

**Mining for impact: exploring the antecedents, barriers,
and opportunities for social impact through bursaries**

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(Corporate Strategy)

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Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Master of Philosophy in Corporate Strategy at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Abstract

Recent research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has shifted its attention from financial performance to a stronger focus on non-financial outcomes like social impact. The main research question addressed the factors, challenges, and opportunities involved in creating social impact through CSR-funded tertiary education bursaries. To begin, a literature review found that while there is extensive scholarship on CSR strategy and implementation, much less is known about how and when CSR activities lead to meaningful societal benefits. This study aimed to expand current understanding of how CSR initiatives, specifically those providing tertiary education bursaries, can help address social issues in developing countries. Through the literature review, the study identified several important themes and concepts that illustrate the role of these bursaries in driving social change. Ultimately, the research produced a conceptual framework that highlights the core constructs and themes essential for maximizing the social impact of tertiary education bursaries, including confirmations, revisions, and new insights compared to existing studies.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Impact, Sustainable Development Goals, Communities, Stakeholder Theory, Education, Bursaries, Mining Industry, Social License to Operate

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables.....	xvi
List of Figures	xvii
List of Acronyms.....	xviii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the research problem and business relevance.....	1
1.2 Theoretical relevance	2
1.3 Research questions	4
1.4 Research aims	5
1.5 Research significance.....	5
1.6 Research scope	5
1.6.1 Theoretical scope.....	5
1.6.2 Physical scope	6
1.7 Overview of the research report	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Search criteria.....	7
2.3 Review of CSR and its key themes	10
2.3.1 Introduction and background on CSR	10
2.3.2 Review of CSR in relation to societal challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals.....	11
2.3.3 CSR and financial performance	12
2.3.4 CSR strategy	12
2.3.5 CSR implementation	13
2.3.6 Societal impact of CSR	13
2.3.7 Analysis and conclusion on the review of CSR	14
2.4 Stakeholder Theory and CSR	16

2.4.1	Introduction and background on Stakeholder Theory	16
2.4.2	Stakeholder Theory and the relationship between the company and the various stakeholders	16
2.4.3	Stakeholder Theory and CSR.....	17
2.4.4	Conclusion on the review of Stakeholder Theory.....	19
2.5	Review of education	19
2.5.1	Introduction on education.....	19
2.5.2	Benefits of education	19
2.5.3	The benefits of tertiary education and societal impact	20
2.5.4	Education and its contribution to societal impact through the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4	21
2.5.5	Analysis and conclusion on education.....	23
2.6	A review of the education financing gap	24
2.6.1	Introduction and background on the education financing gap	24
2.6.1.1	Insufficient investment in education	24
2.6.1.2	Debt and fiscal constraints	24
2.6.2	Education Financing Gap in South Africa.....	24
2.6.3	Analysis and conclusion on the education financing gap.....	25
2.7	Review of education bursaries	26
2.7.1	Introduction and background on education bursaries	26
2.7.2	Different types of tertiary education bursaries.....	27
2.7.3	Barriers to tertiary education bursaries: achieving the desired social outcomes.....	28
2.7.4	Antecedents to education bursary recipients	29
2.7.4.1	Comprehensive financial support.....	29
2.7.4.2	Mental health support.....	29
2.7.4.3	Mentoring and coaching	29
2.7.4.4	Internship and graduate training opportunities	30
2.7.5	Benefits and opportunities to create societal impact with tertiary education bursaries.....	31
2.7.6	Analysis and conclusion on bursaries and key themes identified	32
2.8	Review of the mining industry	35

2.8.1	Introduction and background on the South African mining industry	35
2.8.2	The mining industry and the social license to operate	36
2.8.3	The mining industry and social license to operate and CSR	36
2.8.4	Overall analysis and conclusion of the mining industry	37
2.9	Conceptual framework derived from literature review	39
Chapter 3:	Research Questions.....	40
3.1	Introduction	40
3.2	Main research question	40
3.3	Sub-questions	41
Chapter 4:	Research Methodology.....	43
4.1	Introduction	43
4.2	Research methodology choice	43
4.2.1	Research Question	43
4.2.2	Research paradigm.....	43
4.2.3	Research Design.....	44
4.3	Research Setting and Population	44
4.4	Population and sampling approach	44
4.4.1	Stakeholder group 1	45
4.4.2	Stakeholder group 2.....	45
4.4.3	Stakeholder group 3.....	45
4.4.4	Stakeholder group 4.....	46
4.5	Unit of analysis and unit of observation	46
4.5.1	Level of analysis.....	46
4.5.2	Unit of observation	46
4.6	Sampling method and inclusion criteria	47
4.6.1	Sampling method	47
4.6.2	Selection criteria for participants.....	47
4.7	Sample size	48
4.8	Research instrument.....	50
4.9	Data collection process	52
4.10	Data preparation and analysis approach	53
4.11	Research quality and rigour.....	54

4.12	Limitations of the research design and methods	55
4.12.1	Limitations of the research study and the researcher	55
4.13	Ethical considerations.....	56
Chapter 5:	Findings	58
5.1	Introduction to the Findings	58
5.2	Presentation of Findings.....	59
5.3	Research sub-question 1: Findings related to the antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries.....	61
5.3.1	Introduction to the overviews of themes identified as antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact	61
5.3.2	Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiary. Theme 1 – Support	62
5.3.3	Support sub-theme 1 – Comprehensive financial support.....	63
5.3.3.1	Evidence of comprehensive financial support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact	63
5.3.3.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of comprehensive financial support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact	64
5.3.4	Support sub-theme 2 – Mental health support	65
5.3.4.1	Evidence of mental health support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact	65
5.3.4.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of mental health support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries	66
5.3.4.3	Overall conclusion on support as an antecedent required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries.....	67
5.3.5	Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 2 – Mentoring & Coaching..	68
5.3.5.1	Evidence of mentoring and coaching as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries ..	68

5.3.5.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of mentoring and coaching provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries .	70
5.3.5.3	Conclusion on mentoring and coaching provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	71
5.3.6	Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiary. Theme 3 – Internship & graduate training opportunities.....	72
5.3.6.1	Evidence of internship and graduate training opportunities as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiary	72
5.3.6.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of Internship and graduate training opportunities as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiary.....	74
5.3.6.3	Conclusion on internship and graduate training opportunities provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	75
5.4	Research sub-question 2: Findings related to the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries.....	75
5.4.1	Introduction on the overviews of themes identified as barriers to CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	75
5.4.2	Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 1 – Prior academic success and subject choices	77
5.4.2.1	Evidence of prior academic success and subject choices as a barrier to CSR bursary programs creating social impact	77
5.4.2.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence, prior academic success and subject choices as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact.....	79
5.4.2.3	Conclusion on prior academic success and subject choices as a barrier to CSR bursary programs creating social impact	80

5.4.3	Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 2 – Bursary implementation policies and procedures	81
5.4.3.1	Evidence of bursary implementation policies and procedures as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries	81
5.4.3.2	In case and cross-case analysis of bursary implementation policies and procedures as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries	83
5.4.3.3	Conclusion on bursary implementation policies and procedures as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries	84
5.5	Research sub-question 3: Findings related to the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community.....	85
5.5.1	Introduction on the overviews of themes identified as benefits accruing to the community because of having mining bursary recipients as graduates in the community	85
5.5.2	Findings relating to the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community. Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits to recipients, their families, the community and region.....	86
5.5.2.1	Evidence of Socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and the region	86
5.5.2.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and the region....	91
5.5.2.3	Conclusion on socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and region	92
5.5.3	Findings related to the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community. Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design increasing education and employment levels in the community.....	93
5.5.3.1	Evidence of the multipurpose bursary design increasing education and employment levels in the community	93

5.5.3.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of the multipurpose bursary design, increasing education and employment levels in the community	95
5.5.3.3	Conclusion on multipurpose bursary design increasing education and employment levels in the community	96
5.5.4	Overall conclusion on the benefits accruing to the communities	96
5.6	Research sub-question 4: Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries.....	97
5.6.1	Introduction to the overviews of themes identified as opportunities required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact.....	97
5.6.2	Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 1 – Increasing the number of bursaries awarded	99
5.6.2.1	Evidence of increasing the number of bursaries awarded is an opportunity to create social impact	99
5.6.2.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of increasing the number of bursaries awarded as an opportunity to create social impact	101
5.6.2.3	Conclusion of increasing the number of bursaries awarded is an opportunity to create social impact	102
5.6.3	Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders.....	102
5.6.3.1	Evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders is an opportunity to create social impact	102
5.6.3.2	In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders, it is an opportunity to create social impact	104
5.6.3.3	Conclusion of evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders as an opportunity to create a significant impact.....	105
5.6.4	Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 3 – Contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients.....	105

5.6.4.1	Evidence of contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients is an opportunity to create social impact	106
5.6.4.2	In case and Cross-case analysis of evidence, contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients is an opportunity to create social impact.....	107
5.6.4.3	Conclusion on evidence for contractual and structured community CSR participation for bursary recipients	108
5.7	Overall conclusion on the findings on the opportunities that exist for increasing social impact in the community.....	108
5.8	Revised conceptual framework from the research data analysis	109
5.9	Chapter summary	110
Chapter 6:	Discussion of Findings.....	111
6.1	Introduction	111
6.2	Research sub-question 1 – Antecedents to creating social impact with CSR bursaries	112
6.2.1	Theme 1 – Support	112
6.2.1.1	Recap of theme 1 – support.....	112
6.2.2	Sub-theme 1 – Comprehensive financial support	112
6.2.2.1	Recap of findings on comprehensive financial support	112
6.2.2.2	Recap of the literature on comprehensive financial support	113
6.2.2.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on comprehensive financial support	113
6.2.2.4	Conclusion of the findings for comprehensive financial support	114
6.2.3	Sub-theme 2 – Mental health support	114
6.2.3.1	Recap of findings on mental health support	114
6.2.3.2	Recap of literature on mental health support.....	115
6.2.3.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on mental health support	115
6.2.3.4	Conclusion of the findings for mental health support.....	116
6.3	Theme 2 – Mentoring and coaching.....	116
6.3.1	Recap of findings on how mentoring and coaching are antecedents for creating social impact	116

6.3.2	Recap of literature on mentoring and coaching is an antecedent for creating social impact	117
6.3.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on mentoring and coaching	118
6.3.4	Conclusion of the findings for mentoring and coaching	118
6.4	Theme 3 – Internship and graduate training opportunities	119
6.4.1	Recap of findings on Internship and graduate training opportunities	119
6.4.2	Recap of literature on internship and graduate training opportunities ...	119
6.4.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on internship and graduate training opportunities.....	120
6.4.4	Conclusion of the findings for internship and graduate training opportunities.....	121
6.5	Research sub-question 2 – Barriers to creating social impact with CSR bursaries	121
6.5.1	Theme 1 – Prior academic success	121
6.5.1.1	Recap of findings on prior academic success	121
6.5.1.2	Recap of literature on prior academic success.....	122
6.5.1.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on prior academic success	122
6.5.1.4	Conclusion of the findings for prior academic success in earlier years of schooling.....	123
6.5.2	Theme 2 – Bursary implementation.....	124
6.5.2.1	Recap of findings on bursary implementation policies and procedures	124
6.5.2.2	Recap of literature on bursary implementation	124
6.5.2.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on bursary implementation	125
6.5.2.4	Conclusion of the findings for bursary implementation.....	125
6.6	Sub-question 3 – Benefits accruing to communities.....	126
6.6.1	Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits accruing to communities.....	126
6.6.1.1	Recap of findings on socio-economic benefits accruing to communities	126

6.6.1.2	Recap of literature on socio-economic benefits accruing to communities	126
6.6.1.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on socio-economic benefits to communities.....	127
6.6.1.4	Conclusion of the findings for socio-economic benefits accruing to communities.....	127
6.6.2	Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design	128
6.6.2.1	Recap of findings on multipurpose bursary design.....	128
6.6.2.2	Recap of literature on multipurpose bursary design	128
6.6.2.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on multipurpose bursary design	129
6.6.2.4	Conclusion of the findings on multipurpose bursary design	130
6.7	Sub-question 4 – Opportunities to create social impact in communities...	130
6.7.1	Theme 1 – Awarding more bursaries	130
6.7.1.1	Recap of findings on awarding more bursaries	130
6.7.1.2	Recap of literature on awarding more bursaries.....	131
6.7.1.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on awarding more bursaries	132
6.7.1.4	Conclusion of the findings for awarding more bursaries.....	133
6.7.2	Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders ..	134
6.7.2.1	Recap of findings on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders	134
6.7.2.2	Recap of literature on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders	134
6.7.2.3	Discussion on the findings with the literature on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders	135
6.7.2.4	Conclusion of the findings for improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders.....	135
6.7.3	Theme 3 – Creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes	136
6.7.3.1	Recap of findings on creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes.....	136

6.7.3.2	Recap of literature on creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes.....	137
6.7.3.3	Discussion on the findings with literature on creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes.....	137
6.7.3.4	Conclusion of the findings for creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes.....	138
6.8	Chapter summary	138
Chapter 7:	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	141
7.1	Introduction	141
7.2	Principal Theoretical Conclusions	142
7.2.1	Research sub-question 1: Antecedents to creating social impact with CSR tertiary education bursaries	142
7.2.2	Theme 1 – Support	142
7.2.2.1	Similarities with literature for research	142
7.2.2.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	143
7.2.2.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	143
7.2.2.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 1	143
7.2.3	Theme 2 – Mentoring and Coaching	143
7.2.3.1	Similarities with literature for research	143
7.2.3.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	143
7.2.3.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	144
7.2.3.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 1	144
7.2.4	Theme 3 – Internship and graduate opportunities	144
7.2.4.1	Similarities with literature for research	144
7.2.4.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	144
7.2.4.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	144
7.2.4.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 1	145
7.2.5	Research sub-question 2: Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	145
7.2.6	Theme 1 – Prior academic success	145
7.2.6.1	Similarities with literature for research	145
7.2.6.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	145

7.2.6.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	145
7.2.6.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 2	146
7.2.7	Theme 2 – Bursary implementation.....	146
7.2.7.1	Similarities with literature for research	146
7.2.7.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	146
7.2.7.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	146
7.2.7.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 2	147
7.2.8	Research sub-question 3: Benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community	147
7.2.9	Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits	147
7.2.9.1	Similarities with literature for research	147
7.2.9.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	147
7.2.9.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	148
7.2.9.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 3	148
7.2.10	Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design	148
7.2.10.1	Similarities with literature for research	148
7.2.10.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	149
7.2.10.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	149
7.2.10.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 3	149
7.2.11	Research sub-question 4: Opportunities for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	150
7.2.12	Theme 1 – Awarding more bursaries	150
7.2.12.1	Similarities with literature for research	150
7.2.12.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	150
7.2.12.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	151
7.2.12.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 4	151
7.2.13	Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders ..	151
7.2.13.1	Similarities with literature for research	151
7.2.13.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research.....	152
7.2.13.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	152
7.2.13.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 4	152

7.2.14	Theme 3 – Creating contractual bursary recipient community CSR programmes	153
7.2.14.1	Similarities with literature for research	153
7.2.14.2	Nuanced differences to literature for research	153
7.2.14.3	Distinct differences to literature for research	153
7.2.14.4	Conclusions for research sub-question 4	154
7.3	Research contribution	154
7.3.1	Potential confirmation and validation to the existing body of knowledge	155
7.3.2	Potential extensions to the existing body of knowledge	156
7.4	Recommendations to Management and Stakeholders	156
7.5	Study limitations	158
7.6	Areas for future research	159
7.7	Study conclusion	159
REFERENCES		161
List of Appendices		170
Appendix A – Informed consent form for interviews		171
Appendix B – Interview protocol		172
Appendix C – Organisation consent		174
Appendix D – Ethical clearance approval		175
Appendix E – Proforma editor non-disclosure agreement		176
Appendix F – Code book from Atlas.Ti		178

List of Tables

Table 2.1: The Literature Review Map	9
Table 2.2: Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality education targets relating to tertiary education	21
Table 4.1: Participants of the study	48
Table 4.2: Actual participants interviewed.....	49
Table 4.3: Research instrument – Interview protocol for the bursary recipients	50
Table 4.4: Assessment of research trustworthiness	54
Table 4.5: Participant groups and assessment of vulnerability	56
Table 5.1: Research themes from literature review and research data analysis	58
Table 5.2: The findings presentation map.....	60
Table 5.3: Themes and sub-themes emerging from research sub-question one and supported with research findings.....	61
Table 5.4: Evidence of comprehensive financial support	63
Table 5.5: Evidence of mental health support.....	65
Table 5.6: Evidence of mentoring and coaching	68
Table 5.7: Evidence of internship and graduate training opportunities	72
Table 5.8: Themes emerging from research sub-question two and supported with research findings.....	76
Table 5.9: Evidence of prior academic success and subject choices	77
Table 5.10: Evidence of bursary implementation policies and procedures	81
Table 5.11: Themes emerging from research sub-question three and supported with research findings.....	85
Table 5.12: Evidence of socio-economic benefits.....	86
Table 5.13: Evidence of multipurpose bursary design	93
Table 5.14: Themes emerging from research sub-question four and supported by research findings.....	98
Table 5.15: Evidence of increasing the number of bursaries awarded	99
Table 5.16: Evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders	102
Table 5.17: Evidence of contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients	106

Table 6.1: Summary of revision resulting from the comparative analysis of findings with literature	139
Table 7.1: Potential confirmation and validation of the existing body of knowledge ...	155

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Stakeholder framework	17
Figure 2.2: Intersection between stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility	18
Figure 2.3: Mining Industry at a Glance.	35
Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework from the literature review.....	39
Figure 4.1: A systematic thematic analysis process: A novel six-step process for conceptual model development in qualitative research	53
Figure 5.1: Revised Conceptual Framework.....	109

List of Acronyms

ABDC	Australian Business Deans Council
AJG	Academic Journal Guide
BRT	Business Roundtable
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
ESD	Enterprise and Supplier Development
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
GCs	Grand Challenges
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEI / HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PIT	Professional in Training (or Professionals in Training)
SDG / SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLO	Social License to Operate
SLP	Social Labour Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USD	United States Dollar
ZAR	South African Rand

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the research problem and business relevance

"Are corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives providing the societal good that they promise? After decades of CSR studies, we do not have an answer." (Barnett et al., 2020, p. 937). Over the years, CSR has attracted some interest from academics. Researchers have asked questions about the purpose of CSR, whether it is worthwhile for companies to engage in it, and whether it influences profitability and or affects stakeholders. Academics have researched CSR social impact, but the studies are very few when compared to the studies available on the impact on company performance (Halme et al., 2020).

The world faces many grand challenges, and corporations that are financially resourced can play an important role in addressing some of these challenges. In 2015, all UN member states adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, n.d.). The SDGs provide an action plan for sustainability for all. The SDGs provide a framework that can be used by corporates to pursue social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Sachs, 2012). South Africa, being a developing country, faces many developmental challenges, mainly driven by the high prevalence of poverty, high inequality, and high unemployment, especially youth unemployment. There is insufficient, relevant, and current data available to track progress in the attainment of SDGs (Stats SA, 2023). South African corporates, through their various CSR initiatives, can contribute towards addressing some of the societal challenges we face as a country.

