my study towards my Masters' degree is "**How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa.**" The aim of this study is to explore and understand how Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa.

I am working under the supervision of Dr Calitz ML, from the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria.

As one of the participants, I kindly invite you to participate in this study. There is one part to this research, an interview using semi-structured interview. The interview will be scheduled at school premises during breaks. The interview should take approximately 1 hour per Learner.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the research study without any consequences or explanations. You can be assured that your decision will be respected. Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed always by using pseudonyms to the participants during the transcription phase. **No participant names or personal information will be reported in my findings.**

In participating in this research study, you will be asked for permission by the researcher to make audio recordings of the semi-structured interview. The purpose thereof is to make transcription of data valid and authentic. The recording will be safely kept at the University of Pretoria. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the audio recordings. All data collected will only be used for academic purposes.

You may ask questions before or during the time of participation. If you have any concerns regarding the data collection procedures, please notify me or my supervisor. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to access and verify the recorded views and the transcriptions of interviews made in case there is a need to do so.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria and, where relevant, project funders. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, and to avoid the spread of the virus, the interviews may be done virtually. Different virtual platforms may be used, that you are familiar. This will be discussed with you prior to the virtual meeting. Please indicate by signing your understanding of information shared above, the purpose being to give your consent to participate.

_____

Kind regards

Tsakani Makwakwa

_____

Email address: tsakani214@gmail.com

Contact number: 073 138 1001

Supervisor: Dr Calitz ML

Email address: Talita.calitz@up.ac.za

APPENDIX E: Interview questions

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. Biographical data

Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at ABC Secondary school?

* What is your age?

* Do you reside with your parents?

* Do your parents have jobs?

* What kind of work do your parents hold?

* What level of education do your parents have?

B. Educational factors

* What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

* Do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

* Are you aware of the steps you must take to enter universities?

* If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

* Do you believe your course work will enable you to enrol in the program in which you are most interested? Explain.

* Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

* How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

C. Economic factors

*What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

* In your opinion, what obstacles do other kids face when trying to enter higher education institutions?

* Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

*Tell us whether your parents talk to you about finances and your career choice.

*What difficulties do you encounter while studying?

*Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

D. Sociocultural factors

* What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

* Do you know the cost of higher education?

* How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

* Do you think that being a resident in an area with informal settlements makes it harder for you to attend in universities? Explain.

*Would you mind adding any other comments you may have regarding the obstacles to higher

APPENDIX F: Transcribed recordings

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Transcribed recording)

Good day, my name is Tsakani Makwakwa. I am a student at University of Pretoria.

I am doing research for my master's degree. My research topic is **How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa.**

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 1)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Kgatelopele Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, I am doing my Grade 12 in this school.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 19 years old.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: Yes, I live with my family (my mother, uncle, and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: My mother is working at a local primary school.

Interviewer: What kind of work do your parents hold?

Learner: My mother work as a cleaner in a primary school.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: Ma'am, my mother did not finish her high school grades.

Interviewer: Do you perhaps know the grade she has?

Learner: mmm, she said left school while doing Grade 11.

Interviewer: Did she discuss with you why she left school?

Learner: mmm, she said she was attending school at Limpopo. Then she lost her parents, and no one was looking after them. The situation was terrible in a way that she left school to look for a job.

Interviewer: I am sorry to hear that, it's so touching. Please feel free, can we go on?

Learner: yes, we can.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am a doing science and maths.

I chose this stream because I want to be a medical Doctor.

Interviewer: wow!! So impressive. Are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: Did you pass well in Grade 11?

Learner: yes, I am an A student.

Interviewer: how about your 2022 June results?

Learner: I did very well ma'am, I got level 7 in six subjects except in physical sciences.

Interviewer: which level did you get in physical sciences?

Learner: I got level 5 in physical sciences.

Interviewer: why level 5 in physical sciences is that difficult?

Learner: not really ma'am, my teacher is not competent to teach the subject.

Interviewer: why you say that?

Learner: she doesn't know her content well, sometimes she doesn't pitch for the class during her period.

Interviewer: poor kids, so, what do you do during that time?

Learner: we teach ourselves, even though we don't comprehend the content very well.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to be a doctor.

Interviewer: you want to study medicine?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UCT and Wits University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, the main source of information is Google. I am not too sure of the APS and the fee structure of the universities, but I am currently browsing their information.

Interviewer: is Google assisting you with the information?

Learner: yes, its assisting.

Interviewer: Okay, how well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: I am aware that schools that are not charging school fees tend to underperform. I therefore know that I won't want my children to live in these circumstances. The majority of individuals will say that everything is free, including

universities and with universities it might not be the case. Not all teachers are assisting, I am worried about my physical sciences teacher. We are always behind with the curriculum coverage but 20 of us attend at Kutlwanong, I think I will improve my performance.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: aaaa, for me, I want to improve my physical sciences performance, this subject is a challenge to all of us in classroom. We don't have a good background in physical science, to make matter worse we sat for an exam for the first time this year in June. We never had a full-blown exam; we were writing tests with lesser marks. I have to do extra work since our science teacher isn't that great; sometimes he doesn't even show up in class. In the past, understanding the notion was difficult, but today I'm doing my best.

Interviewer: it's tough hey?

Learner: very tough

Interviewer: Are you ready for your final exams?

Learner: mmm, prelims will be a good indicator.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: what do you know?

Learner: mmm, I know that if I can pass very well, I can get funding for my studies in the form of bursary.

Interviewer: okay, do you have another option apart of studying medicine?

Learner: yes, I have, my second option is pharmacist.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes, it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: Yaa, I believe it does for me since I am aware that something given away will not be worth paying for. Let say we get everything for free, there will be no worries, but the question is are we putting effort to sustain whatever goods and services we receive for free. I strongly believe in working hard to make a transformation.