According to the World Bank, many governments struggle to provide access to higher education due to limited financial resources and competing demands. This often means students from poor and or under-resourced countries have limited access to higher education. One of the ways in which this challenge can be overcome is for corporates that have access to more financial resources to sponsor students, enabling them to access quality higher education. Corporations could use resources set aside for CSR initiatives to sponsor access to tertiary education as one of the ways to reach the Sustainable Development Goal. Many corporates in South Africa already utilise CSR funds for various education initiatives. The question is whether the millions spent on CSR initiatives result in societal impact.

"The South African mining industry spent an estimated ZAR4.9 billion on social investment and development programmes in 2023 to improve the quality of life in mine-host communities. This expenditure was in addition to the ZAR13 billion the mining sector contributed to the fiscus through corporate taxes, PAYE [Pay As You Earn] and royalties, which benefited the country and its citizens." (Minerals Council South Africa, 2024, p. 1). According to the Minerals Council South Africa (2024), the most significant CSR initiatives made by the mining industry for societal impact include education and health facilities, educator and learner support in schools and provision of tertiary education bursaries.

The mining companies, however, have struggled to measure the societal impact of such education initiatives beyond simply quantifying the cumulative Rand spent on such initiatives.

The mining company selected for this study spent ZAR161.79 million on socio-economic spend, which includes money spent on Social Labour Plan (SLP) initiatives and Corporate Social Investment initiatives. For purposes of this study, both the SLP and CSI initiatives are collectively referred to as CSR initiatives. The mining also spent ZAR173 million in 2024 (2023: ZAR126.6 million) on bursaries, as well as training and development. The integrated reports and the Environmental, Social and Governance reports of this mining company only report on the cumulative spend of these CSR initiatives, as they, like other mining companies, have not been able to adequately measure the societal impact of these CSR initiatives.

CSR is a very broad topic, and due to time constraints, this study explored the societal impact of tertiary education bursaries within the mining sector. To limit the boundaries, the study was located on a specific mining company and focused on tertiary education bursaries awarded to recipients from a specific community in which this mining company operates.

1.2 Theoretical relevance

The research problem is underpinned by the debate as to whether CSR initiatives result in societal impact (Barnett et al., 2020). There is no question as to whether CSR positively impacts company performance. Many academic scholars have sufficiently addressed the relationship between CSR and corporate performance.

"A society-centric focus widens the theoretical and topical lenses, with scholars asking questions such as "How and when does CSR improve societal-level outcomes such as social and ecological conditions and create welfare for society at large? (Wickert, 2021, p. E2)

Companies may produce excellent CSR output, but usually, the magnitude of social impact may not be explicit (Wickert & Risi, 2019). There is a need for further research that specifically examines the social impact of CSR. Most companies are not sufficiently positioned to adequately explain the effects of their CSR initiatives, beyond financial impact (Wickert, 2021).

There are 17 SDGs, and the literature review suggests that a lot of researchers have focused on SDGs relating to sustainability, the negative impacts on the environment due to climate change, and harmful practices by corporations. There is very little literature focusing on single SDGs, such as education. During the literature review, the researcher identified that there is scope for researchers to add to the body of knowledge regarding CSR initiatives and the need to better understand the impact of education CSR initiatives and the societal impact of these on communities.

Societal or social impact is the effect that corporate actions have on people, communities, and broader society. Although social impact could be negative, the term is generally used to refer to a positive or good impact. Scholars have linked societal good to the purpose of a business. The Business Roundtable (BRT) (2019) corporate purpose statement expressed a shift from the purely profit nature of companies and the focus on shareholders as the main stakeholders of companies. A commitment was made to all company stakeholders; importantly, a specific commitment was made to respect and support communities (BRT, 2019). The benefits of obtaining quality education are linked to a higher likelihood of securing employment or self-employment, higher income-earning potential, better quality of life due to affordability and access to better healthcare, etc. The question is whether the benefits of obtaining tertiary education extend beyond the benefit to the individual obtaining the tertiary qualification to the community they come from.

"Our review finds that the massive CSR literature offers little evidence of the actual impact of CSR initiatives." (Barnett et al., 2020, p. 954).

The research question for this study is grounded in established academic literature and informed by insights derived from the comprehensive literature review. Through an in-depth examination of scholarly sources, the researcher explored the historical

development of CSR and the ongoing debates concerning its role as a strategic instrument for achieving societal impact, particularly through the attainment of the United Nations SDGs. Previous studies have addressed CSR in relation to all SDGs; however, Mio et al. (2020) advocate for future research to concentrate on individual goals or selected clusters of SDGs, examining their interlinkages through diverse methodological approaches.

Corporations employ a variety of CSR initiatives to generate social impact, primarily targeting communities within their operational footprint, while also contributing to broader societal development. Among these initiatives, education-focused programs are prominent and include infrastructure developments, such as constructing schools, capacity-building interventions like teacher training, and the provision of bursaries for both basic and tertiary education. Smolentseva (2023) emphasises that higher education, in collaboration with other stakeholders, serves as a critical driver of achievement for individuals, families, institutions, and society at large, reinforcing its significance in sustainable development strategies.

1.3 Research questions

The main research question is:

What are the antecedents, barriers, and opportunities for CSR bursary programs in the mining sector to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

Research sub-question 1: What antecedents are required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

Research sub-question 2: What are the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

Research sub-question 3: What are the benefits accruing to the community as a result of CSR bursary programs?

Research sub-question 4: What opportunities exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

1.4 Research aims

This research aimed to gain insight into whether the substantial investments in education-focused CSR initiatives by mining companies generate benefits that extend beyond the individual recipients to positively impact the communities from which the bursary recipients originate. The research further aimed to identify the antecedents, barriers and opportunities associated with societal impact resulting from CSR bursaries awarded to individuals sourced directly from mining company communities.

Consequently, the research aims to leverage its findings to offer actionable recommendations to management and internal stakeholders, providing them with a framework for assessing and enhancing their tertiary education bursary programs to maximise societal impact.

1.5 Research significance

This study aimed to enhance the existing body of knowledge regarding the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in generating social impact, particularly to address societal challenges within developing countries. Given the broad scope of CSR, education was selected as the primary focus due to its widely acknowledged role as a catalyst for socio-economic change. Specifically, this research concentrated on tertiary education bursaries. The literature review identified several key constructs and themes that provide insights into how tertiary education bursaries contribute to social transformation. Ultimately, the study resulted in the development of a conceptual framework outlining the principal constructs and themes related to leveraging tertiary education bursaries for creating social impact.

1.6 Research scope

1.6.1 Theoretical scope

The study explored how corporates utilise CSR tertiary education bursaries to create societal impact in the communities. The theoretical scope of the study was anchored in

the CSR, sustainability, stakeholder theory, education, education financing gap, education bursaries and the mining industry and social license to operate literature.

1.6.2 Physical scope

The study focused on a mining company, listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). Sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues are very important in the mining industry. The mining industry is a significant contributor to socio-economic development in South Africa. It has access to significant resources and spends significant amounts each year on social investments, including CSR initiatives. This is why the setting was chosen for this exploratory study.

1.7 Overview of the research report

This research report comprises seven chapters.

Chapter 1 – Sets out the background of the research problem, providing a business and theoretical perspective.

Chapter 2 – Provides a detailed literature review that is the basis for understanding the key constructs. A conceptual framework of the key constructs and themes concludes this chapter.

Chapter 3 – Sets out the main research question and sub-questions, informed by the literature review.

Chapter 4 – Sets out detailed description of the research design and methodology followed in the study.

Chapter 5 – Provides detailed presentation of the research findings emanating from the data analysis.

Chapter 6 – Provides a detailed discussion of the research findings with literature.

Chapter 7 – Presents the conclusion and recommendations to management and internal stakeholders.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The researcher conducted an extensive review of academic literature focusing on CSR, social impact, and education, with the aim of understanding their contributions to sustainable development and long-term societal outcomes. In line with Creswell's (2023) guidance on systematic literature reviews, the researcher examined the current discourse surrounding the research topic and question, identifying key debates and conceptual frameworks that shape the field.

This review was guided by targeted keywords, which enabled the identification of recurring themes and constructs across multiple studies. Through this process, the researcher gained insights into the historical evolution of CSR, the integration of sustainability principles, and the role of education, particularly tertiary education bursaries, as a strategic tool for driving social impact. The literature revealed how bursary programs have been positioned within CSR strategies to promote educational access, equity, and capacity building, thereby contributing to broader development objectives.

Furthermore, the analysis highlighted key constructs and themes explored by scholars, including the alignment of CSR initiatives with global sustainability agendas, the measurement of societal impact, and the effectiveness of educational interventions in addressing systemic inequalities. Major conclusions within the reviewed studies emphasised the growing importance of education-focused CSR programs as a mechanism for fostering inclusive growth and social transformation.

Based on these findings, the research refined its focus to examine the use of CSR-funded tertiary education bursaries as a deliberate tool for achieving positive social outcomes. This approach positions education not merely as a philanthropic gesture but as a strategic investment in human capital that aligns with corporate sustainability objectives and contributes to long-term societal development.

2.2 Search criteria

The researcher reviewed various articles and keywords used to search for relevant academic articles. CSR, CSR and financial performance, CSR strategy, CSR implementation, business purpose and business strategy, stakeholder theory,

environment, social and Governance (ESG), social impact, societal impact, social impact strategy, SDGs and outcomes. The search criteria used were for articles published in the last five years. The researcher used Google Scholar with the article rating tool to ensure that each article in the search had Academic Journal Guide (AJG) and ABDC ratings. The researcher only selected articles with an AJG rating of three and above and the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) rating of A and above as part of this literature review.

On the next page is a summary sheet of the key themes reviewed as part of the literature review. The literature review map is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: The Literature Review Map

	Main Headings	Subsection 1	Subsection 2	Subsection 3	Subsection 4	Subsection 5	Subsection 6	Subsection 7
2.3	Review of Corporate Social Responsibility	2.3.1 Introduction and background on corporate social responsibility	2.3.2 Review of corporate social responsibility in relation to societal challenges and sustainable development goals	2.3.3 Corporate social responsibility and financial performance	2.3.4 Corporate social responsibility strategy	2.3.5 Corporate social responsibility implementation	2.3.6 Societal impact of corporate social responsibility	2.3.7 Analysis and conclusion on the review of corporate social responsibility
2.4	Review of Stakeholder Theory and CSR	2.4.1 Introduction and background on Stakeholder theory	2.4.2 Stakeholder theory and the relationship between the company and various stakeholders	2.4.3 Stakeholder theory and Corporate Social Responsibility	2.4.4 Analysis and conclusion on the review of Stakeholder theory			
2.5	Review of Education	2.5.1 Introduction on education.	2.5.2 The benefits of tertiary education and societal impact.	2.5.3 Education and its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals	2.5.4 Analysis and conclusion on the review of education			
2.6	Review of The Education Financing Gap	2.6.1 Introduction and background on the education financing gap	2.6.2 The education financing gap in South Africa	2.6.3 Analysis and conclusion on the review of the education financing gap				
2.7	Review of Bursaries	2.7.1 Introduction and background on education bursaries	2.7.2 Different types of education bursaries	2.7.3 Barriers to tertiary education bursaries achieving the desired social outcomes	2.7.4 Antecedents to tertiary education bursaries achieving the desired social outcomes	2.7.5 Benefits and opportunities of creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries	2.7.6 Analysis and conclusion on the review of bursaries	
2.8	Review of The Mining Industry	2.8.1 Introduction and background on the South African mining industry	2.8.2 The mining industry and the social license to operate	2.8.3 The mining industry and social license to operate and corporate social responsibility	2.8.4 Analysis and conclusion on the review of the mining industry			
2.10 Conceptual Framework								

Source: Author's own.

2.3 Review of CSR and its key themes

2.3.1 Introduction and background on CSR

Holme and Watts (2021) define CSR as a business's commitment to contribute economically and to improve the quality of life, for its employees and their families, as well as to the communities in which they operate and society at large.

"Thus, CSR (and its synonyms) empirically consists of (clearly articulated and communicated) policies and practices of corporations that reflect business responsibility for some societal good. Yet the precise manifestation and direction of the responsibility lie at the corporation's discretion." (Matten & Moon, 2008, p. 405).

The scope of CSR has expanded over time to include not only obligations towards local communities but also broader societal responsibilities and strategic initiatives that impact corporate sustainability (Ashrafi et al., 2018). Contemporary analyses emphasise the integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into CSR frameworks, further broadening its importance (Kim et al., 2023).

In contemporary business contexts, CSR strategies are increasingly integrated with overarching business strategies due to their considerable influence on operational objectives and long-term sustainability. Although Wang et al. (2020) acknowledge significant advancements under CSR frameworks in addressing global challenges, uncertainties persist regarding the extent to which these efforts align with society's best efforts in promoting SGDs and enhancing broader societal outcomes. This ongoing need for critical research has been echoed in recent studies exploring the tangible impacts of CSR on organisational performance and SDG progress (Kumar et al., 2021).

The aim of society-focused CSR research is to gain insight into variables other than financial performance. To look at the environment in which a corporation operates and the role it plays there (Wickert, 2021). Societal focus of CSR concerns itself with ensuring that CSR initiatives enhance the social environment, thereby positively impacting society at large, whilst at the same time considering financial implications (Wickert, 2021). Other scholars have also shared this view of linking CSR to societal change, with CSR being viewed as a societal change agent, with positive CSR spend enhancing corporate brand value and social contract to operate (Matten & Moon, 2020).

Consequently, researchers are challenged to explore the use of CSR initiatives in the quest for the achievement of SDGs as a means of achieving societal impact.

2.3.2 Review of CSR in relation to societal challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals

A grand challenge is a specific critical barrier(s) that, if removed, would help solve an important societal problem with a high likelihood of global impact through widespread implementation. Grand challenges require coordinated and sustained effort from multiple and diverse stakeholders toward a clearly articulated problem or goal.

The most widely adopted GCs are the SDGs of the United Nations, which were adopted by 193 member states in 2015. The SDGs set 17 goals and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. They cover a wide range of societal challenges such as poverty, health, education and climate change.

The 17 SDGs were developed to address global social challenges and were a commitment for governments to address these challenges. Over time, corporations have increasingly realised that their broader responsibilities, beyond simply generating profit, have become active participants in sustainable development.

Many companies that prioritise sustainability are members of the UN Global Compact South African Chapter and provide annual reports on their progress towards achieving these goals (UN Global Compact, 2022).

Mio et al. (2020) highlight the ongoing need for research into how corporate actions can mobilise support for sustainable development.

Despite different aggravating and mitigating factors such as geographic location, industry, and company size influencing corporate contribution, companies still have opportunities to further SDGs by applying pertinent CSR strategies. Companies can act as change agents and facilitate positive social impact (Carroll & Brown, 2018; García-Sánchez et al., 2024).

Van Zanten and van Tulder (2021) posit that companies endeavouring for sustained success stand to benefit from aligning their corporate strategies with SDGs, noting that attainment of the SDGs could, in fact, be a key performance indicator for sustainability. Today, many companies, including South African listed entities, utilise SDGs as a sustainability metric as reflected in their integrated reports and ESG reports (PWC, 2019). Many Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed companies produce integrated

reports annually as part of a suite of reports within a suite of disclosures that address sustainability matters (Stats SA, 2023).

Some researchers argue that examining all 17 SDGs within a single CSR study is too broad; research focusing on the interrelatedness among specific SDGs could be more beneficial for both academic and corporate stakeholders. Conversely, Van Zanten and van Tulder (2021) advocate for comprehensive alignment with all the SDGs, asserting that this approach enables companies to better achieve their sustainability objectives and contribute to broader societal good.

2.3.3 CSR and financial performance

Wickert (2021) observes that contemporary CSR research has evolved from an exclusive focus on business objectives and financial performance to a more comprehensive consideration of societal issues and the broader role of business within society. A review of earlier CSR research reveals that scholars were primarily concerned with its impact on financial outcomes, serving to justify corporate expenditure on CSR initiatives. Dmytriiev et al. (2021) affirm Wickert's position, contending that CSR's foundation does not rest on financial performance, and, as the relationship between CSR and financial returns, although the association between CSR activities and financial performance is notable, engagements in CSR do not inherently ensure positive financial results. Recent studies further echo these insights. Highlight the increasing importance of environmental and social factors in evaluating CSR efforts.

2.3.4 CSR strategy

Fatima and Elbanna (2023) concluded that previous research assessed the success of CSR strategy by focusing on financial performance and not considering other indicators like social impact. Dmytriiev et al. (2021) posited that CSR may not improve profitability, but that is not the core aim of CSR. CSR strategy should not be based only on positive financial contribution. Therefore, there is a need for future research to focus on other aspects of CSR, such as its contribution to societal impact.

2.3.5 CSR implementation

Managerial responsibility in CSR includes social initiatives for stakeholders, such as communities, and initiatives implemented for the broader society (Dmytriiev et al., 2021). CSR implementation is complex, influenced by internal and external stakeholders and different contexts such as different regional locations, the country's politics, region, and industry (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Therefore, the context in which a company operates will determine its CSR strategy and implementation. The complexity of CSR implementation necessitates a solid CSR strategy, which will ensure that CSR is implemented, communicated, and evaluated. A company that strives for sustainability should ensure that its corporate strategy considers CSR. The incorporation of CSR strategy into business strategy means that the CSR strategy will not be an afterthought or possibly only aimed at avoiding harm but will be implicitly aimed at generating societal impact. Corporations can therefore use their knowledge of SDGs to derive concrete strategies and initiatives, as well as to measure CSR-related KPIs and to report back on the attainment of these to all stakeholders, in particular, the communities where they operate (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

2.3.6 Societal impact of CSR

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays a crucial role in enabling companies to create positive change within society. The focus of CSR spending has evolved from simply creating the appearance of doing good to genuinely addressing global issues, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Sachs, 2012). When designed to drive socio-economic development, CSR strategies can generate benefits for both businesses and the communities in which they operate (Gurun, 2023; Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Zhou et al., 2025).

Evaluating the societal impact of CSR often involves examining how these initiatives contribute to achieving the UN SDGs. However, academic research exploring the connection between CSR and the resolution of societal challenges, as well as the realization of the SDGs, remains limited. Wickert (2021) notes that researchers still face the task of reframing the rationale for CSR from a business-centric perspective to one grounded in social objectives, such as the fulfilment of the 17 SDGs. This approach provides a clear justification for investigating how CSR can deliver meaningful social impact and advance progress toward the SDGs (UN,n.d).

2.3.7 Analysis and conclusion on the review of CSR

The concept of Social Licence to Operate (SLO) emerged in the 1990s as a response to growing concerns about the negative impacts of mining activities (Cesar, 2021; Dauda, 2022). For this study, SLO is defined as "ongoing acceptance or approval of an operation by local community stakeholders who are affected by it and who can affect its profitability" (Bice and Moffat, 2014, p. 257). SLO represents an informal, yet powerful influence held by local communities, capable of determining the continuity and success of mining projects (Bezzola et al., 2022; Boutilier, 2014; Dauda, 2022). Although not a legal requirement, the loss of SLO, manifested through declining community support, can negatively affect a mining company's reputation and financial performance. Conversely, securing SLO fosters community ownership and protection of mining operations.

While many scholars emphasise the critical role of SLO, others question its significance, arguing that local communities face pressing socio-economic challenges such as poverty alleviation, health improvement, education access, and employment creation, which may limit their leverage in granting or withholding SLO (Dauda, 2022; Hilson, 2012; Standing, 2014). Within this context, mining companies increasingly utilise CSR initiatives as a strategic tool to obtain and maintain SLO (Dauda, 2022).

CSR activities in the mining sector typically include environmental stewardship, workforce integration, enterprise development, infrastructure investment, water security projects, and social programs such as housing, healthcare, and education (Cesar, 2021). These initiatives aim to mitigate environmental impacts, enhance community well-being, and strengthen trust between companies and local stakeholders. Over time, CSR has evolved from a compliance-driven approach to a proactive strategy for creating shared value and sustaining brand reputation (Hilson, 2019; Isacowitz et al., 2022). However, some scholars critique CSR in mining as "greenwashing," questioning its authenticity and long-term impact (Broderick, 2015).

Contemporary CSR research has shifted from an exclusive focus on financial performance to a broader consideration of societal issues and the role of business within society (Wickert, 2021). Earlier studies primarily assessed CSR's success through its impact on profitability, aiming to justify corporate expenditure on social initiatives. However, recent scholarship emphasises that CSR's foundation does not rest on financial returns; while the relationship between CSR and financial performance is

notable, CSR engagement does not inherently guarantee positive financial outcomes (Dmytriiev et al., 2021). Fatima and Elbanna (2023) further argue that prior research overlooked non-financial indicators such as social impact, reinforcing the need for future studies to examine CSR's contribution to societal well-being rather than profitability alone.

CSR implementation is complex, shaped by internal and external stakeholders and contextual factors such as geography, politics, and industry (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Effective CSR strategies require integration into corporate strategy to ensure alignment with sustainability objectives and avoid being treated as peripheral or reactive measures. Corporations can leverage the UN SGDs as a framework for designing CSR initiatives, measuring key performance indicators, and reporting progress to stakeholders (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024). Despite this potential, academic research on CSR's role in addressing societal challenges and advancing SDGs remains limited. Wickert (2021) highlights the need to replace the business-centric rationale for CSR with a social rationale anchored in SDG attainment, providing a clear justification for studies exploring CSR's societal impact (UN, n.d.).

The literature underscores a paradigm shift in CSR research from financial justification to societal impact, emphasising the integration of CSR into corporate strategy and its alignment with global sustainability objectives. While CSR may not inherently improve profitability, its value lies in fostering social change and contributing to the achievement of SDGs. Future research should focus on developing robust frameworks for evaluating CSR's societal impact, particularly in relation to SDG progress, to ensure that corporate initiatives deliver meaningful and measurable benefits for communities and broader society.

The literature underscores the growing importance of SLO as an intangible yet influential factor in the mining industry. While its role remains contested, evidence suggests that CSR initiatives are central to securing community acceptance and mitigating operational risks. By addressing environmental concerns, promoting socio-economic development, and fostering trust, CSR serves as a mechanism for sustaining SLO and aligning mining operations with broader sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, criticisms of CSR as superficial highlight the need for transparent, inclusive, and measurable strategies to ensure that these initiatives deliver genuine social and environmental benefits.

2.4 Stakeholder Theory and CSR

2.4.1 Introduction and background on Stakeholder Theory

This review examines the definition and description of stakeholder theory, as well as the key elements of stakeholder theory and their relevance to the research topic.

Awa et al. (2024) define stakeholders as individuals or groups with a vested interest in the success or failure of a company. According to Dmytriyev et al. (2021), stakeholder groups include shareholders and long-term debt holders, suppliers, customers, employees and members of the communities where the company operates.

Throughout history, scholars have held differing views regarding the fundamental purpose of a business and the corresponding business strategies that should be adopted. Early theorists contended that corporations fulfilled their obligations primarily by maximising shareholder value, viewing shareholders as the principal stakeholders. However, this stance has evolved over time, with academics such as Freeman et al. (2010) advocating for the creation of value for all stakeholders.

2.4.2 Stakeholder Theory and the relationship between the company and the various stakeholders

The closer a stakeholder is to the company, as depicted in Figure 2.1 below, the higher its priority and prioritisation by the company.

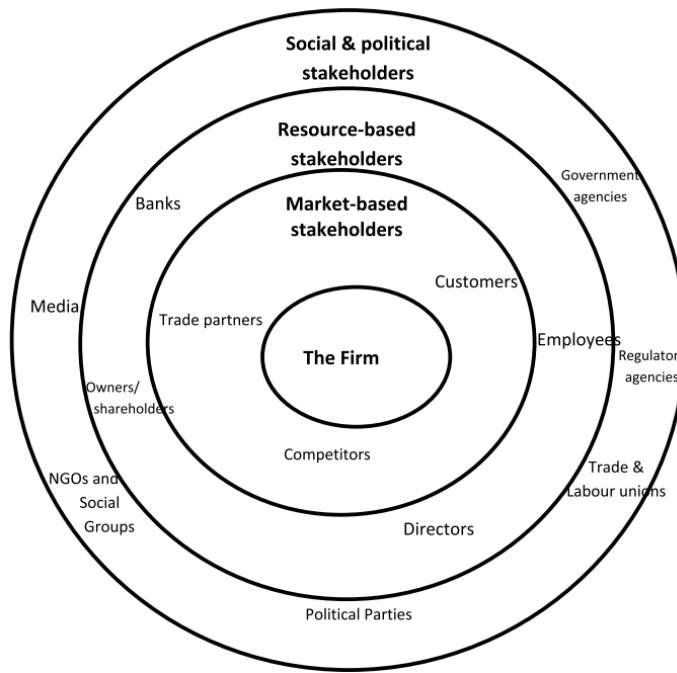


Figure 2.1: Stakeholder framework

Source: from Awa et al. (2024, p. 7).

Freudenreich et al. (2020) emphasise the mutual relationships between the company and its stakeholders, where stakeholders are both recipients and creators or co-creators of value in joint value creation processes. This is in line with Freeman et al.'s (2020) assertion that the relationships between companies and stakeholders are more meaningful than being purely transactional. Bocken et al. (2014) argue that a defining feature of sustainability-oriented companies requires the integration of ecological and social impact into the notion of value creation.

2.4.3 Stakeholder Theory and CSR

Awa et al. (2024) suggest that there is a need to review the link between stakeholder management and CSR. A need for scholars to improve their understanding and or perception of key strategic issues, including CSR issues and to incorporate these into corporate strategy. Stakeholder theory and stakeholder dialogue explain the quality of the relationship between CSR programmes, social interactions, environmental management and sustainable development.

Dmytriyev et al. (2021) highlight an intersection between stakeholder theory and CSR, noting that both frameworks consider communities as relevant.

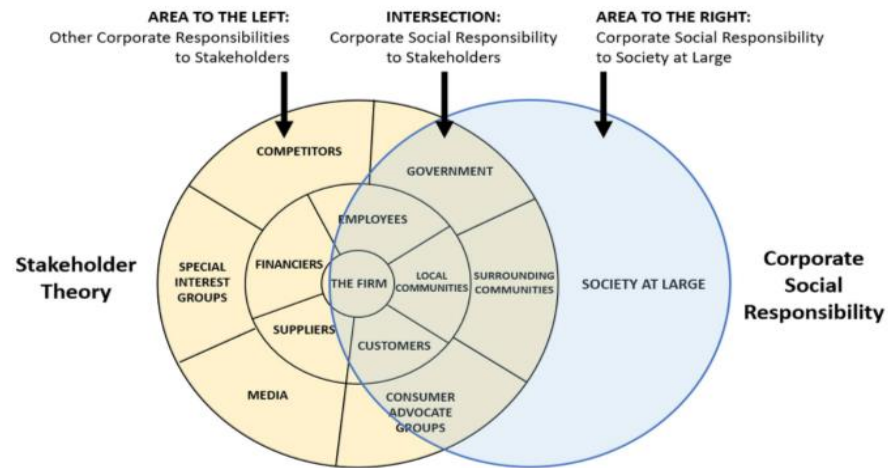


Figure 3. The relationship between stakeholder theory and CSR, organized per corporate responsibility (arrows above circles) and per stakeholder (within circles)

Note: This figure is adapted from Freeman and Dmytriiev (2017), which, in turn, was based on Freeman et al. (2007). [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Figure 2.2: Intersection between stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility

Source: from Dmytriiev et al. (2021, p. 1458).

These theories may be conceptualised along a spectrum, with stakeholder theory at one end and CSR at the other: the distinction is shaped by each framework's outlook on business, responsibility towards beneficiaries and direction of accountability.

Dmytriiev et al. (2021) contend that stakeholder theory and CSR can effectively co-exist. They raise the question of how significant social challenges, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, would be addressed if companies operated solely from the perspective of stakeholder theory, disregarding CSR. Although it is often considered the primary role of governments to tackle big societal challenges, inadequate governance and resource constraints in the developing countries necessitate active CSR engagements by corporates. The researcher concurs with Dmytriiev et al.'s (2021) assessment, acknowledging the overlap between stakeholder theory and CSR and suggests that companies can capitalise on this intersection to fulfil both community and broader societal needs. Consequently, it is essential for company executives to incorporate CSR initiatives into their overarching corporate strategies.

2.4.4 Conclusion on the review of Stakeholder Theory

Academics such as Freeman et al. (2010), Freudenreich et al. (2020) and Freeman et al. (2020) held the view that companies have different stakeholders and that there exists a symbiotic relationship between the company and each of its stakeholders. Value should be created for all stakeholders, but it posits that stakeholders do not rank equally, and therefore, companies may place the interests of some stakeholders ahead of others. The trick for all company executives is to weigh the interests of all the stakeholders and find a balance that may not meet all the stakeholders' expectations but gives something to all stakeholders. Dmytriiev et al. (2021) concluded that stakeholder theory and CSR, whilst being different disciplines with different theoretical frameworks, there is some overlap and that they can therefore co-exist.

This research sought to gain insights into how CSR initiatives, as represented in this study by a mining company's tertiary education bursary program, create social impact.

2.5 Review of education

2.5.1 Introduction on education

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation."

Nelson Mandela

2.5.2 Benefits of education

Appiah and McMahon (2002) assert that education provides significant non-market benefits, such as poverty and inequality reduction, fortification of civic institutions and processes of democratisation, improvements in human rights and political stability, and progress towards environmental sustainability. The non-market outcomes are instrumental in facilitating economic development, with indirect advantages from

education proving particularly significant for economically disadvantaged developing nations in Africa.

Carrol et al. (2006) contend that society reaps considerable rewards through increased tax revenues, diminished dependence on state social welfare programmes, heightened civic participation, reduced demand for primary health care services, and enhanced lifetime earnings.

Contemporary scholarship continues to underscore the extensive societal ramifications of education. Oketch et al. (2016) emphasise education's contribution to improved public health results and strengthened community resilience amidst climate change. Smolentseva (2023) posits that educated individuals acquire knowledge, skills and increased productivity, and thereby increase their earning potential, as well as income and social status level, resulting in economic growth for the society in which they belong.

2.5.3 The benefits of tertiary education and societal impact

Research conducted by Carrol et al. (2006) indicates that higher education yields significant economic and societal benefits. These include increased contributions to public finances through taxation on higher earnings, reduced dependence on state social welfare, elevated levels of civic engagement, such as greater voter participation, and improved health outcomes. Additionally, higher education is associated with a reduction in crime, as it enhances the returns to legitimate employment over criminal activities. There are also individual non-market benefits, such as informed life decisions, including fertility choices. Furthermore, these private advantages often extend to subsequent generations, as the positive impacts of education are transmitted intergenerationally.

Brennan and Teichler (2008) and Brennan et al. (2013) state that higher education results in reproductive and transformative changes in society. Smolentseva (2023) concurs with this view, stating that higher education, together with other role players, is an invaluable contributor to the achievement of individuals, families, groups (schools, government and industry), and society. Higher education, when adequately harnessed, has the potential to transform societies for the better.

Investment in human capital is widely recognised as a critical determinant of national development and societal well-being. Oketch (2016) argues that any country aspiring to achieve sustainable economic growth and improve the quality of life for its citizens must prioritise substantial investment in human capital. This perspective underscores the

strategic role of education and skills development in fostering long-term socio-economic progress. The mechanisms through which human capital contributes to economic growth are multifaceted, encompassing increased individual earnings, enhanced productivity, and positive spill-over effects across sectors (Keller, 2006; Oketch et al., 2016). While the financial returns of higher education primarily accrue to individuals who attain advanced qualifications, the broader benefits, such as innovation, knowledge diffusion, and improved institutional capacity, extend to the rest of society (Oketch, 2016). Consequently, higher education emerges not only as a personal asset but also as a collective resource that drives inclusive development and strengthens national competitiveness in the global economy.

2.5.4 Education and its contribution to societal impact through the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4

Education is the cornerstone for achieving all SDGs. Education is a key to jobs, growth and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2023).

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) relates to the attainment of quality education. There are various ways to attain quality education, and the UN has set out eight targets of quality education. Three of these relate to the attainment of quality tertiary education, as shown in Table 2.2 below, which highlights these. Hence, as noted in Table 2.2 below; target 4.3 focuses on ensuring equal access for both genders to tertiary education and vocational training; target 4.4 focusses on ensuring youths and young adults are equipped with the technical or vocational skills so they can either secure employment or successfully start small businesses, and target 4.9 focusses on developed countries providing scholarships to people from developing countries, so as to increase access to tertiary education and vocational training.

Table 2.2: Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality education targets relating to tertiary education

Target	Description
Target 4.3: Equal access to affordable technical and higher education	By 2030, ensure equal access for all men and women to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Target 4.4: Increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
Target 4.9: Expand higher education scholarship for developing countries	By 2030, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing states and African countries for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Source: All wording in Table 2.2 sourced from the UN (n.d.).

SDG 4, which focuses on quality education, emphasises equitable access to education and lifelong learning as essential drivers of socio-economic development. Quality education is widely recognised as a critical factor in advancing socio-economic progress, particularly in poverty-stricken regions such as many communities in South Africa (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024). This perspective aligns with UNESCO (2023), which identifies quality education as a fundamental mechanism for reducing inequality. Similarly, Unterhalter (2019), in his study on equity within global education systems, highlights both the challenges and progress achieved in promoting fairness and inclusivity in education. Furthermore, Boeren (2019) argues that education-related goals should not be considered in isolation but rather in conjunction with other Sustainable Development Goals, given their interdependent nature.

Despite its significance, Mahajan et al. (2024) note that SDG 4 remains underexplored in academic research, calling for future studies to focus specifically on this goal and its linkages to broader development objectives. This gap underscores the need for targeted investigations into how quality education initiatives can serve as catalysts for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

2.5.5 Analysis and conclusion on education

Education delivers significant non-market advantages, including poverty and inequality reduction, stronger civic institutions, democratization, improved human rights, political stability, and progress toward environmental sustainability (Appia and MacMahon, 2010). These indirect benefits are particularly crucial for developing nations. Furthermore, increased tax revenues, reduced reliance on social welfare, greater civic participation, lower healthcare demand, and higher lifetime earnings are cited as societal rewards (Carrol et al., 2006). Recent research underscores education's role in better public health, community resilience to climate change (Oketch et al., 2016), closing opportunity gaps, and fostering innovation-led economies Smolentseva, (2023).

Higher education amplifies these benefits: it boosts public finances via higher tax contributions, lessens welfare dependency, increases civic engagement, improves health outcomes, and reduces crime by making legitimate employment more attractive (Carrol et al., 2006). The positive impacts of higher education are intergenerational, supporting not just individuals but also their families and communities. Brennan (2008) and Smolentseva (2023) highlight higher education's transformative potential for society at large.

Investment in human capital is identified as a critical driver of national development and well-being (Oketch, 2016). The mechanisms are multifaceted, ranging from increased earnings and productivity to innovation and knowledge diffusion, benefiting both individuals and society (Keller, 2006; Oketch et al., 2016). While individuals gain direct financial rewards, the broader societal gains include improved institutional capacity and global competitiveness (Oketch, 2016).

Education is positioned as fundamental to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with SDG 4 focusing specifically on quality education. The UN outlines targets for equal access to affordable tertiary education (target 4.3), increasing skills for employment and entrepreneurship (target 4.4), and expanding scholarships for developing countries (target 4.9). These targets collectively aim to broaden participation in higher education and vocational training, particularly for disadvantaged populations.

SDG 4 emphasizes equitable access to lifelong learning as a cornerstone of socio-economic development, aligning with research highlighting education as a tool for reducing inequality (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2020). The interdependence of education with other SDGs is noted (Brennan, 2013), while Mahajan

et al. (2024) call for more focused research on SDG 4 and its broader development impacts.

In conclusion the above analysis, underscores that education, especially at the tertiary level, serves as a powerful catalyst for economic and social transformation. Its benefits extend beyond individuals to families, communities, and nations, making it a vital investment for sustainable development and the achievement of global goals.

2.6 A review of the education financing gap

2.6.1 Introduction and background on the education financing gap

According to UNESCO (2023), only 17% of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030, with SDG4 particularly lagging. There is a global education crisis, which at its core is a global education financing gap, driven by two core themes:

2.6.1.1 Insufficient investment in education

There is an anticipated funding gap of USD97 billion for lower-middle-income countries to reach SDG4 by 2030. At present, these countries spend just USD55 per learner annually in contrast to high-income countries, which invest approximately USD8,532 per learner (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2022).

2.6.1.2 Debt and fiscal constraints

Many low-income countries spend more on servicing debt than on education, with government debt levels averaging 72% of gross domestic product (GDP). This fiscal burden constrains the resources available for educational investment (UNESCO, 2023; Zhan & Wang, 2022). Rising education inequities and learning poverty: Should these challenges remain unaddressed, it is projected that lifetime earnings for students worldwide could decline by an estimated (UNICEF, 2023).

2.6.2 Education Financing Gap in South Africa

The South African government invests significantly in funding education at both the basic education level and the tertiary education level. The funding is geared towards public or

government-owned schools and tertiary education institutions. The funding includes funding for educators and small allowances for the running of schools at basic education levels, and funding of education institutions by contributing an amount based on the number of enrolments, as well as funding in the form of bursaries for students from poor households, and loans for students from the so-called missing middle households.

According to Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) and Mishra (2020), research consistently demonstrates that students from low-income households encounter substantial barriers to accessing higher education, primarily due to financial constraints and inadequate schooling. Tertiary education is often too expensive and out of reach for students from disadvantaged communities unless they receive financial aid through bursaries. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has helped, but the demand for NSFAS exceeds the resources available, and there are also issues relating to the "missing middle", who are employed but lack affordability. In contrast, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds benefit from supportive learning environments, private schooling, and access to extracurricular enrichment opportunities, which collectively enhance their prospects of admission to prestigious universities and academic success, leading to an intergenerational legacy of generational wealth or socio-economic deprivation, depending on which side of the social divide you originate from.

Despite all the support from the government, there is still a need for more funding, especially for tertiary education in South Africa. A lot of corporates also chip in, particularly in closing the tertiary education funding gap in the form of tertiary education bursaries, in part to develop their talent pipelines but in part as part of their CSR initiatives. This is evident in that these tertiary education bursaries do not use merit as the only criterion for accessing the bursary, but almost all also use financial need as a key criterion to qualify for a bursary.

2.6.3 Analysis and conclusion on the education financing gap

UNESCO (2023) reports that only 17% of SDG targets are on track for achievement by 2030, with SDG 4—Quality Education, significantly lagging. The global education crisis is primarily driven by a financing gap, including an estimated USD97 billion shortfall for lower-middle-income countries to meet SDG 4 targets (World Bank, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). These countries spend just USD55 per learner annually compared to USD8,532 in high-income nations. Additionally, many low-income countries allocate more resources to debt servicing than education, with debt levels averaging 72% of GDP

(UNESCO, 2023; Zhan & Wang, 2022). Failure to address these challenges will exacerbate learning poverty and reduce lifetime earnings globally (UNICEF, 2023).