Interviewer: what transformation are you referring to?

Learner: mmm, I don't want my children to grow up at an informal settlement, I want to have a proper house in a decent area with better facilities. I will also educate people in my community on how to access institution of higher learning. I think we must shift our mind set and see things in a way that not all things are for free, some of the things we must work hard to get.

Interviewer: interesting, how supportive are your parents of studying at institutions of higher learning? Explain.

My mother is very supportive, she wants all of us in the house to be educated. She gave me application fee so far. She said she is busy saving registration fee even though she won't have money to pay for my tuition fee, she believes that if I get admitted things will work out there in the university.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: mmm, I will lie if I say I study at school, teachers want to teach us. I study at home even though is not a quiet place to study but I make my way to study.

Interviewer: okay, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: ooh, I have a fear in my physical sciences performance. Our science teacher is not too great; occasionally, he doesn't even show up in class, so I have to complete additional work. In the past, it was a struggle to understand the concept, but now I am trying my level best.

Interviewer: are you sure you won't make it?

Learner: I will make it, but I want to get level 7.

Interviewer: I hear you; you will get it if you work hard. Do you have anything to add on what we have discussed.

Learner: no addition.

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your medicine studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 2)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Kgatelopele Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am I am a learner in this school.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad and my mum).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: not both of them (a learner scratched his head)

Learner: aaa, My father is working but my mother is not working (a learner looked down).

Interviewer: ok, feel free

Interviewer: What occupation does your father have?

Learner: My father does part time job at Shoprite (a learner lost his eye contact, he looked down).

Interviewer: it's okay

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, they both have matric cerficates.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am a commerce learner; doing accounting, business studies and economics.

I chose this stream because I thought I was capable.

Interviewer: you thought you were capable?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: you were not thinking of any career path or anything?

Learner: no (a learner kept quiet for a while, then respond) at that time I did not know anything about that.

Interviewer: how is it now?

Learner: (a learner starts by laughing) I have an idea now.

Interviewer: you have an idea?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: so, what do you want to study when you passed you Grade 12?

Learner: I want to be an accountant, so I will continue with my accounting.

Interviewer: you want to study accounting?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you are interested in studying further, have you applied to universities?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and Wits University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, my neighbour was a student at wits, so he assisted me with the application process. He also showed me how to Google information of UJ. I can say that the only knowledge I had of universities was that which was contained in the prospectuses of the universities I had been able to obtain.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities?

Learner: mmm, most of my knowledge comes from prospectuses that we receive from our Life Orientation teacher and from browsing the internet on my phone to learn more about the degrees and careers I am interested in. I have my phone

116

therefore I can say that information. not enough because no career guidance in my school, they just want to teach us only. We hear from other people and our relatives about different career choices. Teachers will keep on telling us that we can't afford to go to universities because they are very expensive.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: aaah, I am aware of other bursaries but had not applied for NSFAS because:

If I apply for Absa and NSFAS at the same time, the standards they require are not similar; NSFAS settles for far less than those other ones. "Its conditions are really, really different from other bursaries." They do this because they are aware that doing otherwise means settling for less. I am not sure but majority of us might have a challenge of money. I know of myself that my parents won't afford to pay for my tuition fees. I am not sure that if I pass my matric, I will get funding because universities are very expensive.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: tell me, what do you know?

Learner: my neighbour told me about bursaries and loans.

Interviewer: yes, go on

Learner: he told me that I can access higher education even if I don't have money. He said I can pass very well I can get a bursary.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, yes, other learners that I know did not apply to go to university next year. Some they cited that they want to take a gap year while others said they need to look for a job. Some learners feel that they won't meet the standard of the lifestyle that university learners are living. I feel that other learners will laugh at me because I am poor.

Interviewer: do you think people will have time to study your background?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: do you think so?

Learner: hahaha (laughing) there are learners from rich families in universities.

Interviewer: so, you have a fear of that?

Learner: I am just saying because I don't know how universities operate.

Interviewer: okay, I hear you.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: my parents are trying very hard to make sure that I pass my matric with flying colours, I know for sure that they don't have money to give me, but they love me. They always encourage me to study even if we don't live in a good environment.

118

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: mmm, here at school we are overcrowded. Some learners are not focused, you may find that they make noise and interrupt some of the important sessions. At home I try to study but is not a quiet place. I don't have a specific room that I must use to study. I have a responsibility to fetch a child at day care, I have to walk long distance from my school to day care, when I arrive home, I am tired. This really affect my studies because is everyday routine.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 3)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Ikusasalethu Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, I am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

119

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my father, my mother, and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: yes, both are working.

Interviewer: What kind of work do your parents hold?

Learner: My father work as a security guard while my mother work as a domestic worker.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: my parents did not go to school.

Interviewer: what do you mean if you say they did not go to school, are you saying that they did not even go to primary?

Learner: mmm, my father grew up from rural areas, they were forced to take cattle's for grazing every day. My mother come from another country; she came in South Africa looking for a job.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

 Learner: I am a doing science and maths.

 I chose this stream because I like sciences and numbers.

Interviewer: wow! Are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: not really ma'am.

Interviewer: why you say not really?

Learner: because I am not an A student.

Interviewer: Did you pass well in Grade 11?

Learner: yes, I passed well last year.

Interviewer: how about your 2022 June results?

Learner: I did very well ma'am, I got level 6 in both maths and science.

Interviewer: why you say you are not an A student?

Learner: I say so because for me to be in level 6 it's my teachers' efforts.

Interviewer: why you say that?

Learner: aaa, my science teacher invites a retired teacher who was working at the top performing school to come and do the reinforcement, I am going to use this opportunity to my advantage because I am having two teachers bringing different skills and expertise to make sure that I excel in my studies.