In South Africa, government funding supports basic and tertiary education through institutional subsidies, bursaries for low-income students, and loans for the "missing middle." However, financial constraints and inadequate schooling continue to hinder access for disadvantaged students (Chiramba & Nyoni, 2024; Mishra, 2020). While NSFAS provides critical support, demand exceeds available resources, leaving gaps for students who do not qualify. Conversely, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds benefit from private schooling and enriched learning environments, perpetuating intergenerational inequality.

CSR initiatives, particularly tertiary education bursaries, play an important role in bridging this gap. These programs often prioritise financial need alongside academic merit, reflecting a dual purpose: addressing educational inequity and developing corporate talent pipelines.

The literature highlights a persistent global and national education funding crisis, with SDG 4 at risk of not being achieved by 2030. In South Africa, despite significant government investment, structural inequalities remain, necessitating complementary interventions. CSR-driven bursary programs emerge as a critical mechanism for promoting equitable access to higher education and advancing sustainable development objectives.

2.7 Review of education bursaries

2.7.1 Introduction and background on education bursaries

Various academic studies have been conducted on the use of bursaries and scholarships to close the education financing gap for the different levels of education, primary and secondary school (these two are categorised as basic education in South Africa), as well as vocational and higher education (these two are categorised as tertiary education in South Africa). The focus of this study is on tertiary education bursaries and the social impact thereof.

Many governments have used bursaries, in particular tertiary education bursaries, to increase participation in tertiary education of individuals from low-income households who would otherwise not afford the high costs of tertiary education (Harrison et al., 2018).

Bursaries serve a critical function of alleviating financial obstacles and promoting academic progress, achievement and student retention or persistence, particularly among disadvantaged populations. Bursaries offer financial support, relief from financial distress, freedom to focus on studying, and reduce the need to work, to cater for living and academic expenses (Aitken et al., 2004; Carson, 2010; Ryan et al., 2016).

In developing nations, bursaries have been shown to exert a considerable influence on increasing enrolment and retention rates, especially for female students. Academics have confirmed through past research the positive impact that tertiary education bursaries have on higher retention of students at tertiary education institutions (Aitken et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 2016). A factor linked to the retention of students at university because of the receipt of education bursaries is the reduced stress and enhancement of the ability to focus on studying. This was earlier identified in a study by Aitken et al. (2004) and confirmed by Ryan et al. (2016).

Studies by Harrison and Hatt (2012) on the impact of studies in the UK and Germany demonstrated that bursaries resulted in higher retention rates as well as a faster completion rate of degree programmes than those relying on parental financial support for their studies. This would ultimately impact the likelihood and extent of bursary students remaining and completing their studies at university, as well as the potential societal impact they can generate in the communities.

2.7.2 Different types of tertiary education bursaries

Bursaries and scholarship schemes can be categorised based on their eligibility criteria: some are merit-based, others are awarded according to household income levels and targeted at low-income households, while hybrid models consider both merit and financial need (Harrison et al., 2018). For the purposes of this study, the researcher considered the hybrid model, where both merit and household income inform the selection of most bursary recipients.

Typically, bursary recipients selected from mining communities in the Mpumalanga region, where the mining company operates, originate from low-income, historically disadvantaged backgrounds and often face significant barriers to accessing quality tertiary education, especially in costly fields such as engineering and geology. The mining company's tertiary education bursary scheme serves two primary objectives. First, it aims to develop a talent pipeline by placing some bursary recipients into graduate

traineeships or internships upon completion of their studies. Second, it seeks to create positive social impact within the surrounding communities by empowering students with tertiary qualifications, thereby enhancing their prospects for employment and generating socio-economic benefits for the individuals, their families and society at large.

2.7.3 Barriers to tertiary education bursaries: achieving the desired social outcomes

Bursary programs are also fraught with challenges and these typically from the side of the institution offering the bursaries relate to bursary program implementation and bursary program policies and procedures. Studies have identified the following challenges faced by bursary programmes. Some of the bursary challenges are a combination of administrative issues, such as policies and procedures, while others are due to a combination of internal and external factors.

Scholars have identified several factors impacting the outcome of bursary programs, such as the prior academic success of the bursary applicant. More often than not, there are stringent qualification criteria, especially the academic merit criteria. The academic merit criteria limit the potential number of recipients for the bursary scheme, especially those from low-income and previously disadvantaged communities, who may have been disadvantaged by the quality of schools attended and the level of resourcing in the schools they attended, as well as other social factors.

Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) argue that one of the most significant barriers to successfully completing higher education is rooted in the historical disadvantages created under apartheid, where historically disadvantaged students received low-quality education, evidenced by resourced schools. Kaye (2020) concurs, stating that inadequate support earlier on in the education system creates significant disadvantage prior to completion of high school, thereby reducing the pool of potential bursary applicants. The negative impact of inadequate support earlier on in life has a more significant impact on disadvantaged population groups, or communities, such as those in which mining companies operate. Once enrolled at university, bursary recipients also face other life challenges related to other social and life factors, other than financial challenges, which could further hinder their chances of completing their tertiary education studies and thereby limiting the success of the bursary program and, by inference, the social impact resulting from obtaining a tertiary education qualification (Ryan et al., 2016).

2.7.4 Antecedents to education bursary recipients

Ontong and Smit (2023) highlighted different factors that contribute to bursary recipients successfully completing their tertiary education studies, such as, the support provided to bursary recipients; including support for all financial requirements, provision of mental healthcare support, provision of tailored academic support, academic monitoring of bursary recipients whilst studying at university, provision of mentors and mentorship, and opportunities to get internships and or graduate traineeships post completion of studies.

2.7.4.1 Comprehensive financial support

Comprehensive financial support is defined as one that caters for tuition fees, resources such as laptops and textbooks, accommodation, and all other living expenses. Hatt et al. (2005) found that bursaries aid student retention and that bursary students are generally more motivated and determined to succeed. Ryan et al. (2016, p. 67) argue that "Scholarships are, however, an important tool where financial hardship is seen as the greatest barrier to participation."

2.7.4.2 Mental health support

Mental health support emerges from the literature review as an important antecedent to create societal impact through tertiary education bursary programmes. For purposes of this study, the researcher defines mental health as the absence of anxiety or fear that impairs learning (Harrison et al., 2018). Ontong and Smit (2023) found that mental health awareness and support are essential components of bursary schemes, highlighting the importance of access to professionals such as psychiatrists and social workers.

2.7.4.3 Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching provide students with access to individuals who assist them in addressing academic challenges, offer guidance, promote perseverance throughout their studies, and share pertinent information. While the terms "mentoring" and "coaching" are frequently used interchangeably, for the purposes of this study, they are treated as synonymous. Ontong and Smit (2023) and Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) emphasise that mentoring is a vital element for bursary recipients, especially for those students coming from disadvantaged communities. Mentoring and guidance from seniors could reinforce academic ambitions. Although mentoring traditionally involves senior individuals guiding juniors, Cage et al. (2021) identified opportunities for peer-to-

peer mentoring, such as through a “buddy” system, to provide additional support. By fostering a supportive network and encouraging open communication, both mentoring and coaching initiatives can help students navigate the complexities of university life and maximize the benefits of their bursary support.

Additionally, Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) suggest that combining tutoring, mental health support, and mentorship helps disadvantaged students develop resilience and succeed at university. Integrating mentoring and coaching into bursary schemes builds community among recipients, which is vital for those who might otherwise feel isolated by higher education’s challenges. Inclusive and culturally aware mentorship programs allow students to share experiences, reduce stigma around seeking help, and gain self-assurance to continue their studies. In the end, these comprehensive supports boost the chances of academic success and graduation and prepare students to become mentors themselves, sustaining a cycle of support within their communities.

2.7.4.4 Internship and graduate training opportunities

Tertiary education bursaries in South Africa do not necessarily encompass internship or graduate training opportunities. Certain corporations utilise these bursaries as a strategic tool for strengthening their talent pipeline, by ensuring a steady flow of new graduates into training programs who may subsequently fill positions vacated by permanent staff. According to Hunt and Scott (2020), the labour market is becoming increasingly competitive, and possessing academic qualifications alone does not always guarantee employment. Consequently, internships and graduate training opportunities are widely recognised as important factors that can enhance graduates' employability.

Sustainability issues are important in the mining industry, particularly in relation to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. From a sustainability perspective, partnerships between universities and companies providing bursaries can enhance students' sustainability education by integrating practical work experience through internships or graduate training opportunities. Such initiatives ensure that university students are informed about the SDGs and comprehend their significance (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

2.7.5 Benefits and opportunities to create societal impact with tertiary education bursaries

The benefits to individuals from bursary-funded degrees pertain to enhanced capabilities, including the opportunity to realise their full potential through increased access to financial resources, access to information, supportive societal norms, social networks, and broader cultural exposure (Harrison et al., 2018). The bursaries position recipients for successful careers and lives.

Bursaries not only facilitate access to quality tertiary education but also alleviate financial pressures, enabling recipients to focus on academic goals and eliminating the need for part-time work. This financial support allows students the freedom to participate in extracurricular activities and social events, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty to the university. Ultimately, the holistic university experience motivates bursary recipients to succeed even beyond graduation and develops a desire to give back, by sharing the knowledge and the benefits of bursaries with others from similar backgrounds, beginning with their families, communities and anyone they may encounter (Reed & Hurd, 2016).

Quality tertiary education leads to improved development outcomes for individuals, communities, and countries, because it eradicates societal poverty and social inequality that can benefit society, building people who can contribute to long-term sustainable development of society it gives students the capability to engage with complex, social, economic issues when individuals attain higher education, this has the potential of positive and transformative changes, to individuals, families and society one family at a time, per Ferguson and Roofe (2020), Brennan et al. (2013) and Smolentseva (2023).

This research aims to deliver comprehensive insights into the societal advantages and latent opportunities for expanding positive social impact through CSR-funded tertiary education bursaries. Academic literature highlights the importance of increasing awareness of such bursaries among all eligible applicants, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Reed & Hurd, 2016). A significant number of prospective students in these communities remain unaware of existing financial support options, especially when there is no precedent of university enrolment within the family. As observed by Chiramba and Nyoni (2024), parental educational attainment also affects the tertiary education outcomes of students. Targeted outreach initiatives to rural schools can facilitate greater application rates from disadvantaged learners; upon successful receipt of bursaries, these individuals are often positioned to disseminate relevant information throughout their families and communities. Ultimately, each graduate

supported by a bursary contributes to enduring societal benefits by promoting intergenerational access to higher education and its related socio-economic improvements.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) offer significant opportunities for generating societal impact. HEIs serve as platforms where students engage with and debate complex societal issues, and addressing these challenges can benefit society while advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Education and research are widely recognised as key contributors to the achievement of all 17 sustainable development goals (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2024). Tertiary education bursaries contribute to the student pipeline for HEIs, and CSR bursaries play a crucial role in enabling access for individuals from historically disadvantaged and marginalised communities. These bursaries provide recipients with opportunities to learn about and discuss sustainable development matters, many of which resonate with their own lived experiences. Ferguson and Roofe (2020) highlight the need to increase female enrolment and participation in higher education as a strategy for achieving SDG 4. Within the context of mining bursary schemes, there is clear potential to expand enrolment, particularly among women and promote gender equity by broadening the reach of these bursaries within mining communities.

Ferguson and Roofe (2020) suggest that HEIs in developing countries can advance the achievement of SDG 4 by establishing partnerships with stakeholders, including developed nations, multinational corporations, and local businesses, with greater access to financial resources than the governments of developing countries. Such collaborations can increase access to tertiary education and provide funding for learning and research, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes and socio-economic upliftment of individuals, families and communities. Consequently, CSR bursaries in tertiary education present an opportunity to either initiate or strengthen collaborations with universities and other third parties, thereby supporting progress towards attaining quality education as outlined in SDG 4.

2.7.6 Analysis and conclusion on bursaries and key themes identified

Tertiary education bursaries are powerful tools for advancing social equity and sustainable development. Their impact extends beyond individual beneficiaries to families and communities, enabling intergenerational educational advancement and breaking cycles of poverty. To fully unlock their potential, programs must address both

administrative and social barriers, expand outreach to increase awareness among eligible candidates, and provide comprehensive support to recipients throughout their educational journey.

Extensive research highlights the role of bursaries and scholarships in addressing education financing gaps across all levels of education, including basic and tertiary education (Harrison et al., 2018). This study focuses specifically on tertiary education bursaries and their social impact. Governments worldwide, including South Africa, have implemented bursary schemes to increase participation among students from low-income households who would otherwise be excluded due to the high costs of tuition, accommodation, and learning materials (Harrison et al., 2018). Bursaries alleviate financial stress, reduce the need for part-time work, and enable students to concentrate on academic success and retention (Aitken et al., 2004; Carson, 2010; Ryan et al., 2016). Studies in the UK and Germany further confirm that bursary recipients achieve higher retention and faster degree completion compared to those relying solely on parental support (Harrison & Hatt, 2012).

Bursary schemes vary in eligibility criteria, including merit-based, need-based, and hybrid models combining both (Harrison et al., 2018). This study adopts the hybrid approach, commonly used by mining companies in South Africa, where bursaries target students from historically disadvantaged communities in Mpumalanga. These programs serve dual objectives: developing corporate talent pipelines and creating positive social impact by empowering students with tertiary qualifications. However, bursary programs face challenges such as stringent academic criteria, administrative inefficiencies, and delayed disbursements, which can lead to student dropouts (Ryan et al., 2016). Historical inequalities rooted in apartheid-era education further exacerbate these challenges, limiting the pool of qualified applicants (Chiramba & Nyoni, 2024; Kaye, 2020).

Ontong and Smit (2023) identify multiple factors that contribute to the successful completion of tertiary education by bursary recipients, including comprehensive financial support, mental health services, tailored academic assistance, mentorship, and opportunities for internships or graduate traineeships. Financial support typically covers tuition, accommodation, learning resources, and living expenses, which significantly reduce financial stress and allow students to focus on academic achievement (Hatt et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2016). Mental health support also emerges as a critical component, as anxiety and stress can impair learning; access to professional services and group

sessions is recommended to address stigma and improve well-being (Harrison et al., 2018; Ontong & Smit, 2023).

Internships and graduate training opportunities are increasingly recognised as essential for employability in competitive labour markets (Hunt & Scott, 2020). Partnerships between universities and corporations offering bursaries can further enhance sustainability education and awareness of SDGs through practical work experience (Leal Filho et al., 2023). Beyond financial relief, bursaries provide recipients with broader capabilities, cultural exposure, and social networks, positioning them for successful careers and enabling them to contribute positively to their communities (Harrison et al., 2018; Reed & Hurd, 2016).

Quality tertiary education has transformative potential, reducing poverty and inequality while equipping individuals to address complex socio-economic challenges (Brennan et al., 2013; Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Smolentseva, 2023). CSR-funded bursaries play a pivotal role in expanding access for historically disadvantaged groups, promoting gender equity, and fostering partnerships that advance SDG 4 (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2024). However, awareness gaps persist among eligible students, particularly in rural communities, underscoring the need for targeted outreach initiatives (Chiramba & Nyoni, 2024; Reed & Hurd, 2016).

The literature demonstrates that tertiary education bursaries are a critical mechanism for improving access, retention, and completion rates among disadvantaged students, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and socio-economic development. While bursaries offer significant benefits, their effectiveness depends on addressing systemic challenges such as historical educational inequities, administrative inefficiencies, and funding limitations. Corporate bursary programs, particularly those in the mining sector, play an essential role in complementing government efforts by targeting financial need and fostering social impact. However, for bursaries to achieve their intended outcomes, policies must ensure equitable access, timely disbursement, and holistic support beyond financial aid to mitigate social and academic barriers.

The literature also demonstrates that tertiary education bursaries, particularly those funded through CSR initiatives, are instrumental in promoting equitable access to higher education and generating long-term societal benefits. By addressing financial barriers, providing holistic support, and integrating employability pathways, bursary programs contribute to poverty reduction, gender equity, and sustainable development. Strategic partnerships between corporations, universities, and other stakeholders can amplify

these impacts, aligning bursary schemes with SDG 4 objectives. Nevertheless, challenges such as awareness gaps, stigma around mental health, and structural inequalities must be addressed to maximise the social impact of bursary programs.

2.8 Review of the mining industry

2.8.1 Introduction and background on the South African mining industry

Figure 2.3 highlights the key figures summarising the key economic contributions of the mining industry in South Africa for 2024 compared with 2023. In 2024, the South African mining industry contributed approximately ZAR442bn to GDP, ZAR117bn in taxes and royalties, ZAR773bn in exports and employed 473,474 people. These highlight the important role and contribution of the mining industry, as well as the significant financial resources it has.

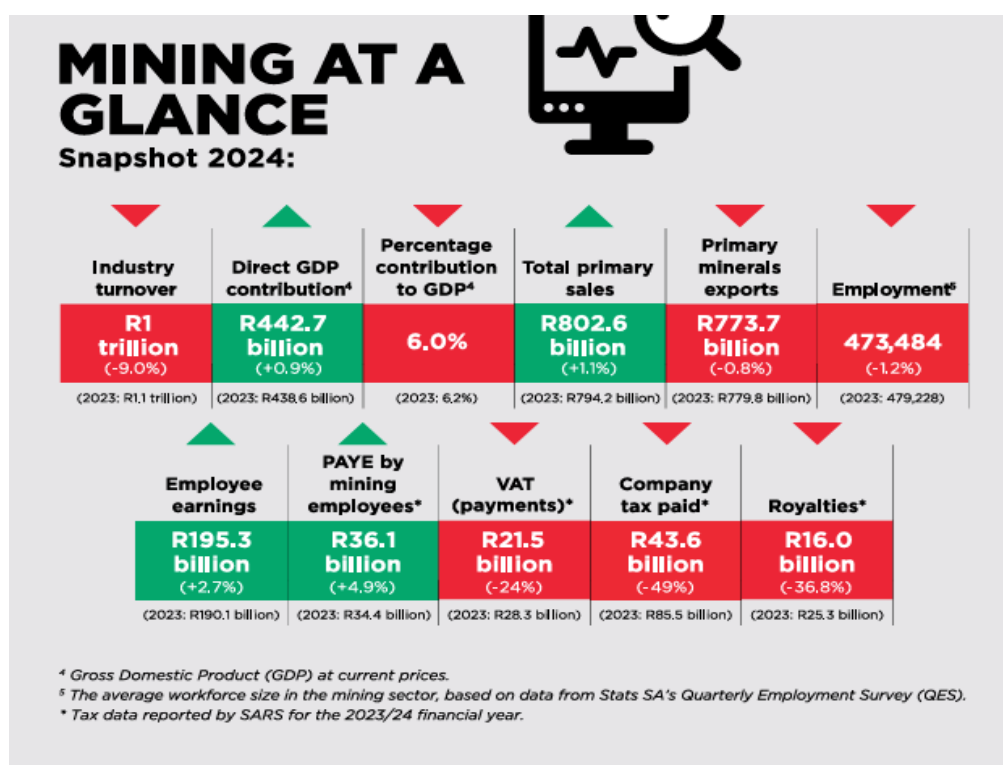


Figure 2.3: Mining Industry at a Glance.