Interviewer: ooh that is good, so you also attend extra classes?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to do BSC Computer science.

Interviewer: you want to study computer science?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go and what will you study there?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and Wits University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, our LO teacher gave us booklets to look at.

Interviewer: did she gave guidance on how to apply to universities?

Learner: yes, she explained to us.

Interviewer: Okay, how do you think this school has prepared you for further education and for choosing a suitable career? Explain.

Learner: yes, I had teachers that care of me, they talk to me on regular basis and trying to show me the right way and correct me if I do something out of order. There are many errors I have made along the way that they have pointed out, but I also had teachers who treated me like their own child, who took me and guide me.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: aaa, number one, in my opinion, is poverty; for one, my mother is uh, let me put it this way. Most of the information may be in internet cafes; thus, my mum currently cannot afford. Therefore, poverty becomes a barrier since I do not think I would succeed if I were not as serious as I am. Most of the time, poverty causes us to close our eyes, kind of like the donkey. We fail to see that there are others who can assist us.in most cases, you see learners concentrating on their personal lives, which eventually brings them back.

I know that the only way to alter my family condition is to go to school, which suggest that while poverty can make it difficult to enrol in higher education institutions, education can be a path out of it. The fact that I can alter my home circumstances for free and that attending school is the sole option to do so greatly drives me. This encourages me to work hard in my studies so that I can qualify for a bursary the following year.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: what do you know?

Learner: our LO teacher told us about bursaries and study loans.

Interviewer: so, you have the information about funding, tell me more?

Learner: she told us that we can access higher education even if we don't have money.

Interviewer: that's good, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, yes, most of the learners are not aware of the entry requirements in the university. You may find that some pass Grade 12 but not meeting the requirements to enter universities. Money could be another factor as I have mentioned it before. I can see from a prospectus for Wits I have at home that rates are higher. This encourages me to work hard in my studies to receive a bursary that will pay for everything as I am aware that my mother cannot afford it.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: aaa, my parents take education very seriously; they wish that if it was possible for them to turn back time they will do so because life is difficult without a

good job. My parents want me to go to school even though they won't afford to pay for my tuition fees. I know that the only way to alter my family condition is to go to school," which suggest that while poverty can make it difficult to enrol in higher education institutions, education can be a path out of it.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: mmm, I have enough time to study at home because we attend classes until 16:30 at school. I stay in a noisy environment, but I make my way to study. It is a struggle to concentrate while is noisy outside.

Interviewer: ooh sorry, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (Participant 4)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Kgatelopele Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, I am a learner in this school.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum, and siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: yes, both are working.

Interviewer: What kind of work do your parents hold?

Learner: My parents work at a retail shop.

Interviewer: okay, what level of education do your parents have?

Learner: They both have matric.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am a doing history and geography.

I chose these subjects because are easy to pass.

Interviewer: you thought are easy?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: you were not thinking of any career path or anything?

Learner: yes, when we go to Grade 10 no proper orientation regarding career choices. We just follow our friends wherever they go. No guidance at all.

Interviewer: how is it now?

Learner: I have an idea now.

Interviewer: you have an idea?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: yes, I want to study teaching.

Interviewer: you want to be a teacher?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting, is teaching a good career for you?

Learner: yes, I love it

Interviewer: why you say you love it?

Learner: I just love to work with people.

Interviewer: okay, If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and University of Pretoria.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: There were student teachers in my school doing their practical's, they told us about these universities and how to apply for admission.

Interviewer: so, student teachers are the one who made you fall for teaching as a career?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: why you say so?

Learner: mmm, because when I look at them, they look young, and they also told us that they are from poor family backgrounds.

Interviewer: interesting, how well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: mmm, apart from the information we got from student teachers, the school never discussed anything related to universities or institution of higher learning. They go to an extent of choosing subjects for us in Grade 10 because they want everyone to pass in grade 12. I am aware that 36 points are required at Wits (University of the Witwatersrand),"27 points are needed for Bachelor of Education program at the University of Johannesburg, while 35 points are needed for other program, which takes four years to complete.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

 Learner: mmm, though question but let me try majority of us come from poor families, where our parents struggle to provide basic needs and wants. To me it is so difficult to raise money for tertiary while they fail to buy food. Everyone in this place wants to leave the countryside and go to a region with a higher quality of life. You have access to everything somewhere. Therefore, I believe that my decision to remain in informal settlement area has motivated me, for the fact that most political and corporate leaders come from informal settlements area.

Interviewer: what do you mean if you say they fail to buy food?

Learner: mmm, I mean that we eat food at school from morning until 16:00. When I arrive home, I find that there is no food. I must wait for my parents to come back from work so that we can have food to eat. It is a difficult situation I must say.

Interviewer: ooh sorry to hear that, do you have any information about the cost of higher education? How does this affect you?

Learner: yes, you mean the application process

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: tell me, what do you know?

Learner: mmm, what I know is that when you apply online at UJ its free and UP charge application fee when you apply.

Interviewer: I hear that you also applied at UP, did you pay the application fee?

Leaner: yes, I paid, my parents gave me money.

Interviewer: that's good, do you know about other costs involved?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: you know?

Learner: yes, yes student teachers also told us about Funda or Funza lushaka. I don't feel any discomfort because everything is free, textbooks free and get food for free and attend school for free, but if I paid, I would feel like I had to put in a lot of effort to make the money my parents are paying for something worthwhile.

Interviewer: what did they say about it?

Learner: they said its part of funding that we can get when we enrol for teaching course.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, did they tell you about it?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: what did they say about it?