Source: Minerals Council South Africa (2024, p. 6).

2.8.2 The mining industry and the social license to operate

The term "Social Licence to Operate" (SLO) emerged in the 1990s in response to increasing concerns about the negative impacts of the mining industry (Cesar, 2021; Dauda, 2022). While academic definitions of SLO vary, this study adopts the definition provided by Bice and Moffat (2014, p. 257): "ongoing acceptance or approval of an operation by local community stakeholders who are affected by it and who can affect its profitability". This definition of SLO will be used for the purposes of this study. According to Dauda (2022), Boutilier (2014), and Bezzola et al. (2022), SLO is an unwritten or intangible and informal power held by local communities, which can greatly influence the continuation and success of local mining projects. Even though SLO isn't a legal obligation, losing SLO, demonstrated through a decline in community support, particularly in local mining operations, may adversely impact a mining company's credibility and the financial outcomes of its activities. Additionally, once an adequate SLO is established, the community members may develop a sense of ownership and protection towards the mine. Therefore, counter negative perceptions and actions towards the mine.

Some scholars hold a contrary view, that the significance of SLO in the mining industry is debatable and question the critical role of local mining communities in determining the success of local mining projects. It is suggested that these local mining communities face pressing social challenges, such as alleviating poverty and its associated health issues, improving access to education, fostering economic development and enhancing employment opportunities, which may undermine the notion that they possess leverage to negotiate or grant SLO to mining companies (Dauda, 2022; Hilson, 2012; Standing, 2014).

It is in the context of SLO that mining companies engage with communities in bringing CSR engagements and CSR initiatives and their impacts as a tool for obtaining and retaining SLO (Dauda, 2022).

2.8.3 The mining industry and social license to operate and CSR

Mining companies typically engage in various CSR activities as part of their efforts to obtain and or retain SLO. Cesar (2021), in the paper on how CSR helps mining companies to earn SLO, highlights six ways in which CSR activities are conducted in the mining industry.

- Through the exploitation of the natural resources that mining companies access via their mining operations. Often, mining companies utilise water to engage local communities in ensuring that mining activities do not lead to pollution of water in the surrounding communities, as well as ensure that access to water is not adversely impacted by mining operations. Mining companies relocate local mining communities so that they do not suffer adverse effects due to being situated too close to mining operations. At times, mining companies may also create local community share trusts so that mining communities get a share of mining profits.
- Where possible, people residing in the local communities are absorbed into the workforce at the mine, as well as engage in enterprise and supplier development, so entrepreneurs can be onboarded as part of the value chain in the mining operations.
- Mining companies often invest in the development of local infrastructure such as roads, bridges, community halls, clinics and schools, which benefits the local mining communities.
- Investments in the improvement of water use are one of the typical CSR activities engaged in by mining companies, such as constructing water reservoirs as a water security measure for the mine as well as the mining communities.
- CSR initiatives in the form of social projects within and beyond the immediate vicinity of mining operations, such as investing in local housing projects, healthcare and education.

The mining industry has gradually moved towards utilising CSR as a means of doing good, by utilising profits generated from their mining activities to contribute to social good and to minimise the impact of their operations on the environment, thereby maintaining good brand reputation (Hilson, 2019; Isacowitz et al., 2022). Some scholars hold a contrary view of CSR in the mining industry, equating it to mere "greenwashing" (Broderick, 2015).

2.8.4 Overall analysis and conclusion of the mining industry

The concept of SLO emerged in the 1990s as a response to growing concerns about the negative impacts of mining activities (Cesar, 2021; Dauda, 2022). For this study, SLO is defined as "ongoing acceptance or approval of an operation by local community stakeholders who are affected by it and who can affect its profitability" (Bice and Moffat,

2014, p. 257). SLO represents an informal, yet powerful influence held by local communities, capable of determining the continuity and success of mining projects (Bezzola et al., 2022; Boutilier, 2014; Dauda, 2022). Although not a legal requirement, the loss of SLO manifested through declining community support can negatively affect a mining company's reputation and financial performance. Conversely, securing SLO fosters community ownership and protection of mining operations.

While many scholars emphasise the critical role of SLO, others question its significance, arguing that local communities face pressing socio-economic challenges such as poverty alleviation, health improvement, education access, and employment creation, which may limit their leverage in granting or withholding SLO (Dauda, 2022; Hilson, 2012; Standing, 2014). Within this context, mining companies increasingly utilise CSR initiatives as a strategic tool to obtain and maintain SLO (Dauda, 2022).

CSR activities in the mining sector typically include environmental stewardship, workforce integration, enterprise development, infrastructure investment, water security projects, and social programs such as housing, healthcare, and education (Cesar, 2021). These initiatives aim to mitigate environmental impacts, enhance community well-being, and strengthen trust between companies and local stakeholders. Over time, CSR has evolved from a compliance-driven approach to a proactive strategy for creating shared value and sustaining brand reputation (Hilson, 2019; Isacowitz et al., 2022). However, some scholars critique CSR in mining as "greenwashing," questioning its authenticity and long-term impact (Broderick, 2015).

The literature underscores the growing importance of SLO as an intangible yet influential factor in the mining industry. While its role remains contested, evidence suggests that CSR initiatives are central to securing community acceptance and mitigating operational risks. By addressing environmental concerns, promoting socio-economic development, and fostering trust, CSR serves as a mechanism for sustaining SLO and aligning mining operations with broader sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, criticisms of CSR as superficial highlight the need for transparent, inclusive, and measurable strategies to ensure that these initiatives deliver genuine social and environmental benefits.

2.9 Conceptual framework derived from literature review

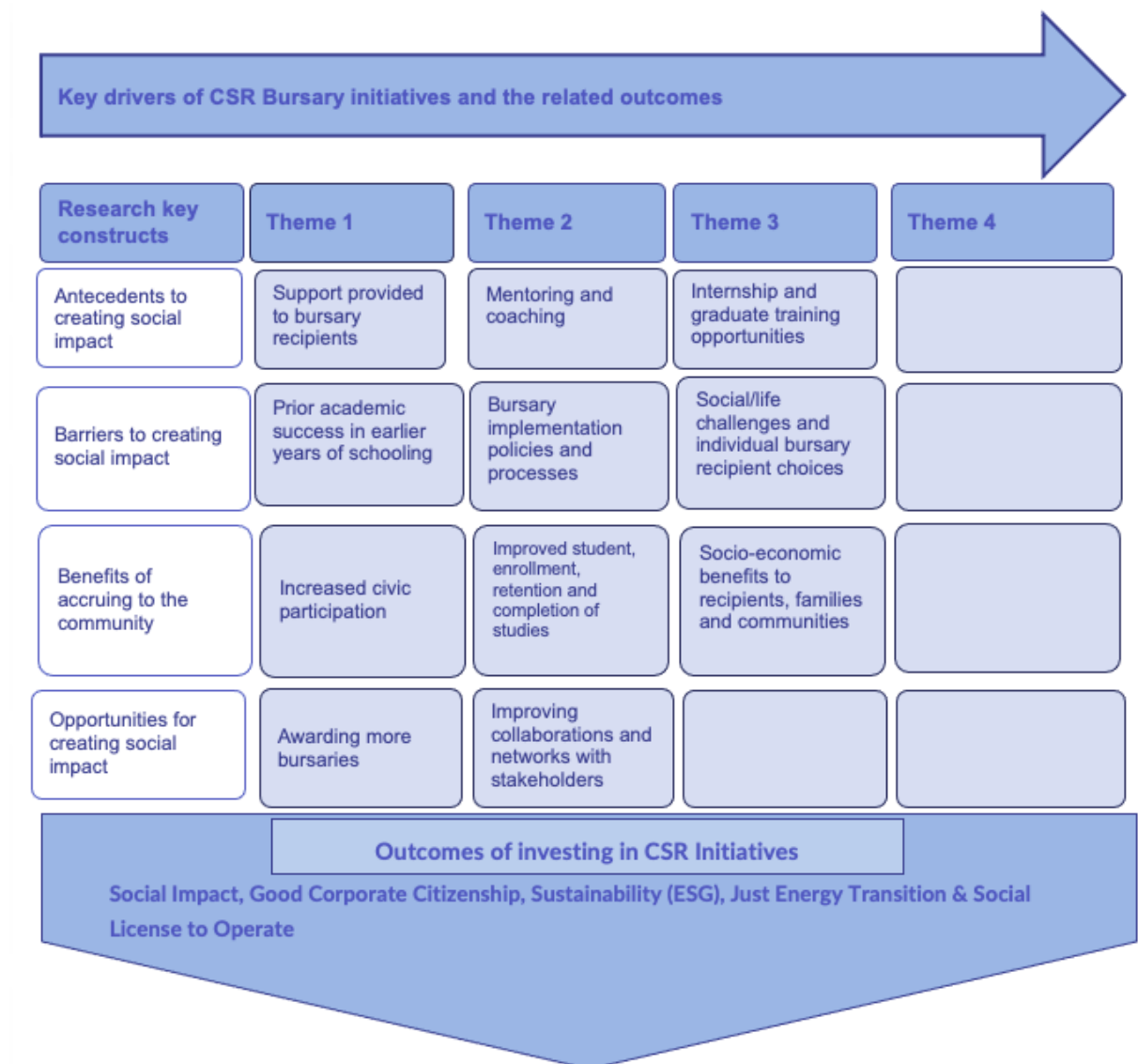


Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework from the literature review

Source: Author's own.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research questions as derived from the research problem and research questions set out in Chapter 1, as well as the reviewed literature. The academic basis for the research questions is set out in Chapter 2.

This research sought to understand how tertiary education bursaries achieve positive social outcomes by answering three specific research questions. The research questions that "the massive CSR literature offers little evidence of the actual impact of CSR initiatives" (Barnett et al., 2020, p. 954).

A society-centric focus widens the theoretical and topical lenses, with scholars asking questions such as "How and when does CSR improve societal-level outcomes such as social and ecological conditions and create welfare for society at large?" (Wickert, 2021, p. E2).

3.2 Main research question

Corporations use various CSR initiatives in their efforts to create social impact, mainly to the communities surrounding the areas they operate in, but also to society at large. One of such CSR initiatives is education initiatives, such as building schools, training and equipping teachers to be better teachers, as well as education bursaries for basic and tertiary education. Smolentseva (2023) posits that higher education, together with other role players, is an invaluable contributor to the achievement of individuals, families, groups (schools, government and industry), and society.

Ryan et al. (2016, p. 67) argue that "Scholarships are, however, an important tool where financial hardship is seen as the greatest barrier to participation." Harrison and McCaig (2017) stated that there is some agreement amongst scholars that bursaries work; however, research in the US, for example, focused on the impact of bursaries recruitment on the outcomes of bursaries. Research data from robust qualitative designs could provide better insights into how bursaries remove educational disadvantage.

The basis for creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries is premised on the successful completion of the tertiary education studies by the beneficiary recipient. This study, therefore, looks at conditions that need to be met firstly for bursary recipients to

successfully complete their studies and secondly, post-completion of studies, what social impact can be brought onto wider society.

The purpose of this study is to study the social impact that a mining company's tertiary education bursary can generate, what conditions are required for successful social impact, what are the challenges to bringing the social impact and the opportunities for creating the social impact, beyond the benefits to the individual beneficiaries.

The main research question is:

What are the antecedents, barriers, and opportunities for CSR bursary programs in the mining sector to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

3.3 Sub-questions

Ontong and Smit (2023) concluded that academic success and the well-being of bursary recipient students are connected, and that this well-being should be a key consideration in the design of any successful bursary program. This is the academic basis for research sub-questions 1.

Research sub-question 1: What antecedents are required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

Scholars have posited various challenges to the successful outcome of tertiary education bursaries. Some relate to factors predating the application for a bursary. Kaye (2020) argues that inadequate support earlier on in the education system creates significant disadvantage prior to completion of high school, thereby reducing the pool of potential bursary applicants. On the other hand Ryan et al. (2016), that once enrolled at university, bursary recipients also face other life challenges related to other social and life factors, other than financial challenges, which could hinder their chances of completing their tertiary education studies and thereby limiting the success of the bursary program and by inference the social impact resulting from obtaining a tertiary education qualification. Research sub-question two is formulated on this academic basis.

Research sub-question 2: What are the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

Smolentseva (2023) noted that elevated participation rates in education contribute to societal stratification, differentiating individuals with higher education and higher earnings from those with limited education and earning lower incomes. This finding emphasises the transformative impact of education on individuals and societal development. It also highlights the importance of continued research into the broader impact of higher education. This informed research sub-question 3, which examines the long-term benefits that funded graduates bring to the community.

Research sub-question 3: What are the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community?

The conclusions reached by Smolentseva (2023) and the use of education to effect societal impact also inform research sub-question 4, which considers the opportunities to create sustainable societal benefit and change, using bursary-funded graduates.

Research sub-question 4: What opportunities exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion on the research design and methodology for the research as conducted by the researcher. The research design and methodology chosen are described in full, including choices made by the researcher as the best to address the research questions.

4.2 Research methodology choice

4.2.1 Research Question

The literature review helped identify a gap in current academic studies, which resulted in the research question of how the tertiary education bursary scheme of a mining company drives social impact. Whilst conducting the literature review, questions and sub-questions were developed to help answer the main research question. There is a call to action from various authors calling for the required focus on gaining insight into how CSR can have an impact on society. One of the characteristics of a qualitative study is the need to explore and describe a phenomenon to develop a concept (Creswell, 2023). The research question is explorative in nature; therefore, a qualitative research design is appropriate.

4.2.2 Research paradigm

Interpretivism focuses on understanding social phenomena and the meaning behind human behaviour (Pulla & Carter, 2018). This study sought to understand a mining company's bursary drives' social impact in the community where the bursary recipients originate. This was achieved by primarily engaging with participants based on their lived experiences of the phenomenon studied. The researcher, therefore, concluded that the interpretivism paradigm was the most appropriate for this study.

4.2.3 Research Design

"Qualitative research aims to purposefully sample select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem or research question." (Creswell, 2023, p. 198). Fusheini and Salia (2021) express that each person interviewed in a qualitative research study has a different appreciation of the same experience and, therefore, can give valuable insight that would help a researcher better understand the phenomenon being studied. This approach could give credible information on how the awarding of tertiary education bursaries impacts the mining community. The research data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, as the study is an explorative one seeking to get insights through asking open-ended questions derived from the research question (Walker et al., 2017).

4.3 Research Setting and Population

The setting of the research is the Mpumalanga region, where this mining company operates, and the communities in this region. The mine selects students from high school and or tertiary education institutions; some of these students originate from the Mpumalanga region, where this mining company has a few mining operations. The students are then awarded tertiary education bursaries to pursue degree studies. This study looked at the social impact of a mining company awarding tertiary education bursaries to students from the Mpumalanga region.

4.4 Population and sampling approach

The research population is people who can answer the research question and give their insights based on their lived and or professional experiences. According to Barnett et al. (2020, p. 957), it is necessary to explore the impact beyond specific stakeholders, but instead to look at the population level. The population for this study was the Mpumalanga region and the communities in this region in which the mining company operates and has been targeted for the tertiary education bursary to assess the impact of the bursary programme on the community, instead of just the individual bursary recipients. The researcher identified four stakeholder groups whose lived and or professional experience can help give insight into the impact of the awarding of tertiary education on the mining community and the wider society. The predominant language spoken in this region is

Siswati, which the researcher also speaks, and this aids ease of communication with stakeholder group 2, which comprises the community representatives.

4.4.1 Stakeholder group 1

Comprised past recipients of the mining company bursary who completed and graduated from their studies before 2022. The reason for selecting past recipients who completed their studies is that the objective of awarding the bursary is fulfilled. The reason for selecting graduates who completed their studies prior to 2022 is to allow sufficient time to have passed so that the potential interviewees are likely to have secured employment, and the researcher is interested in exploring the impact thereof. Bursary recipients should have successfully completed their studies using the mining company bursary to fund them before 2022. The researcher included bursary recipients who studied in different academic disciplines and genders so that the researcher could obtain as diverse responses and insights as possible.

4.4.2 Stakeholder group 2

This group comprised community representatives, such as stakeholder forum leaders and local government representatives, to source data on benefits in the community directly/indirectly attributable to the students from the community receiving bursaries. These individuals would be active members of the community with an established history within the community, possessing knowledge of its development and key social issues in the local communities.

The researcher targeted school principals but was unable to secure an interview with any of the principals of local schools attended by the graduates, such principals would be familiar with the tertiary education bursary scheme and have insight into both current and past beneficiaries of the tertiary education bursary sourced from the local schools.

4.4.3 Stakeholder group 3

This group comprised mining company representatives involved in the tertiary education bursary scheme initiative. These are employer representatives based at the head office responsible for the design, implementation and management of the tertiary education

bursary schemes. Mining company employee representatives are involved in the bursary scheme program. These would be company employees responsible for selecting candidates for the bursary program. They are also responsible for monitoring students' progress at university and placing graduates into internships and or graduate training with subsequent permanent employment at the mining company, where possible.

4.4.4 Stakeholder group 4

Regional mining company representatives are placed at mining operations in the community. This group consists of employee representatives based at the operations within the community from which the graduates and former recipients of the tertiary education bursary were sourced. These individuals are company employees with established ties to the community and have experience that enables them to observe short-term, medium-term and long-term changes within the area, depending on length of service in the region.

4.5 Unit of analysis and unit of observation

4.5.1 Level of analysis

CSR encompasses a wide range of activities; this research specifically examines education as a subset of CSR within a particular mining community. The mining company selected for this study provides tertiary education bursaries as part of its CSR initiatives. Some bursary recipients are selected from the local community under the company's Social Labour Plan (SLP), which supports community development as an element of its social license to operate. The objective of the study is to explore the social impact on the defined local mining community by focusing on the beneficiaries who were selected. Therefore, the unit of analysis is the community.

4.5.2 Unit of observation

The objective of the study is to explore the social impact of awarding bursaries to recipients within a specified community and the impact thereof beyond the individual recipients. The unit of observation is social impact on a specified community. The

specified community in this study is the Mpumalanga region. The unit of analysis for this study is individual, as data were collected through interviews with individual participants.

4.6 Sampling method and inclusion criteria

4.6.1 Sampling method

Non-probability purposive sampling was appropriate for sample selection as this is a qualitative study whose purpose is to get insight into the societal impact of awarding tertiary education bursaries.

Therefore, participants from each of the four stakeholder groups highlighted earlier in this paper were purposefully selected. The individuals were interviewed on their lived or professional experiences. Multiple participant groups have been chosen to explore the research question from different angles and to provide data triangulation.

4.6.2 Selection criteria for participants

Participants were selected using the following criteria:

Participant group 1 – past bursary recipients

- Must have received a tertiary education bursary from the mining company.
- Must have graduated prior to 2022.
- Must originate from the Mpumalanga region.

Participant group 2 – Stakeholder community representatives

- Must reside in one of the mining communities in the Mpumalanga region.

Participant group 3 – Head office mining company representatives

- Must work at the head office for the department responsible for managing the various bursary programmes.

Participant group 4 – Local operations company representatives based at the mining operations in the Mpumalanga region

- Must work for the mining company at a mining operation located in the Mpumalanga region.

Table 4.1: Participants of the study

Participant Group	Target sample selection per participant group	Actual sample selection per participant group	% achieved
Past bursary recipients	6	6	100%
Community stakeholder representatives	6	3	50%
Head office company representatives	3	3	100%
Local operations company representatives	3	3	100%
Total	18	15	83%

Source: Author's own.

Table 4.1 above shows the number of participants targeted for each participant group compared with the actual number of participants interviewed. A 100% was achieved for three of the participant groups, except for the community stakeholder representative participants, who proved difficult to recruit for the researcher. Nevertheless, the researcher is satisfied that there was adequate representation from that participant group.

4.7 Sample size

Creswell (2023) suggests a sample size of at least 18 participants selected from across all four participant groups, with a minimum of 12 considered adequate to give diverse insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences. The target sample size was 18 participants across four participant groups. Fifteen participants were eventually interviewed, which is a more than adequate sample size. The 15 participants were able

to give depth of perspectives and allowed for triangulation of the research findings across the four participant groups.

Data saturation point was reached at the point at which no new themes emerged from the data.

Table 4.2: Actual participants interviewed

	Participant	Participant Group
1	HOCR1	Head office company representative
2	HOCR2	Head office company representative
3	HOCR3	Head office company representative
4	LOCR1	Local Operations company representative
5	LOCR2	Local Operations company representative
6	LOCR3	Local Operations company representative
7	PBR1	Past bursary recipient
8	PBR2	Past bursary recipient
9	PBR3	Past bursary recipient
10	PBR4	Past bursary recipient
11	PBR5	Past bursary recipient
12	PBR6	Past bursary recipient
13	CSR1	Community stakeholder representative
14	CSR2	Community stakeholder representative
15	CSR3	Community stakeholder representative

Source: Author's own.

Table 4.2 above shows the final list of participants across the four participant groups. The research data were collected using semi-structured interviews with the final list of participants. The participants have been anonymised using codes to protect the identity

of each participant and to comply with the ethical undertakings as outlined in the signed informed consent forms.

4.8 Research instrument

The final list of participants was selected as per the sampling criteria. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured interviews using the research instrument set out below.

A standard structured interview protocol was designed with open-ended questions to ensure consistency and reliability of data gathered. The research instrument used is presented below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Research instrument – Interview protocol for the bursary recipients

Question	Detailed question
Introduction	• Greet the participant and introduce myself as the interviewer • Explain the purpose of the study • Confirm informed consent to record the interview • Ask the participant if they have any questions before proceeding with the interview
Q1 Research question 1 <i>What are the antecedents, barriers, and opportunities for the CSR bursary programs to create social impact in the community?</i>	1.1 Please tell me your journey to becoming a bursary recipient.

Question	Detailed question
Q2 Research Sub-question 1 <i>What antecedents are required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	2.1 Why do you think the mine offers these bursaries? 2.2 Please tell me, how has obtaining a bursary-funded degree influenced your life? 2.3 Please tell me, how has obtaining a bursary-funded degree influenced your family? 2.4 What support did you get whilst studying, and how did that help you as a student to complete your studies successfully?
Q3 Research Sub-question 2 <i>What are the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	3.1 In your view, what are the key challenges to ensuring that the bursary program benefits more than just the individual bursary recipients? 3.2 Have there been any unintended consequences of this bursary program in the community? If yes, please give examples?
Q4 Research Sub-question 3 <i>What are the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community?</i>	4.1 How have previous bursary recipients from your community impacted the community? How did that impact affect your role in the community? 4.2 How have you used your opportunities as a bursary recipient to impact your family? 4.2 How have you used your opportunities as a bursary recipient to impact the wider community?
Q5 Research Sub-question 4 <i>What opportunities exist for CSR bursary programs to</i>	5.1 How could the bursary program in its current form create wider societal impact in the community, beyond the impact on individual bursary recipients? 5.2 How could the bursary program be adapted to increase the impact of the bursary program?

Question	Detailed question
<i>create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	
Closing question	Thank you very much for attending this interview and answering the interview questions. Do you have any further comments?

Source: Author's own.

4.9 Data collection process

The interview questions were adapted slightly to cater for the context of each of the participant groups two to four, without changing the essence of each open-ended question.

All participants signed an informed consent form. This form was sent prior to the scheduled interview date.

The researcher used Microsoft Teams to conduct interviews virtually. The researcher recorded all interviews so that they researcher could engage well with all participants and not have to take detailed notes during the interview.

English was used to conduct the interviews, as all the participants are professionals. One of the community representatives interviewed made use of siSwati terms intermittently. siSwati is the predominant vernacular language spoken in Mpumalanga, and the researcher is fluent in siSwati, so there was no break in communication during the interview despite the use of siSwati. There was therefore no need to use an independent translator. The researcher used Microsoft Teams transcripts to transfer the raw transcript data into Word and then edited the transcripts by listening to recorded audio and reading the transcripts repeatedly. The transcriber is then used to transcribe audio into written data. There was therefore no use of a transcriber.

Data was stored without identifiers, securely in the cloud, where it can only be accessed via a secure password. The data will be stored for a period of ten years, after which it will be destroyed. No names of individuals or organisations are reported as part of the findings; no names are reported (when the identity of the participant is known to the researcher), only aggregated information was reported on.

4.10 Data preparation and analysis approach

Once all the data were collected from the primary data sources via interviews, the following steps were followed: data were organised and prepared for analysis (this includes transcripts and additional notes) (Creswell, 2023).

The researcher utilised the Atlas Ti computer software to assist with the coding process. All the data were coded, the codes were then grouped into themes, and a storyline was then developed by interpreting and connecting themes identified in the previous step and analysed and interpreted further against the conceptual framework derived in Chapter 2 as part of the literature review process (Creswell, 2023). Both deductive and inductive analysis was used to analyse the data. Please refer to Figure 4.1 below, which shows a thematic process that the researcher followed.

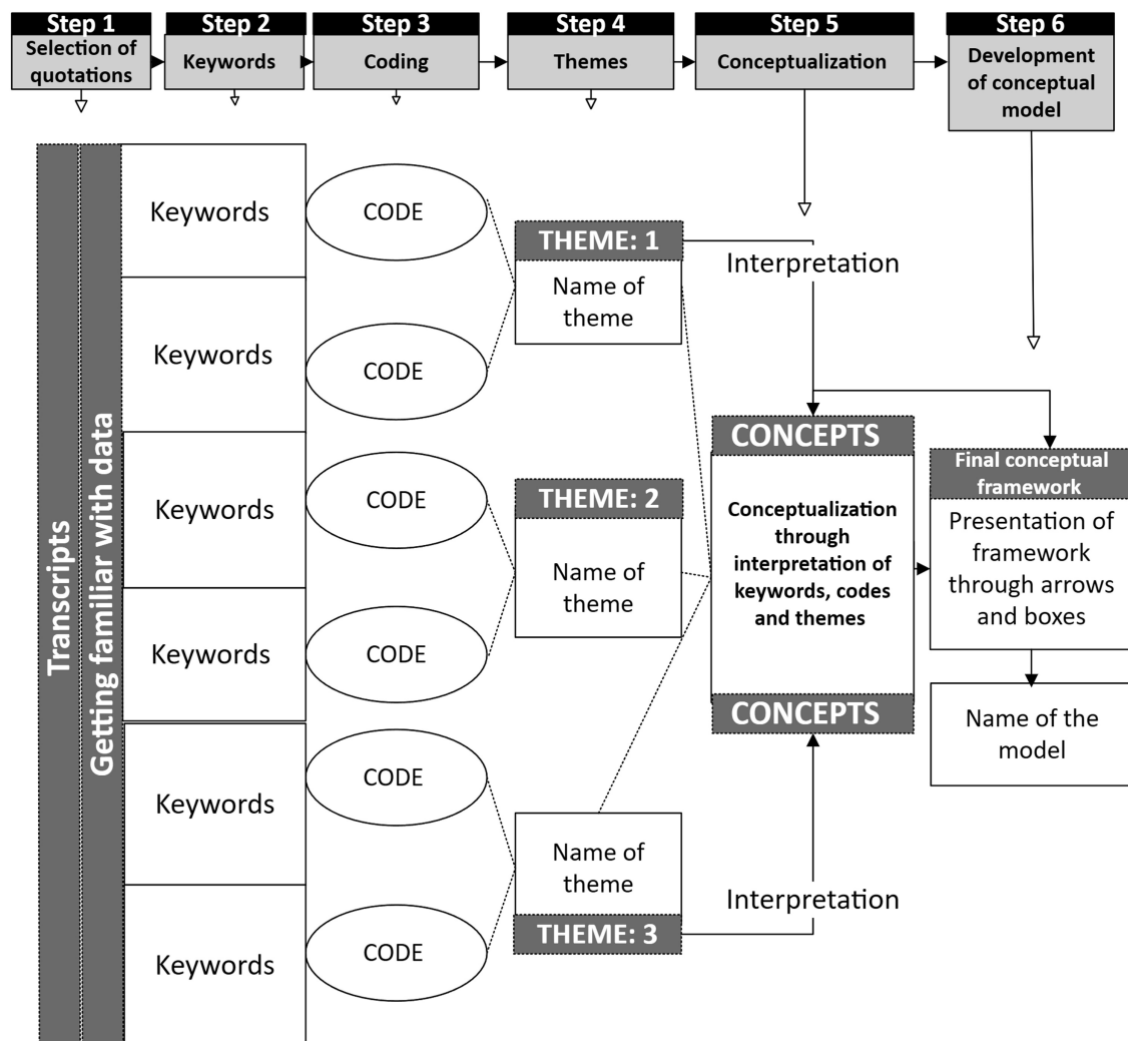


Figure 4.1: A systematic thematic analysis process: A novel six-step process for conceptual model development in qualitative research

Source: (Naeem et al., 2023, p. 4).

Please refer to Appendix F, the coding table, which is the outcome of the research data depicted in Figure 4.1 above and followed by the researcher to arrive at the revised conceptual framework.

4.11 Research quality and rigour

The data then go through a series of steps to test quality and rigour, including data triangulation, testing data accuracy, further literature review from highly rated journals, presenting negative or unexpected data, and identifying and eliminating participant bias (Creswell, 2023)

The following was used by the researcher to ensure research quality and rigour: Trustworthiness in qualitative research means rigorous design, credible findings and applicable methods (Table 4.4) (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Table 4.4: Assessment of research trustworthiness

Trustworthiness control	Description	How
Credibility	To what extent are the research findings and conclusions believable	The researcher used data triangulation by interviewing multiple participants from four different types of groups.
Transferability	To what extent are the researcher's conclusions transferable to other contexts	Transferability in this study is enhanced by ensuring that detailed descriptions are provided of the research context studies so that other researchers can identify similarities and differences between this study and other studies to enable them to determine whether the findings in this study are relevant to their study. Transferability was also enhanced by highlighting the limitations of this study and a detailed explanation of the purposive sampling employed to select participants.

Trustworthiness control	Description	How
Dependability	To what extent can a review of the research data, by independent researchers, result in similar conclusions	Dependability of this study is ensured by ensuring that a detailed audit trail of all the steps taken in the research, including research design, accurate recording and safe storage of all interview notes as well. The use of multiple participants from four different types of groups to triangulate the data.
Conformability	To what extent can others confirm the researcher's interpretations and conclusions	Conformability was enhanced by ensuring accurate recording and transcription of interviews as well as secure storage of interview data. Appropriate triangulation of research data from different participant groups. The researcher also continually examined their own biases, assumptions, and perspectives to identify where these may influence the research.

Source: adapted from Nassaji (2020, p. 428).

4.12 Limitations of the research design and methods

4.12.1 Limitations of the research study and the researcher

- i. The researcher has limited knowledge of social impact based on the literature review conducted at the beginning of this research project.
- ii. The researcher is an inexperienced researcher, this being the first research being conducted in a non-scientific laboratory setting. The lack of experience may result in limitations in appropriately wording the interview questionnaire, the interviewing technique, and data analysis. The researcher utilises the support from the research supervisor to mitigate this research limitation.
- iii. The boundaries set for the purpose of this study were narrowed down to cater for time and resource constraints; therefore, the findings only explain or are applicable to the defined boundaries.

- iv. Due to time and resource constraints, the researcher was not able to include a comparative study between the mining bursary recipients who did not complete their studies and the resultant benefit to the community and the mining bursary recipients who did not complete their studies.
- v. The data collected in a specific community may not apply in other communities.
- vi. The data collected in the mining sector may not apply in other sectors.

These limitations do not negate the potential usefulness of the research, as they help us better understand the phenomenon of using CSR to tackle societal challenges.

4.13 Ethical considerations

All participants were required to sign an informed consent form. This form was sent prior to the scheduled interview date. A proforma informed consent form is attached in Appendix B.

The researcher got to meet and know all participants, virtually. All interviews were recorded, and all the transcripts were anonymised and stored in a secure cloud location for a period of ten years, where they can only be accessed with a secure password.

Vulnerable population groups are defined as those who are particularly susceptible to coercion or undue influence or who have difficulty giving free and informed consent to being research subjects. The participant groups are not considered to be part of vulnerable groups as outlined in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Participant groups and assessment of vulnerability

Participant group	Vulnerability
Past bursary recipients	Not considered vulnerable as they have already completed their studies and are not subject to undue influence or coercion.
Community representatives	Not considered vulnerable as they derive no personal benefit from the bursary scheme and are not subject to undue influence or coercion.

Participant group	Vulnerability
Mining company representatives (bursary program)	Not considered vulnerable as they are professionals, derive no personal benefit from the bursary scheme and are not subject to undue influence or coercion.
Mining company representatives (based in the local community)	Not considered vulnerable as they are professionals, derive no personal benefit from the bursary scheme and are not subject to undue influence or coercion.

Source: Author's own.

Risk that participants may not understand the nature of the study, instructions or questions, or their rights because of language barriers between themselves and the researcher. This was addressed by providing an informed consent form, which was explained to all participants prior to the interviews, and which was signed by all participants prior to the scheduled interviews. All aspects of the research topic were explained fully to all participants. Any potential issues with respect to a lack of understanding of the English language were addressed using the local vernacular language, which the researcher speaks.

The literature review helped identify a gap in current academic studies, which resulted in the research question of how corporate social responsibility contributes to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 and creates social impact. Whilst conducting the literature review, questions and sub-questions were developed to help answer the main research question. There is a call to action from various authors calling for the required focus on gaining insight into how CSR can have an impact on society. One of the characteristics of a qualitative study is the need to explore and describe a phenomenon to develop a theory (Creswell, 2023). This study is therefore categorised as a qualitative study.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction to the Findings

As outlined in the methodology section (Chapter 4), research data were collected from fifteen participants across the four participant groups using a semi-structured interview protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol had four research sub-questions relating to the main research question. The transcripts were anonymised and coded using a unique sequential code per participant group and uploaded onto the Atlas.ti software. Keywords were identified from each transcript, and then these were coded and finally grouped into themes. The responses have been grouped and presented in this findings chapter in response to each of the four research sub-questions. Themes were identified during the literature review, and new themes were identified through research data analysis. Refer to Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Research themes from literature review and research data analysis

<u>Main research question</u> What are the antecedents, barriers, and opportunities for CSR bursary programs in the mining sector to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?	Themes from the literature review themes	New themes from research data analysis
<u>Research Sub-question 1</u> <i>What antecedents are required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	3	N/A
<u>Research Sub-question 2</u> <i>What are the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	3	N/A
<u>Research Sub-question 3</u> <i>What are the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community?</i>	3	1
<u>Research Sub-question 4</u> <i>What opportunities exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	2	1

Source: Author's own.

5.2 Presentation of Findings

This section presents findings from analysing data collected as part of the research process and as described in the methodology section (refer to Chapter 4).

The literature review, as discussed in Chapter 2, resulted in the development of a conceptual framework. This conceptual framework comprises 11 themes corresponding to specific research sub-questions that support the main research question. As part of the data analysis, two new themes were identified, resulting in a revised conceptual framework with a revised total of 13 themes. The researcher performed a thorough data analysis on the themes that provided research findings to provide deeper insights into the research topic. Table 5.2 below depicts the findings presentation map.

Table 5.2: The findings presentation map

5.1 Introduction of Findings Chapter							
5.2 Presentation of Findings							
	Research Construct	Subsection 1	Subsection 2	Subsection 3	Subsection 4	Subsection 5	Subsection 6
5.3	Research Q1 Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	5.3.1 Introduction to antecedents	5.3.2 Theme1. Support	5.3.3 Support sub-theme 1 – comprehensive financial support	5.3.4 Support sub-theme 2 – mental health support	5.3.5 Theme 2 – Mentoring and coaching	5.3.6 Theme 3 – Internship and graduate training opportunities
5.4	Research Q2 Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	5.4.1 Introduction to barriers	5.4.2 Theme 1 – Prior academic success and subject choices	5.4.3 Theme 2– Bursary implementation			
5.5	Research Q3 Benefits accruing to the community	5.5.1 Introduction to benefits	5.5.2 Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits	5.5.3 Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design	5.5.4 Overall conclusion on benefits		
5.6	Research Q4 Opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries	5.6.1 Introduction to opportunities	5.6.2 Theme 1 – Awarding more bursaries	5.6.3 Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders	5.6.4 Theme 3 – Creating contractual bursary recipient community CSR participation programmes	5.5.4 Overall conclusion on opportunities	
5.7 Conclusion of Findings Chapter							

Source: Author's own.

5.3 Research sub-question 1: Findings related to the antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

5.3.1 Introduction to the overviews of themes identified as antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact

Sub-question 1 relates to the identification of antecedents to CSR bursaries, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. During the literature review conducted in Chapter 2, three themes relating to the barriers to creating social impact were identified through the research conducted.

- Support.
- Mentoring and coaching.
- Internship and graduate training opportunities.

Table 5.3 below presents the three themes, and two sub-themes supported with evidence collected in the research, the description of these themes, whether these were new themes and if they are discussed as part of the findings.

Table 5.3: Themes and sub-themes emerging from research sub-question one and supported with research findings

Themes and Sub-themes	Theme and sub-theme description	Existing or New theme	Discussed (Yes/No)
Theme 1 Support	Comprehensive support is provided to students throughout their stay at the university. This support is provided to ensure the students are enabled to focus on their academic pursuits whilst at university.	Existing	▪ Yes
Sub-theme 1 Comprehensive financial support	Comprehensive financial support covering tuition, textbooks, a laptop, accommodation, food, and travel allowances	Existing	▪ Yes

Themes and Sub-themes	Theme and sub-theme description	Existing or New theme	Discussed (Yes/No)
Sub-theme 2 Mental health support	Mental health support caters for the mental well-being of bursary recipients and is meant to help students cope with the academic and personal challenges.	Existing	▪ Yes
Theme 2 Mentoring and coaching	Mentoring and coaching to provide role models who offer guidance to students, particularly in their early university years.	Existing	▪ Yes
Theme 3 Internship and graduate traineeship opportunities	Internship and graduate training programs are offered to ensure students receive experiential learning with reputable employers, aligning their practical training with the academic disciplines completed at the university.	Existing	▪ Yes

Source: Author's own.

5.3.2 Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiary. Theme 1 – Support

This theme was chosen for analysis due to its frequent emergence across various participant groups, providing a wide range of perspectives informed by diverse lived professional experiences, as well as cross-case comparisons.

The findings for the support theme are described and analysed below as three sub-themes for which detailed data were obtained, namely, comprehensive financial support and mental health care support.