Learner: they told us that it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

128

Learner: aaa, I am not sure I will answer you correctly because our challenges are not the same. You may find that their challenges are better than our challenges. They have good schools with good teachers, their families can afford to pay for their studies. when one is suffering, some get the spirit to motivate them so that they may work hard to alter the situation so that in future I do not suffer and the following generation does not suffer too, i suggest that poverty could lead to better outcomes. Others, on the other hand, accept the circumstances, wear it as their reality, and live by it without giving it a second thought. They believe that this is the end of life and cannot envision any other positive outcome.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of studying at institutions of higher learning? Explain.

Learner: mmm, my parents are trying but because of the type of jobs that they are doing it prevent them from assisting with homework's. They work long hours and a subject like History needs them to assist me because some of the things happened under their watch. I believe that my parents support is the finest since they give me information about the things, they observe in me. Therefore, my educators are unfamiliar with me and my vulnerabilities. My parents tell me straight out if you do this you will get this.

Interviewer: I hear you, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very good.

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: I have a lot of responsibility at home, including cleaning, dishwashing, and cooking. I cannot come to school to learn because of how far I live.

Interviewer: so, you have enough time to study at home?

Learner: mmm, it's not enough but I sacrifice the little time I get to study.

Interviewer: why you say a little time?

Learner: yooo, our house is too small and there is no specific study area. People are watching tv until late besides that sometimes we start cooking at 19:00 because we must wait for my parents to bring food.

Interviewer: ooh sorry, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: what could be a barrier?

Learner: money

Interviewer: why you say that?

Learner: if I don't get funding, I might have a serious problem because my parents will not afford to pay for my studies.

Interviewer: you said something about NSFAS earlier did you apply?

Learner: yes, I did apply.

Interviewer: be positive, do you have any other issue that you want us to discuss?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: okay, thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 5)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Kgatelopele Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, I am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my grandmother and my siblings).

Interviewer: is your grandmother the only person looking after you and your siblings?

Learner: yes, she is.

Interviewer: okay, is she working?

Learner: no.

Interviewer: so, who is providing for the family?

Learner: mmm, my grandmother is a pensioner?

Interviewer: are you referring to old age pension (grant) or for retirees?

Learner: old age grant from government.

Interviewer: I can hear that you talk about your grandmother only, where are your parents?

Learner: our parents died 10 years ago.

Interviewer: ooh sorry, were they sick?

Learner: no, it was a car accident (eish!!).

Interviewer: I am so sorry my child (we both kept quiet for a while).

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing accounting, business studies and economics.

I chose these subjects because I love commerce.

Interviewer: are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: so, what do you want to study when you passed you grade 12?

Learner: I want to be a teacher.

Interviewer: you want to study teaching?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: Do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and Northwest University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, not really but we are managing it with my classmates. We have very limited resources in school with no connectivity even at home my grandmother cannot afford to buy data.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: aaa, even though I attend school at no fee-paying school, I believe that my teachers are there to support me to get my top three performance in school. I am going to work very hard so that I get bursary, I know that I can compete with learners from fee-paying schools. They help me because they advise me how to behave so that I can obtain those things that I seek. Additionally, they help me to resist panicking, feeling ignored or threatened by my peers. Many learners at the university have attitudes, both positive and negative, so they advise me to be responsible. I am aware that life at university is an independent, individual one where you can select the companions and lifestyle you prefer. most of such discussions aid in my determining what I want and how to behave responsibly.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: eish! we don't have computers or other equipment for study, we do, however, have laptops, but we rarely utilize them. They are for us, but most of the time they claim to be busy. As a result, they must schedule a time for you to come use them, I believe they are 21.

The school occasionally provides laptops for us to use when researching and applying at institutions of higher learning.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: not really

Interviewer: why are you saying not really?

Learner: aaa, because we rely on teachers as our source of information, I believe that at some point they don't have all information that we are looking for about universities entry requirements and funding. it was a good thing that the school was providing them with computers so they could conduct research and submit applications to institutions.

Interviewer: okay, did you apply?

Learner: yes, I did.

Interviewer: did you apply for funding?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: good, which one?

Learner: NSFAS

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: hey, the costs are substantial, especially at Wits. I must work hard to secure a bursary to pay for my studies because I am aware that my parents cannot afford it. Even other learners cited the issue of high costs in university.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of studying at institutions of higher learning? Explain.

Learner: Yaa, I am aware that life at university is an independent, individual one where you can select the companions and lifestyle you prefer. most of such discussions aid in my determining what I want and how to behave responsibly.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: no

Interviewer: why?

Learner: my grandmother she is not educated, and she is old.

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: mmm, what I can say is that is too bad here. We don't have enough space to study because I also have siblings that are studying in high school. The house is too small for us. The level of noise in the area also affects our studies.

Interviewer: ooh sorry, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 6)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Siyabonga Secondary school?

Learner: Yes,

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum, and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: yes, but only my father is working

Interviewer: What occupation does your father have?

Learner: My father is a security officer.

Interviewer: okay, what level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, my father completed matric.

Interviewer: what about your mother, did she complete matric?

Learner: no

Interviewer: what is her level of education?

Learner: sorry I am not comfortable to talk about my mom's level of education.

Interviewer: okay, lets skip that one.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing humanities.

I like readable subjects.

Interviewer: I hear you, how is your performance in these subjects?

Learner: yooo, my performance, mmm, it's not bad.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to be a teacher.

Interviewer: you want to study teaching?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at University of the North and University of Venda.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: yes, I know about entrance requirements but none of the people around me are familiar with bursaries.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: aaa, I will talk about teaching, teachers teach us. I don't think we will get people like them in universities. Our teachers spoon feed us. They talk to us and guide us on how to study, they want us to pass. They don't have much information about access to higher education, especially the APS.

Interviewer: I am happy to hear that.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: eish! Money could be the problem. I also think that lack of information on how to apply funds could be a challenge as well. Most of our teachers are old and I believed they graduated long time ago, they might not have recent information about funding at universities. Most people don't want to become anything at all; we are not that ambitious. Actually, we have tendency to only think about having fun; we don't worry about schoolwork at all.

Interviewer: I hear that you talk about money, do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I know about entrance requirements but none of the people around me are familiar with bursaries. I wish I can get that information for funding soon.

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, what do you know?

Learner: I heard about bursaries and student loans.

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, I am not sure but what I know is that is someone does have money to go to university, they must consider studying very hard to get a bursary. Most people don't want to become anything at all; we are not that ambitious. Actually, we have tendency to only think about having fun; we don't worry about schoolwork at all.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: yooo, my parents are very supportive, but they don't have money to pay for my studies next year. We are living in a poor environment affected by poverty; it is difficult to have everything while my parents can't even afford to buy basics.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very good.

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: aaa, It is difficult to study at home because I share a room with my siblings, sometimes they make noise for me. I cannot concentrate on my studies while they are awake. I wish I have a study room.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: I want a bursary

Interviewer: did you apply for a bursary?

Learner: no

Interviewer: it's not too late, you can still apply

Learner: are you sure?

Interviewer: yes, do you have any other question or concern?

Learner: no, I am fine at least there is a hope.

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 7)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Siyabonga Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my mum and my siblings).

Interviewer: is your mum employed?

Learner: currently she is not working, she was working but she was retrenched.

Interviewer: retrenched?

Learner: the company that she was working for had financial difficulties due to covid 19.

Interviewer: ooh sorry, what occupation did she occupy then?

Learner: she was working as a waitress.

Interviewer: ooh I see, what is the level of your mums' education, did they go to college or university?

Learner: mmm, my mother a matric certificate but now she is improving her level of education, she is a student at UNISA.

Interviewer: wow! Which qualification is she doing?

Learner: she enrolled for BED degree.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am a doing science.

Interviewer: why are you doing whose subjects?

Learner: mmm, the most interesting subject for me is Life science, I make sure that I get total in all class activities. I like this subject with all my heart. My teacher also told me that I am a top learner in the grade for this subject. Even in my lower grades I used to enjoy learning natural science.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to study BCUR.

Interviewer: you want to study nursing?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: aaa, my aunt told me that there is a stipend when a student enrols for nursing course.

Interviewer: wow! That's good, how well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: mmm, my LO teacher is trying even though is not enough because she can't teach career guidance only while she must complete the syllabus. She also encourages us to browse the information on the internet.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: the barriers?

Interviewer: yes, barriers or challenges.

Learner: aaa, I think number one could be poverty, i myself I don't have money to pay for my studies next year. I am just praying that things work in my favour and get admitted for nursing. I cannot afford to pay internet connectivity in the internet café.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes, through prospectors, for instance I have prospectors from Wits at home their fees are very high as compared to UJ.

Interviewer: you said you need funding for your studies right, what are you going to do to make sure that you secure your funding in university next year?

Learner: I am working very hard to get funding. I believe that I am going to get it if they really consider our performance.

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: yes, I believe that poverty is everywhere especially nowadays with high costs of goods and services. The very same learners in urban areas you may find that they are financially suffering just like ourselves. I also believe that life is not easy for them as they must pay everything water and electricity, some they still pay

money for their houses. Access to university can be a challenge for them as well because money is involved.

Interviewer: How supportive is your mum of studying at institutions of higher learning? Explain.

Learner: Yaa, ok, my mum she's very supportive, she even sacrifices her free time to make sure that we are fine in the house in terms of food. She works as a domestic worker while she's not busy with her studies. She always encourages me to study very hard so that I can bring a change in our family.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: aaa,there are difficulties at home because there is not a study area, my family is large, and the rooms are cramped. As a result, I must wait until everyone is asleep so that I may study because there is nowhere to do so.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing, I think we discussed all.

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 8)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Siyabonga Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am I am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad and my mum and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: yes, they are both working.

Interviewer: What kind of work do your parents hold?

Learner: My father work as a bank teller.

Interviewer: and your mother?

Learner: my mother is a nurse.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, my mother went to the nursing college.

Interviewer: and your father?

Learner: aaa, my father only has matric certificate.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am a commerce learner; doing accounting, business studies and economics.

I chose this stream because I love it.

Interviewer: you chose it because of love not capability?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: you were not thinking of any career path or anything?

Learner: noo, I never thought that I day I will be doing my grade 12.

Interviewer: how are you performing?

Learner: my subject combination is not that good.

Interviewer: what do you mean?

Learner: I chose mathematics instead of mathematical literacy.

Interviewer: are you having a problem with maths?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: what is your problem?

Learner: yooo, each time I practice maths alone I don't get it right; I need someone to practice with me at all times. I struggle a lot in mathematics.

Interviewer: what about your performance, is that good?

Learner: I doubt if I can qualify to go to the university.

Interviewer: why?

Learner: I never got 50% in maths; my performance is 40% even if I work very hard. I accepted that maths is not my strength.

Interviewer: so, Do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I wanted to be an accountant, but with maths at 40% I won't get a space there.

Interviewer: you want to study accounting?

144

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? Did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and Wits University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: I have booklets for UJ and Wits their APS is too high, 40% in mathematics is a no-go area for them. I won't be in their waiting list with this type of performance.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: yes, in terms of teaching they are trying, but I feel that something lacking behind in terms of career guidance. My teachers saw it in grade 10 that maths is not my strongest subject but for them they never thought that one day it will be the requirement for my career. I feel that the school failed me because they did not guide me accordingly.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

learner: mmm, there are so many things that might prevent us to go to university. For me number one will be performance in mathematics, if I don't get 50 % is over with my future career. Other learners cited that their challenge could be money because majority of learners are coming from poor families. South Africa has poverty, particularly in informal settlements areas.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: tell me, what do you know?