5.3.3 Support sub-theme 1 – Comprehensive financial support

5.3.3.1 *Evidence of comprehensive financial support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact*

Table 5.4: Evidence of comprehensive financial support

We fund them with full support. So, it means not only their tuition but also their accommodation, their meals and any other related expenses like stipends, book money, pocket money, data, and wellness allowance. 12:23 ¶ 28 in HOCR1
We do believe that, you know, if you partially fund someone, they still sit with that anxiety about where the rest of the money is going to come from. So, we support them fully so that they can spend their time at university focusing on their performance. 12:175 ¶ 30 in HOCR1
Sure, it brings ease. Honestly, you don't have to stress or worry about how your studies are going to be funded because most of them, when we onboard them, come in with a lot of pressure on their shoulders. 13:30 ¶ 65 in HOCR2
To say I had to carry the stresses of my studies, but I also had to carry the stresses of my finances, to say well, even if I study hard, will this continue if I don't have the finances? 13:34 ¶ 67 in HOCR2
So, as a bursar, you used to get, besides the stipend, the tuition fees and all that, which removes one level of stress that a student needs to face. Because I believe that the only stress a student must have is a test. The exams, the assignments and attending classes. 14:38 ¶ 74 in PBR1
Basically, my family never had to contribute a single cent towards my education, and the bursary was there from day one, all the way up until I got appointed. So yeah, it really helped a lot, because my family never had to worry about anything. I also never had to worry about funds, accommodation, or anything like that because all my focus was just to study to make sure that I pass. 4:33 ¶ 10 in PBR3
All our needs are taken care of. If there was any need that we needed, they were always there to help and support and in a way that sort of helped and eased up the pressure for my family, because the bursary I had covered for everything from day one up until I finished all the way. Even when I started working my first month, I stayed at

the hotel. The transport was organised to make sure that I could make it to work. 4:8 ¶ 10 in PBR3
So there was obviously the financial support they gave us, they paid for everything basically from tuition, books, food, accommodation, everything. 3:14 ¶ 27 in PBR4
So, it not only helps me, but it also helps my family because now they have one less child to take care of. I was able to do everything myself, by myself, cell phone, simple things such as cell phone, clothes and food because everything was. 3:6 ¶ 23 in PBR4
Oh, it has influenced it positively because, number one, it has helped in alleviating the financial burden from my parents because they could not afford to send me to varsity. So that was a financial relief from their side as well. To say there is someone who's willing to send me to school. And funds for my tuition fees and registration fees. Not only that, but I also get residence, which was covered, food and books. So, I thought it was an all-rounded bursary, which for me was good for my family, good for me as well, because it meant that. I do not have to burden my family with that pressure in terms of finances. 1:19 ¶ 21 in PBR6

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.4 are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.3.3.2 *In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of comprehensive financial support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact*

The comprehensive financial support sub-theme emerged as a central characteristic of the mining company's bursary program. Analysis from the head office participants indicated alignment on the role of comprehensive financial support as a fundamental design feature. HOCR1 explained that comprehensive funding allows bursary recipients to concentrate on their studies without the distraction of financial stress associated with covering additional expenses if only partially funded. Similarly, HOCR2 noted that some bursary recipients indicated that academic studies are already sufficiently demanding, and partial funding would simply increase the pressures they face. There were no dissenting opinions regarding comprehensive financial support among these participants.

The group of past bursary recipients includes individuals who successfully completed their university education and subsequently joined the mining company as employees. This participant group consistently expressed strong gratitude for receiving comprehensive financial support through the bursary program. PBR1 expressed that students should focus solely on academic activities such as attending lectures and taking exams, without the burden of financial concerns. PBR3 highlighted the relief experienced by not requiring any monetary contributions from their family, which allowed them to concentrate fully on their studies. Similarly, PBR4 remarked that the allowances provided independence from family and lessened their families' obligations. PBR6 emphasised that comprehensive financial support was essential for university attendance, as their parents would have been unable to fund their education without this assistance; this assistance alleviated their family's financial responsibilities.

5.3.4 Support sub-theme 2 – Mental health support

5.3.4.1 *Evidence of mental health support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact*

Table 5.5: Evidence of mental health support

We offer them the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that employees receive, which is then also extended to the bursars. So, when they are having mental wellness challenges. 13:107 ¶ 85 in HO CR2
They know there is someone they can talk to, professionals that they can contact and yeah, discuss how they can move forward in their studies if they have any mental wellness problems. 13:108 ¶ 87 in HO CR2
So, I mean, my problem is sometimes you find that a lot of students, especially when they go to varsity, they struggle to adapt, and then their mental health becomes affected. 3:26 ¶ 107 in PBR4
So that supports, like the mental health part of our bursary program. I don't think it's equipped or developed enough to support students. For example, let me just make another example. Another student who may have an undiagnosed ADHD, for example, and then they are struggling at school. The bursary won't really support them in that way, because they just say: Just because you are failing, we can't do anything. 3:32 ¶ 109 in PBR4

They are not fine, but if you find that there are other undiagnosed mental health issues, such as. Or anxiety issues that, if they can get that support from the sponsor, they will be able to overcome. But like I don't, I don't really see that support, especially when it comes to mental health issues from the sponsors. It's not just the mining company. It's just everywhere. You'll find that the student just got dropped because they failed, and they don't find out why. But they say it was because they were struggling with whatever, whatever, and they tried to get help. But because there's a lack of support from the person who's sponsoring them to be in varsity, they end up not getting the help that they need. So I think maybe we can also now focus because without this whole type of diversity and inclusion thing, we can also not just focus on. Making sure people pass but supporting them in a holistic way, and making sure that they're mentally, if they need to go to a psychiatrist, that support should be given by the sponsor to make sure that you know. I think that's an enforcement that the sponsors can help with in that regard. 3:31 ¶ 113 in PBR4

But I think we are now moving into a generation where there are pressures from academics, and there are mental diseases that are now emanating from our world. So, I think it must also then cover that element as well. So that students know that although they are expected to perform in terms of academics. But there is that form of support. So, if you are now facing a mental breakdown, there are some support features which the bursary is also facilitating to cover and support so that they ensure that the students can finish their degree in time. 1:18 ¶ 62 in PBR6

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.5 are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.3.4.2 In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of mental health support provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries

The mental healthcare support sub-theme was identified as a fundamental aspect of student well-being, directly influencing their potential for successful academic completion. The head office employee representatives noted that the mining company regards mental health care as an essential element of its support offered for bursary recipients. HOCR1 emphasised that students are provided access to the same

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to company employees. HOCR2 stated that students are clearly informed about the availability of mental health professionals to support their well-being throughout their studies.

The group of previous bursary recipients also emphasised the significance of mental health care for students. PBR4 provided some unique insights into mental health and identified several concerns related to student mental well-being. Firstly, many students may encounter challenges with mental health as they adjust to university life. Secondly, some students may enter university with preexisting, undiagnosed mental health conditions, such as ADHD or anxiety, which can adversely affect their academic performance and potentially lead to failure. In such instances, usually the sponsoring companies may terminate bursaries due to unsatisfactory academic results, often without adequately investigating whether the non-performance is due to mental health issues. PBR4 recommended that student mental health support should include access to specialised professionals, such as psychiatrists. Likewise, PBR6 reiterated the importance of providing mental health care support for students to ensure that students are appropriately supported in the event of a mental health crisis.

5.3.4.3 Overall conclusion on support as an antecedent required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

The research findings indicate that the mining company's bursary programmes are characterised by the provision of comprehensive financial support, which is highlighted as a key feature by both the head office employee representatives and bursary recipients. Comprehensive funding enables students to focus entirely on academic pursuits without the distraction and anxiety of financial pressures that partial funding may cause. Recipients consistently express gratitude for this support, noting that it not only allows them to succeed academically but also relieves their families of financial burdens. The programmes contribute to students' independence and ensure that financial constraints do not hinder their university performance.

Findings regarding mental health support from the head office participants and former bursary recipients highlighted its critical role for students. The head office participants underscored the health care service available to students, drawing parallels to the support provided to employees through access to an Employee Assistance Program as part of the employee value proposition.

Conversely, former bursary recipients noted that additional measures could be implemented to strengthen mental health support for students. They emphasised the importance of investigating the underlying factors contributing to academic non-performance, particularly potential connections with mental health challenges, and recommended providing students with access to specialised professionals. As well as the suggestion to provide students with access to specialised professionals. These suggestions aim to ensure that students receive the comprehensive support necessary for their academic success.

Comprehensive financial support and mental health support have been identified as important factors affecting the outcomes of bursary programs and, consequently, the potential for past bursary recipients to foster social impact in the community.

5.3.5 Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 2 – Mentoring & Coaching

The mentoring and coaching theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.3.5.1 *Evidence of mentoring and coaching as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries*

Table 5.6: Evidence of mentoring and coaching

Mining engineering mentor who will then be a principal engineer or a group manager. Something. Yeah, that will then mentor them when we go on the semester visits, they have the opportunity to talk to them and ask questions and ask for advice. I mean, even when choosing modules. When they're doing projects, they can reach out to their mentors. And yeah, when they get to the business unit for a vac work, they have coaches on the business units. So, they are not alone. The coach will then make sure that they have work to do. They answer all their questions. 13:54 ¶ 95 in HOCR2
Secondly, there are also other programmes that are introduced by the bursary team to ensure that they keep them motivated, so that they have programmes for them, and there's coaching and mentoring. 6:16 ¶ 17 in LOCR1

There are employees who are willing to maybe partner with them, be a mentor, et cetera, et cetera. So just making sure that along the way they don't feel lost or in the programme or in the process. 11:13 ¶ 43 in LOCR2

And if the mentors are more involved in the first part, I think of the onboarding, the check-ins are more frequent as well on the onboarding stage or even the first year. I think it would assist more in your adjusting to that environment. 2:18 ¶ 63 in PBR2

We had mentors to make sure that we're progressing fine. 4:6 ¶ 10 in PBR3

And then from the technical side, we had our mentor, and we used to sit with our mentor, and then that would be now on the study side. Are you having challenges with your studies, the modules, per se? Did you fail everything? If you fail anything? What can you do about it? Does it affect your timeline? So, some sort of guidance, you know what you can do now to improve on certain things. So, there was always guidance from both the mentor and the bursary manager as well. So, it helped a lot. 4:23 ¶ 18 in PBR3

The mentorship program. So, I had a mentor when I was still in Varsity from the mining company that would come, and I think they would come visit us every quarter on campus. But obviously, I also have access to him. So, he would go through how I'm performing. 3:33 ¶ 29 in PBR4

School. You look at my academics, but also how I'm hoping emotionally if I'm doing well, like if my mental health is fine, and then they would obviously give advice. 3:35 ¶ 31 in PBR4

So, I was saying that, oh, end of, I think it was the end of the second year or the beginning of the third year, when I was struggling a bit with my studies. And so I was struggling with them. Not all my modules, it was some modules and then others, the ones where I was passing. I was doing very, very well. So, the mentor was like, just make sure that you don't strive because you know when you're in person, you always want to get distinctions, and then you end up neglecting other motions. So, he was like, well, don't strive for distinctions, just balance things out, even if it means getting 50% for everything, just as long as you pass everything. You don't make her at the end. So, I was like, oh, OK, you don't want distinctions, because when I was under the assumption that it's always looking for distinctions, it's like, no, we don't want distinctions one pass. 3:36 ¶ 35 in PBR4

That advice carried me until the end because I ended up graduating on record time because of the fact that I was just balancing things out. I was like, you know what they said, they don't want distinctions. So, like, yeah, it was just I think advice like that to take the pressure off to make sure that I'm coping and. Yeah, it was. It was good. It was a good program in terms of the support that they were giving us. 3:17 ¶ 39 in PBR4

I think one of the most helpful things in terms of support I received through the bursary program was definitely the mentorship sessions and the check-in sessions that we had. I think we had about four check in sessions on campus throughout the year and also we were offered mentors within the company to kind of liaise with in terms of gaining perhaps insights into what your career might look like starting off in the industry, gaining a picture of what it is that your qualification puts you in line to become, the type of career options that you have. So that was really helpful, as well as being able to go through those minutes, and being able to have people whom you could ask. Support in terms of where I can access resources? Who can I speak to and where can I go to be able to finish things on time or achieve, you know, projects that I'm doing, assistance in terms of gaining resources to help me complete my qualification, so that's how it was useful. 15:10 ¶ 38 in PBR5

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.6 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.3.5.2 In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of mentoring and coaching provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

HOCR2 highlighted the critical role that mentors and coaches play in supporting students throughout their studies, including offering guidance on course selection and assistance with project-based work. Additionally, coaches provide valuable support during students' vacation work placements within various business units. Both LOCR1 and LOCR2 emphasised the significant contribution of mentors and coaches in encouraging students and maintaining their motivation to succeed academically.

Four out of six of the bursary recipient participants indicated their appreciation for the mentoring and coaching support provided. Participant PBR3 specifically valued the

mentoring, highlighting the advisor's proactive follow-up on academic performance and the constructive guidance in overcoming challenges related to completing their studies successfully.

PBR4 acknowledged the mentor's valuable support in providing guidance regarding academic performance. They expressed strong appreciation for the mentors, emphasising the significance of achieving consistent results across all courses rather than excelling in one while failing another. PBR4 also highlighted their gratitude for the mentor's attention to their emotional and mental well-being. Likewise, PBR5 valued having access to a trusted individual for advice and guidance, benefiting from insights into available useful resources during their studies, which contributed to the successful completion of their academic pursuits.

5.3.5.3 Conclusion on mentoring and coaching provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

The research findings indicate that mentoring and coaching play a pivotal role in supporting bursary recipients by providing academic guidance, assisting with course and project decision-making, and offering support during vacation work placements. The provision of mentoring and coaching helps maintain student motivation and well-being. Some former bursary recipient participants expressed appreciation for the mentorship and coaching, highlighting its importance for consistent academic performance and emotional support. Access to trusted mentors and professional seniors, as well as guidance on helpful resources, were noted as key factors in successfully completing academic studies.

Successful completion of studies positions the students for successful careers and personal motivation and drive, as well as the desire to give back and to uplift them and their families, and to inspire and encourage others from their communities to pursue higher education and to access funding, such as that provided by bursaries, to achieve their academic ambitions.

5.3.6 Antecedents required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiary. Theme 3 – Internship & graduate training opportunities

The internship and graduate training opportunities theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and/or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.3.6.1 Evidence of internship and graduate training opportunities as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiary

Table 5.7: Evidence of internship and graduate training opportunities

We're bringing them into practical work so that they can start experiencing the culture and the working environment. And yeah, it's just to make sure that their well-being is looked after. And of course, they adapt well at the university. 12:103 ¶ 68 in HO�R1
We're talking about interns, we're talking about Learnerships; we're talking about artisans. And so you know, there are opportunities for them to tap into those TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) colleges. 12:144 ¶ 106 in HO�R1
When they get into the PIT program, and you have to be everything to them, honestly, a financial advisor, psychologist, here and they yeah like a mentor and a coach to them when you are in this position. And then yeah, they also go on veg work. So, my role will then be to plan their vacation work, to speak to their mentors, and to say: Where do you want them to go on vacation work? 13:18 ¶ 43 in HO�R2
Let's shape them while they're still studying so that they can solve business problems at a later stage. So, then it becomes a matter of our PITs will then feed into the permanent employee gaps where there are gaps in the business where permanent employees are needed, then they know they take from the PIT program, but then the PIT that's been taken as an employee now leaves a gap in the business. 13:23 ¶ 57 in HO�R2
In the PIT Programme itself, a bursar will then fill the gap of that PIT. So, it's just about solving for business and just making sure that there's business continuity. 13:24 ¶ 59 in HO�R2

So, one of the supports that is provided, I think one of the key things is that they get vocational work or work experience throughout the program. So, it gives them exposure to a work environment and how to look once they start working. 6:84 ¶ 15 in LOCR1
That they're able to communicate whatever needs they need, if they need to go for vac work, they will get assistance to be placed at the relevant places for their vac work. So, they have access to even. 11:12 ¶ 43 in LOCR2
So, for example, we give out bursaries in mining and engineering, then those learners will then have either an opportunity to do some vac work with us or become professionals in training. 11:51 ¶ 33 in LOCR2
You're a vac work student. You learn as much as you can through people who are already doing what you are studying for. So, I think it really does help. 14:44 ¶ 94 in PBR1
I would still choose the same program because it included everything you know, if I needed vacation, work or experience and certain things for school purposes. 4:32 ¶ 56 in PBR3
So having this funding ensured that I do have my qualification and then also because of how the structure of the bursary is set up, having the bursary then kind of gave me a leg through the door in terms of getting into the PIT programme, which has been formed the entire foundation, of my career and obviously gave my family, I think, a glimpse into, you know, for me well being the first in my family to graduate from an institution of higher learning with a degree specifically. And also, being the first to be in this industry, it's kind of given to my family. A glimpse into having a young professional in the family, you know, in the family and somebody who builds a career. What that looks like and the opportunities that it brings. 15:8 ¶ 33 in PBR5
Like I said, well, that's a difficult one for me because, like I previously mentioned, the beneficiaries, yes, will go and then obtain those degrees and come back and then be without jobs. So, I believe that if they were guaranteed an internship or employment of some sort after they get these bursaries, then that's a different story. We know that today I am indeed being helped. But for you to help me get a degree, and then I come back home, and then I sit with a degree. Hey, it's a bit of a challenge. 9:10 ¶ 54 in CSR1

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.7 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.3.6.2 *In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of Internship and graduate training opportunities as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiary*

The theme of internship and graduate training opportunities emerged as a significant aspect of the mining company's bursary program. Both HOCR1 and HOCR2 emphasised the value of practical work experience, specifically, the vacation work offered to bursary recipients during studies, which plays an essential role in familiarising them with the company's culture and work environment, as well as preparing them for full-time employment. They also highlighted the importance of the internships and Professional in Training (PIT) programmes provided to some graduates following graduation. These internships and PIT programmes provide on-the-job training and create opportunities to be considered for permanent positions should internal vacancies arise within the company.

LOCR1 and LOCR2 similarly acknowledged the positive impact that vacation work and/or the PIT programmes have in equipping former bursary recipients for permanent employment within the mining company.

PBR1 expressed appreciation for the value of vacation work in providing students with practical work experience under the mentorship of experienced professionals in their field. PBR3 concurred with PBR1's perspective on the significance of vacation work experience and further highlighted the pivotal role the PIT program played in establishing a strong foundation for their career as a young professional in the mining industry, which was beneficial for them and their family.

CSR1 noted that while getting a bursary-funded degree is valuable, it can be discouraging for graduates to complete their studies and remain unemployed. CSR1 proposed that awarding bursaries could be more effective if accompanied by a guaranteed internship or other form of work placement.

5.3.6.3 Conclusion on internship and graduate training opportunities provided to bursary recipients as an antecedent to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

The research findings indicate that the mining company's bursary programmes place considerable emphasis on the importance of practical work experience, which is facilitated through vacation work, internships and Professional in Training (PIT) programs. These initiatives enable bursary recipients to acclimate to the organisational culture, acquire practical work experience, and prepare effectively for potential full-time employment. Participants have recognised the significant value of mentorship and coaching and the solid foundation for career development that these opportunities provide.

However, concerns from the local community representatives persist regarding the potential for graduates to remain unemployed after obtaining their bursary-funded degrees. This is a reflection on the high unemployment levels in the communities and the country. It has been suggested that the effectiveness of the program could be enhanced through the provision of guaranteed internships, graduate training placements or other forms of work placement upon graduation.