Learner: my aunt told me about bursaries and loans.

Interviewer: okay, what did she said to you?

Learner: she told me that I can access higher education even if I don't have money because there are bursaries for top achievers.

Interviewer: you also said something about study loan, what do you know about it?

Learner: I know that if I get admitted at university, I can apply for NSFAS loan.

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: aaa, I think lack of information about higher education, the entry requirements and poverty can prevent leaners to access higher education. I feel personal that I did not choose subjects correctly because of lack of information and proper guidance. Again, in order for us to be at university it all depends on our hard work. All I know is that continuing with your education is expensive, and that only drives me to work more in the classroom to earn a scholarship to protect my future. Lack of cash, because not all of us would be able to achieve the standards needed for bursaries.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of studying at institutions of higher learning? Explain.

Learner: aaa, my parents motivate me to study very hard so that I can get a bursary, they want me to study and make a change in my family. We are living in

146

a poor condition; my parents are not affording to buy the basic needs in the house. What I can say is that my mum also does extra work when she is free.

Interviewer: interesting, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: Since I lives next to a bar, if there is a party or other event that requires me to give up my time for them, I may have to take a break or go to bed since the noise makes it difficult for me to concentrate.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 9)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Ikusasalethu Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, I am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 19 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad and my mum).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: only my father is working.

Interviewer: okay, what occupation does your father have?

Learner: My father is a teacher.

Interviewer: what about your mother?

Learner: my mother is not working but sometimes she gets piece jobs.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: my father has a degree for teaching while my mother has matric.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am a doing general subjects, no specific stream.

Interviewer: why you chose general stream?

Learner: ma'am, I was looking at subjects that has practical component so that I can pass easily.

Interviewer: you were not thinking of any career path or anything?

Learner: no, I saw that other subjects are very difficult to pass.

Interviewer: so, you just want to pass your matric only?

Learner: yes.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to study hospitality, or anything has to do with tourism.

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and Northwest University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, most of the time I rely on Google to get information, I downloaded their booklets. Their entry requirements for my career is not that bad.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: Yaa, I personally get information from my father because he went to higher learning institutions. He is so helpful with the information but most of the time he is busy marking assessment of his learners sometimes we don't talk at all because of his busy schedule.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: mmm, to me, being unable to pay my tuition means I have more time to study since I don't have to worry about money," I will have to stay at home if my parents cannot afford to pay for my tertiary expenses since those who will earn more and do better. So, for me, not having to pay school fees motivates me to go to school and learn. The same situation might affect other learners in my school.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: what do you know?

Learner: my father told me about bursaries and loans.

Interviewer: that's interesting, so did you apply for funding?

Learner: yes

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, yes, other learners that I know I did not apply to go to university next year. Some they cited that they want to take a gap year while others said they need to look for a job. Some learners feel that they won't meet the standard of the lifestyle that university learners are living. Some learners have money to buy unhealthy products such as alcohol and drugs. I feel that other learners will laugh at me because I am poor.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: Yaa, my parents are so supportive; I feel so blessed to have a father that went to the university. It is much easy for me because he guides here and there. The challenge might be money because he is the only source of income in the house.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: At home, I don't have any difficulties but here at school, whether during morning or afternoon studies, there are some learners who have a poor attitude. It almost seems like they don't know what their end objective is. It is really challenging to study in such a noisy environment because they don't want to learn, they make noise, and they occupy all your attention. Those difficulties are the ones that can make it harder for me to study. The community makes decisions at home, and they have power to decide to play their radio all night long with speakers outside, which has an impact on us all, but especially on me.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 10)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 12 at Ikusasalethu Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 19 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum, and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: My father is working but my mother is not working.

Interviewer: What occupation does your father have?

Learner: My father work as an administrator at school.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, my father has matric cerficate while my mother did not complete her matric.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing humanities.

I chose this stream because I want to be a social worker.

Interviewer: you want to be a social worker?

Learner: yes ma'am.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to be an accountant, so I will continue with my accounting.

Interviewer: you want to study accounting?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: Yes, I did apply at UJ and Wits University.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: Yes, I used my phone to Google about the prerequisites, then I Googled about the ESKOM bursary and then I applied.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: the school does not have more information about universities, it is difficult because when it comes to career guidance schools are failing us as learners, they don't channel us to the right direction from lower grades.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: mmm, I am not sure but majority of us might have a challenge of funds because our families are facing poverty. I know of myself that my parents won't afford to pay for my studies next year. I am just praying that I improve my results because I also struggle with other subjects.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: tell me, what do you know?

Learner: I was told by my uncle that I can be able to access higher education even if I don't have funds. So, to me, not having to pay school fees is a good thing, some parents can't afford them because we are different. So, if we pass our matric with flying colours, we might end up earning bursaries and that will result in us not paying any expenses in universities.

153

Interviewer: yes, go on

Learner: he told me that I can access higher education even if I don't have money. He said I can pass very well I can get a bursary.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan, a student needs to apply for it in order to get funding.

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, yes, Due to the worry that some learners have applied and had their letters answered, it can help my studies, but I cannot even study well. If my friends tell me that they have received communication from university of Mpumalanga or University of Johannesburg and that they are only waiting on final results. I am saying this because I might not have money to enrol in institutions of higher education or secure any bursary due to my low grades.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: yes, my parents are very supportive they always encourage me to work hard so that I pass my matric with flying colours, I know that they don't have money to pay for my studies, but they are there for me.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: mmm, here at school is not a good place to study because other learners will be making noise. No proper supervision by the teachers. Besides that, we are also expected to write homework's and school portfolio work.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 11)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 11 at Kgatelopele Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am I am a learner in this school.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: My father is working but my mother is not working.

Interviewer: What occupation does your father have?

Learner: My father work as a police officer.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, they both completed their matric.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing commercial subjects.

I chose this stream because I want to work at banking industry.

Interviewer: wow! Good career choice, are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: yes, so far so good.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to study banking.

Interviewer: banking?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: No, I will apply at UJ and University of Pretoria when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: are these institutions offering this type of qualification?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, my cousin will assist me with the applications. She was a student at UJ.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: Yaa, I think the school is not playing their part, no career guidance or career exhibition taking place in my school. I fully understand that we live in a disadvantaged community, but I feel that something needs to be done in order to prevent the barrier of accessing higher education.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: eish! just because of the application cost because some universities seek R100 and R300 and our backgrounds are different," the application fee is a barrier to entering higher education institutions.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, what do you know?

Learner: I know about bursaries and student loans.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, most of us in grade 11 we are not aware that we need to study very hard because our final year report will be used to apply for institution of higher education. We know this information very late, and we cannot go back and correct it. I think lack of information is a barrier on its own.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: mmm, my parents are very supportive because they want me to pass my grade 12 with flying colours next year. They did go far in terms of education, but they show interest and always keen to assist with my schoolwork even though they don't know the concept. They always encourage me and are very supportive. They also make sure to praise me if I perform very well. They always contact my educators to check on how I am doing.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: eish! I think is better to study while I am home because people who are making noise get tired and sleep, so I utilise that opportunity. This can be very difficult for someone who does not plan their day properly, we live in the disadvantaged community, and we must manage time effectively to make a change in our lives.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 12)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 11 at Kgatelopele Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 17 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (mum and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: My mother is working.

Interviewer: What occupation does your mother have?

Learner: My mother work as a nurse.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, my mother has a nursing diploma.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing humanities.

I chose this stream because I want to be a lawyer.

Interviewer: wow! are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: yes, so far, I am doing great.

Interviewer: so, Do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to study Law.

Interviewer: Law?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: No, I will apply at Wits University and University of Pretoria when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: are these institutions offering this type of qualification?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: mmm, not yet but I will try to get the information as soon as possible.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: mmm, not really, they don't discuss anything about tertiary institutions. All I can say is that they prepare us in terms of teaching, they do teach us. My friends from town schools share the information that their teachers are giving them. I personally rely on them as a source of information.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: aaa, I think the APS could be the factor because we are too relaxed in this grade come next year things will change. High level of poverty, our parents are not having money to pay for our studies.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, what do you know?

Learner: I know about bursaries and student loans.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: yaah, like I said earlier that the entry requirements, poverty and lack of information could be the factor. Most of the learners in grade 11 are still playful because we lack proper guidance. Our teachers also teach grade 12 so they pay more attention to them than us.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: yes, my mum she is very supportive because she discusses the challenges of life and make me understand that we are not the same. So, when I am in class, I must know that some learners can be very distractive and waste time for others because they don't have targets to reach. So, I am very much aware that marks are earned not given.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: yoo, our house is situated near main road, the movement of cars, some will be hooting. The level of noise is unbearable especially on Fridays and weekends and sometimes there are accidents. It is so traumatising I must say.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 13)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 11 at Siyabonga Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am I am a learner in this school.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 17 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: both of my parents are working.

Interviewer: What kind of work do your parents hold?

Learner: My father work as a security guard while my mother is a cashier.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, they both completed their matric.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing maths and science.

I chose this stream because I want to be an engineer.

Interviewer: wow! Good career choice, are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: yes.

Interviewer: so, Do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to study engineering.

Interviewer: engineering?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: No, I will apply at UJ and Wits University when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: are these institutions offering this type of qualification?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: no, but I am hoping to get this information when the right time come.

Interviewer: you said right time, when is the right time?

Learner: when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: mmm, i think the school is focusing on producing grade 12 results but no assisting much in terms of information. I think they should care of our access to institutions of higher learning because we are their products. No one would like to see their products suffering in street.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: aaa, application fee can be a problem to most of us because you find that we must pay in different institutions. Entry requirements, for instance, most institutions want 60% of English, to me this is a barrier because is not my home language. To make matter worse our teachers will read in English and explain in vernacular and myself as a learner I am expected to know this language. It is a barrier because the Department of Education is not doing proper skill audit when they recruit teachers.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, what do you know?

Learner: I know about bursaries and student loans.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: aaa, I think lack of information could be a barrier, being born and raised in informal settlement limit ourselves in terms of accessing important information. Most of our parents are not having proper jobs which lead to poverty. Our parents cannot afford to pay tuition fees.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: mmm, my parents are very supportive when it comes to school related matters. They understand that it requires more time and efforts to get good grades. They support and guide me because they don't want the history to repeat itself. They know that education is the only key to success. My parents even asked me what I want to do after matriculation. When it comes to my job possibilities, they just inquire about what I want to study. Since I want to pursue engineering in my first year while studying, they understand and are supportive of my decision.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: When I arrive home, I have a responsibility to assist my siblings with their homework's, it consumes lot of time because they don't understand maths.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 14)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 11 at Siyabonga Secondary school?

Learner: Yes.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 18 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum and my siblings).

Learner: and my uncle.

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: My father is working but my mother is not working.

Interviewer: What occupation does your father have?

Learner: My father work as a teacher.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, they both completed their matric. My father also has a BED degree.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing maths and science.

I chose this stream because I want to do mechanical engineering.

Interviewer: wow! Good career choice, are you doing well in these subjects?

Learner: yes, so far so good.

Interviewer: so, do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: I want to study mechanical engineering.

Interviewer: mechanical engineering?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: If you intend to continue your education, where will you go? did you apply?

Learner: No, I will apply at UJ and Wits University when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: are these institutions offering this type of qualification?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: most of the participants I interviewed chose UJ and Wits, why you chose these institutions?

Learner: for me is because they are not far from here.

Interviewer: what do you mean if you say they are not far from here?

Learner: mmm, I am just thinking that if I get funding that will not cover accommodation I can travel to the university on daily basis.

Interviewer: ooh I see, it makes sense now.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: yes, I do I saw their booklets while visited my cousin.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: aaa, I don't think the school is preparing us enough because most of us when we go to grade 12 next year, we will have a content gap. I am saying this because teachers spend most of their time in grade 12 classes doing intervention classes with them.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: yooo, our performance because each of us will be judged based on our performance. Some teachers are lacking behind because they are not competent. Lack of resources in school could be a factor. We don't have labs for physical sciences and Life sciences in school.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, what do you know?

Learner: I know about bursaries and student loans.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: mmm, I think most of us in grade 11 we are not aware that we need to study very hard because we will be judged based on our grade 11 performance. My teachers will always say grade 11 is a pre matric. Poverty can also contribute to barriers of accessing institutions of higher learning.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain.

Learner: ooh, my parents asked me about the type of job I want when I finished my tertiary studies. I said that I wanted to be a mechanical engineer, and they questioned me if I know the type of qualifications required for the position. I told them that it will require maths and science to be accepted in institutions of higher learning. They promised to assist me with an extra classes tutor.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: eish! My Uncle will come home with his friends and play music while drinking alcohol until late in the evening, I cannot concentrate on my studies because of the noise level. I have to wake up at 3 am for me to catch up with the schoolwork.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

A. Biographical data (PARTICIPANT 15)

Interviewer: Can you confirm that you are a learner in Grade 11 at Ikusasalethu Secondary school?

Learner: Yes, Ma'am I am a learner in this school.

Interviewer: What is your age?

Learner: I am 17 years old ma'am.

Interviewer: Do you reside with your parents?

Learner: I live with my family (my dad, my mum, and my siblings).

Interviewer: Do your parents have jobs?

Learner: both of my parents are not working. Their company closed due to covid 19.

Interviewer: I am sorry to hear that, so what is the source of income in your family?

Learner: they started a small business

Interviewer: small business, what type of business?

Learner: they sell fast food.

Interviewer: What level of education do your parents have?

Learner: mmm, they both completed their matric.

B. Educational factors

Interviewer: What subjects are you taking, and why did you select them?

Learner: I am doing humanities.

I chose this stream because I want to be a teacher.

Interviewer: wow! You want to be a teacher?

Learner: yes.

Interviewer: interesting

Interviewer: Do you intend to continue your education after matriculation?

Learner: No, I will apply at UJ and Northwest University when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: Are you able to get information on universities, scholarships, and entry requirements?

Learner: no, but I am hoping to get the information soon.

Interviewer: When do you have a time frame maybe?

Learner: when I do my grade 12 next year.

Interviewer: How well do you believe this school has prepared you for future learning opportunities? Explain.

Learner: noo, I think the school is not guiding us from grade 10. They do teach us but where are we going after all this, we don't have direction. We get information from street and friends. I wish that they can invite motivational speakers to talk to us or organise a career exhibition.

C. Economic factors

Interviewer: What are the possible reasons that you or your classmates might be unable to continue your education at a university?

Learner: aaa, I think we are affected by the content gap because some of the topics were not adequately taught in grade 10. Some topics were trimmed so there is a content gap. This will affect our performance and the entry requirements in universities.

Interviewer: Do you have any knowledge of how much higher education costs? How does that make you feel?

Learner: yes, I do

Interviewer: you do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: okay, what do you know?

Learner: I know about bursaries and student loans.

Interviewer: that's interesting, do you know about NSFAS?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: ok, tell me more about it

Learner: it's a student loan

D. Sociocultural factors

Interviewer: Do you believe that youngsters who don't reside in areas with informal settlements experience the same obstacles to continuing their education at institutes of higher learning as you do?

Learner: yooo, our parents cannot afford to pay tuition fees. lack of information could be a barrier. Most of our parents are not having proper jobs which lead to poverty. Our performance against the entry requirements.

Interviewer: How supportive are your parents of your decision to enrol in institutions of higher education? Explain. Tell us whether your parents talk to you about finances and your career choice.

Learner: eish! If our parents are not working, it means that I won't have access to those things that would help me pass well to get to university or even having the money to apply for admission.

Interviewer: tell me, do your parents discuss career choices with you?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: they do?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: that's very interesting

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience while studying here at school or at home?

Learner: Yaa, It is hard to study at home because there is no table and chair for me to sit and study. Each time I study while sleeping and I just fall asleep so easy.

Interviewer: ooh yes, besides all what we have discussed, do you know of any barrier that may prevent you from accessing universities?

Learner: nothing

Interviewer: are you sure?

Learner: yes

Interviewer: thank you for your time and all the best for your studies.

APPENDIX G: Editor's letter

Nikki Watkins

Editing/proofreading services

Cell: 072 060 2354   E-mail: nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com

26 May 2023

To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that I have done language editing and proofreading of the master's thesis:

How Grade 11 and 12 learners from informal settlements navigate access to higher education in South Africa

by

Tsakani Nkiyasi Makwakwa

JMWatkins

Professional
EDITORS'
30 Guild
1993–2023
Promoting excellence in editing

Nikki Watkins
Associate Member

Membership number: WAT003
Membership year: March 2023 to February 2024

072 060 2354
nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com

www.editors.org.za

UK Centre of Excellence Editing and Proofreading Diploma
SA Writers College Certificate of Copy-Editing and Proofreading

All changes were indicated by Track Changes (MS Word) for the author to verify. As the editor I am not responsible for any changes not implemented, any plagiarism or unverified facts. The final document remains the responsibility of the author.