The completion of vacation work and subsequent placement of graduates internally at the mining company through internship and PIT programmes, pivots the graduates, and for career success and gives them continued financial freedom and the ability to give back to their family as well as the community, through individual and company-initiated CSR activities, thereby is an antecedent for creating social impact in the communities

5.4 Research sub-question 2: Findings related to the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

5.4.1 Introduction on the overviews of themes identified as barriers to CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

Sub-question 2 relates to the identification of barriers to CSR bursaries, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. During the literature review conducted in

Chapter 2, three themes relating to the barriers to creating social impact were identified, and no new themes were identified through the research conducted.

- Prior academic success and subject choices.
- Bursary implementation policies and processes.
- Social and life challenges.

Table 5.8 below presents the two themes supported with evidence collected in the research, the description of these themes, whether these were new themes and if they are discussed as part of the findings.

Table 5.8: Themes emerging from research sub-question two and supported with research findings

Themes	Theme description	Existing or New theme	Discussed (Yes/No)
Theme 1 Prior academic success and subject choices	This refers to the academic results obtained and subjects passed at the time of applying for the tertiary education bursary. Academic performance and subject selection may affect eligibility for receiving a bursary.	Existing	Yes
Theme 2 Bursary implementation policies & processes	This refers to the policies and procedures established for administering bursary programmes. The effectiveness and efficiency of these policies and procedures may influence whether they function as barriers within the implementation process.	Existing	Yes

Source: Author's own.

5.4.2 Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 1 – Prior academic success and subject choices

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.4.2.1 Evidence of prior academic success and subject choices as a barrier to CSR bursary programs creating social impact

Table 5.9: Evidence of prior academic success and subject choices

And of course, you know how we allocate these funds, either in the STEM categories, which are our science, technology, engineering disciplines, but also occupations in high demand. 12:39 ¶ 32 in HO CR1
For them to study at university, of course, you need to build career confidence and make sure that when they choose and select bursaries and careers to follow, they know what they're talking about. So, we do as a company also invest in schools. 12:81 ¶ 58 in HO CR1
Career fairs, you know, making career options and that information available to the students, just as a part, but also to say, but do you know what careers are out there, and are you sure that that is really the career that you want to follow. So that is also important for us. 12:82 ¶ 60 in HO CR1
And we do certain universities. So we do UJ for mine surveying, we do the University of the Free State for geology, we do Wits for all the engineering and geology, we do UP for all the engineering and geology, and we do UCT. Also, the same engineering and geology we do, Stellenbosch University also does the same, and we also do Northwest University. So, if somebody comes and says I'm studying. 13:111 ¶ 27 in HO CR2
So you find that certain universities don't offer those modules. Yeah. Yeah. So, you will see, even with rock engineering, for example, rock engineering is for geology students, but you find that the University of Free State students struggle with rock engineering interviews because of this. 13:15 ¶ 31 in HO CR2

We need to solve for business, so engineering is considered a cost discipline in the business. So, the business doesn't want to struggle to find engineers. So, they decide. Let's plan, let's always be ready in terms of talent. 13:104 ¶ 53 in HOCR2

So, it's seen as an exclusive bursary only set aside for high-performing learners who are performing at a certain level and some of the candidates from the local area. Local community do not make it, and we've had instances where we sent a group of learners for these things, and they come back out of 10. 6:34 ¶ 35 in LOCR1

The second part is that we also subject them to your psychometric assessment and all of that. A learner who was doing maths and science would probably perform much better than a learner who did history, for instance. 6:62 ¶ 83 in LOCR1

We understand that disparities in terms of the skill sets or the level of education within our host community. So, it's sort of like a strategy to also assist us to get talent locally and to also just make sure in terms of our legacy. When we leave the environment, we leave certain skills, and also, if you look at it from a household perspective, it also assists in making sure there's at least one graduate within the households and our host community for sustainability purposes. 7:6 ¶ 15 in LOCR3

Yeah, apart from diversifying skills, I think we're already doing bridging programmes to make sure that people get a second chance. So that would, I would intensify as well. 7:40 ¶ 81 in LOCR3

Just have a structured bridging programme to allow people to access university. 7:51 ¶ 83 in LOCR3

So you'd find that, yes, somebody did pass matric, but they didn't get the required marks to get into the programme that they want to do in university. So, the bridging programme would come in and help you to improve those marks. 7:42 ¶ 85 in LOCR3

So, when I picked the subjects at school, which were physics and Maths, obviously, there are many careers that are available. But I think engineering was the one that stood out. And I think from grade 10 onwards, I had an opportunity to be sponsored by the mining company, and I think that was more or less streamlined. Because we used to have Saturday classes, which the mining company sponsored and so forth, so more or less channelled, I would say, channelled my career and progress since then. But I think the most critical. 14:39 ¶ 11 in PBR1

So if I didn't attend those programmes, chances are I would not have had that opportunity. In fact, I wouldn't have even known that Exxaro exist within the community and they are doing mining. Most probably wouldn't have. You know, and I can assure you, there's probably 80%, if not more than that, where students and even parents don't know the companies around, what they're specialising in, and what kind of programmes they're offering. 14:42 ¶ 133 in PBR1
I think bursaries are only one part. Just going back in terms of the communities around the mines or where the companies are based, where bursaries only cover one portion. So sometimes you know there's a very big portion of the community that might not have the same opportunities in terms of academic speaking. 4:25 ¶ 22 in PBR3
OK, so I think I matriculated in 2011 with good marks. I think I was at the top of my class that year. 1:21 ¶ 7 in PBR6

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.9 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.4.2.2 *In case and cross-case analysis of evidence, prior academic success and subject choices as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact*

The mining company's bursary program includes a component dedicated to developing a talent pipeline in fields such as mining, engineering and metallurgy that aligns with the company's industry. Participant HOCR1 noted the importance of recruiting for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) disciplines. Candidates with strong prior academic performance are typically those who achieve the marks required for entry into these academically rigorous programs. HOCR2 stated that the bursaries are available at certain universities, as some universities do not cover the essential content required in practice. HOCR2 also mentioned that the aim is for them to address business requirements, so mining-related disciplines are prioritised. Consequently, bursary applicants are required to complete mathematics and science, as these subjects are prerequisites for admission into mining-related programs.

LOCR1 stated that community members often view the mining company bursaries as primarily intended for high-performing learners, since some of the applicants from the

community do not pass the assessments required for the bursary. There is a perception among community members that applicants from the host communities may be disadvantaged, as those with mathematics and science backgrounds tend to perform better in the assessments, compared to those without these core subjects, even when applying for bursaries for non-mining-related academic disciplines. LOCR3 noted that the differences in educational achievement can place host community applicants at a disadvantage, and this has been addressed by offering matriculants from the community access to the matric bridging program. The matric bridging program assists matriculation students to prepare and retake their matric exams to improve their marks and their chances of getting into desirable university programs.

Participant PBR1 stated that, as a high school student, they studied maths and science, which proved beneficial when considering engineering as a possible career path. The mining company sponsored Saturday classes within their community, providing a solid foundation for academic achievement and successful admission to an engineering program, which they successfully completed. Similarly, PBR6 received a bursary from the mining company, excelled academically at school and matriculated at the top of their class. PBR3 expresses that some locals from the communities may historically not have achieved academically due to the state of the communities surrounding the mines.

5.4.2.3 Conclusion on prior academic success and subject choices as a barrier to CSR bursary programs creating social impact

In conclusion, the research findings indicate that one of the goals of the mining company's bursary programmes is to cultivate a talent pipeline aligned with industry needs, particularly in mining and STEM fields. The emphasis on prior academic achievement and specific subject prerequisites, such as mathematics and science, creates barriers for many applicants from host communities. These requirements, though necessary to meet business objectives and to ensure success in rigorous university programs, inadvertently limit access for students who have not had the same educational opportunities. The company's efforts to address these disparities, such as providing bridging programs and community-based academic support, represent important steps toward inclusivity. However, ongoing challenges remain in balancing the need for qualified candidates with the goal of creating broader social impact and equitable access for all community members. Ultimately, for the bursary programmes to achieve the intended social impact beyond individual beneficiaries, continued investment in educational support and flexibility in granting bursaries to provide a means of accessing

higher education will be essential to expand the social impact currently achieved through the bursary programmes.

5.4.3 Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 2 – Bursary implementation policies and procedures

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.4.3.1 Evidence of bursary implementation policies and procedures as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries

Table 5.10: Evidence of bursary implementation policies and procedures

So, the challenges from our side are, of course, always budget and resources, right, because you only have it, it's about how your business performs, how much budget you have. 12:112 ¶ 74 in HO�R1
Unfortunately, sometimes you want to save the world, but you can't. You can only issue it to a certain number of, you know, successful candidates and internally. Sometimes we also find that you know where people managed bursaries. 12:116 ¶ 76 in HO�R1
We are also expecting those same people to do now learning and development to work with mentoring, so sometimes the resources are also a problem for us internally. 12:118 ¶ 78 in HO�R1
So it's very difficult to personalise, you know, the bursary offering to each and every individual. What is also challenging within the company, specifically, is that we don't have a bursary system. We don't have a system where we capture our details. 12:121 ¶ 86 in HO�R1
You know where students can upload their results and send their lease agreements. It's a lot of admin, right? So that is definitely one of our challenges. 12:125 ¶ 88 in HO�R1

So I think number one, finances in terms of budget. 13:112 ¶ 105 in HO CR2
Another challenge is also making sure that there's alignment across all the bursary programmes within the business. 13:60 ¶ 119 in HO CR2 Because they solve different problems, the other one for our business that is differently abled, you find that the bursary is for aligning with our strategy and our diversity, equity and inclusion strategy. 13:59 ¶ 121 in HO CR2
So there needs to be alignment and harmony within all these bursary programmes because I can't say there needs to be balance because they're different, they're solving for different things, they can never be balanced. But at least there must be alignment and harmony within. 13:63 ¶ 127 in HO CR2
My other challenge would be business continuity. Honestly, I think there are a lot of bursaries, and there are just two of us. 13:64 ¶ 129 in HO CR2
Yeah, I think I'll go back to the area that we need to improve in, just in terms of those constant engagements, because as it stands now, yes, we are involved in the recruitment phase. But going forward, it would mostly be the talent pipeline in HRD that. 7:28 ¶ 63 in LO CR3
There, you hardly ever have information filtering through and through to the most impacted, and that would be the neighbouring communities, where to say if there's a bursary that's coming, it's opening this opening date, and the closing date. Date the poor child who probably deserves to get the bursary might not be able to simply because they don't have access to the information, and even if they have access to the information, they don't have the infrastructure to enable them to. 14:27 ¶ 127 in PBR1
I think when I look at how things are now, I don't think it's as easy as it is to access your application forms, especially if you're from rural schools. 2:35 ¶ 94 in PBR2 Some of the mines are really in the rural schools, so it's difficult to get into that space. But I think that is where you would see the most impact because that is where you have kids. Really do need a bursary, and they would not be able to do anything else without it. I mean, they are kids. When? When? When I went to varsity. And it's. I don't. I'm not saying it's wrong because obviously it's based on merit. If you are doing well, you obviously get the bursary, and you'd find that there are kids that are well off but

still have the bursary, and there are kids that are not as well off and don't really have access to the application or even access to it. 2:29 ¶ 96 in PBR2
That whole process, and in most cases, you don't even because it requires, like I mentioned in the beginning, there were a lot of screening stages in between. I think the first one was Pretoria, and then the next one was Witbank. And then I think the interview was at the main office, the old one. And in all those areas, you need to make a plan to go to that area to either get transport money or whatnot, but if you can't afford it, there isn't any other opportunity for you to do it closer to your home. 2:30 ¶ 98 in PBR2
I think that should go beyond universities and go to schools, share the application process and give those kids an opportunity to apply there. 2:32 ¶ 102 in PBR2

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.10 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.4.3.2 In case and cross-case analysis of bursary implementation policies and procedures as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries

Both HOCR1 and HOCR2 identified limited resources as a major challenge affecting the bursary programs. According to HOCR1, the number of bursaries awarded is directly determined by the available budget. Although the company aims to support as many deserving students as possible to address community needs, financial constraints limit its capacity due to the funds available. Additionally, there is a shortage of human resources, as only a small number of personnel are assigned to manage the bursary programs, and these individuals also have responsibilities in other departments. Another challenge is the absence of an effective bursary management system to efficiently administer the bursary program.

HOCR2 further noted the difficulty in aligning various bursary programs, as each is designed to fulfil distinct strategic objectives and address different needs, such as developing a talent pipeline, meeting diversity, equity and inclusion goals, and supporting the company's social impact strategy.

LOCR3 noted that greater engagement is needed with bursary beneficiaries by local operations company representatives, as their involvement has primarily been concentrated at the recruitment stage.

PBR2 noted that a significant challenge involves reaching more potential bursary applicants from rural areas and schools, who are often in greater need of financial assistance compared to applicants from more developed areas, including within the mining communities. It was observed that students from rural schools may lack access to the necessary infrastructure to submit applications or may not have the resources to cover transportation costs to attend the various assessments required. It was therefore suggested that the application process could be made more accessible by administering it directly at rural schools.

5.4.3.3 Conclusion on bursary implementation policies and procedures as a barrier to CSR bursary programs, creating social impact beyond individual beneficiaries

The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of the bursary programs is currently hindered by a combination of limited financial and human resources, the absence of a robust management system and challenges in program alignment and accessibility. While the company remains committed to supporting deserving students and fulfilling broader strategic goals, these barriers restrict the overall impact of the bursary programmes. Enhanced engagement with beneficiaries, streamlined administrative processes, and targeted outreach to rural communities are crucial steps toward overcoming these obstacles. By addressing these challenges, the company can ensure that its bursary programs are more equitable, efficient and aligned with both community needs and organisational objectives.

5.5 Research sub-question 3: Findings related to the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community

5.5.1 Introduction on the overviews of themes identified as benefits accruing to the community because of having mining bursary recipients as graduates in the community

Sub-question 3 relates to the identification of benefits accruing to the community because of having mining bursary recipients as graduates in the community. During the literature review, three themes relating to the benefits accruing to the community were identified, and a new theme was identified through the research conducted.

- Improved student enrolment, retention and completion of studies.
- Increased civic participation.
- Socio economic benefits.
- Multipurpose bursary design.

Table 5.11 below presents the themes supported with evidence collected in the research, the description of these themes, whether these were new themes and if they are discussed as part of the findings.

Table 5.11: Themes emerging from research sub-question three and supported with research findings

Themes	Theme descriptions	Existing or New theme	Discussed (Yes/No)
Theme 1 Socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and region	Socio-economic upliftment, such as attainment of higher education, enhancement of employment opportunities, upliftment of living standards, etc.	Existing	Yes

Themes	Theme descriptions	Existing or New theme	Discussed (Yes/No)
Theme 2 Multipurpose bursary design – increasing education and employment levels in the community	Bursary programmes are designed to serve multiple purposes such as providing a talent pipeline for business, creating social impact in the communities, promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.	New	Yes

Source: Author's own.

5.5.2 Findings relating to the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community. Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits to recipients, their families, the community and region

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.5.2.1 Evidence of Socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and the region

Table 5.12: Evidence of socio-economic benefits

Ultimately, you know, develop those communities and invest in them and just give back in the communities where we operate, and of course, to, you know, just enhance our corporate standing, our corporate reputation within the industry. Yeah. And making sure that ultimately, we are, yeah, it's just, you know, being an authentic investor and uplifting the educational levels in the communities we operate. 12:10 ¶ 19 in HOCT1
A high percentage of bursary recipients sent money back to their families on a monthly basis. 12:151 ¶ 144 in HOCT1
And of course, with the travelling allowance that we provide, they can at least go back to their families and visit them twice, twice a year, I think. And the biggest impact

would be, of course, when they start with the employment and they start receiving a salary, that's when the contribution actually starts. 12:154 ¶ 156 in HO CR1
So that burden doesn't sit with their family anymore, and to only extend that into the opportunities for employment is just so much higher, which will ultimately increase the livelihoods of their families. 12:51 ¶ 36 in HO CR1
So, they impact their communities positively by contributing in terms of motivation, speaking to the learners, and I know others who are tutors of maths and science in their communities. 13:68 ¶ 145 in HO CR2
I think it has brought enlightenment in terms of the future, the future bursars that are coming. They now know what a mine engineer does. They now know. 13:113 ¶ 149 in HO CR2
That it's possible for them, you know, sometimes when you see something done by someone that doesn't look like you, it's far-fetched, man. You feel like I hear you. But you don't think it's achievable. But as soon as it's someone who looks like you who comes from where you come from. Then you can relate better. You think? Ah, man, if this person is from here and they can do this, then it means I can do it. I can do it. So, it gives. It gives hope to the young ones. 13:70 ¶ 151 in HO CR2
So reality is that you do actually have people who support their families from the bursary, from the stipend that they get, you know, from the bursaries. 11:10 ¶ 39 in LO CR2
For most of the people in our communities, it really goes a long way in just changing the trajectory of someone's life or the trajectory of a certain family as well. 11:11 ¶ 41 in LO CR2
Well, I know that most of the people who would get their bursaries or even maybe let's say, the PIT programmes, those people support their families, those people go back, they build a house at home, they assist their parents. 11:29 ¶ 91 in LO CR2
Of which, then we just contribute and make sure that in terms of pipeline, we've got those people from the community. I think, but that is over and above the fact that I mean, if you give a person to a previously disadvantaged child. It's an opportunity to change someone's life. A person will be employed in future, and we know that, at least

in South Africa, one employed person in the family takes care of an average of about five to six people. 11:50 ¶ 35 in LOCR2
I think, looking at my background and at home family-wise, I don't think I would have. Been able to afford to go to university. I remember even my application fee for varsity. One of my teachers paid for me because I couldn't afford to. 2:3 ¶ 24 in PBR2
It was in a good way, a positive way, because it was as if I was working, even though I was not working. But yeah, I think the little that I had then went to even helping my siblings as well. 2:7 ¶ 30 in PBR2
At some point, I was even using the bursary money to assist back at home. 2:6 ¶ 28 in PBR2
I think the main one is being able to support my family. I mean, my family was the first one to go to university and come back, and now I have a full job, so I've tried to make sure that the siblings behind me also have the same opportunity, so I assist with paying for their fees. I assist with them applying, but I think there have been a lot of things that I've also been able to do for my family that I would not have been able to do. Had I not been in the position that I am now, yeah. And I think it's just that the other part is just motivation because a lot of my siblings look up to me, and I think it also gives them that sense of, you know, if I could do it. 2:23 ¶ 84 in PBR2
I was able to build my house. So growing up, I think I grew up in a shack. It was still a shack at the time, and then we didn't have electricity, but now it's a house. We do have electricity and running water. So it's much better, so many times of my contribution, at least I was able to build my mum a house when I started working. 4:30 ¶ 33 in PBR3
From the community, while I was in Varsity, I used to tutor for maths and science in my previous high school. That was something that I used to enjoy, that I started doing while I was still in high school, and I will also continue to do. While I was still in varsity, I just provided mentorship and assistance to those who needed assistance in terms of careers, different career paths that they can take, and courses that they can consider. Or especially people who are interested in working in mining. Just sort of give them insight in terms of what they can expect the environment to be, what sort of qualifications they would require to get to where they need to be. 4:35 ¶ 33 in PBR3

Oh, there's a guy from Mpumalanga. I met him when we were going for the first interviews. Somewhere here in Witbank. And right now, the guy. I think he's the CEO of a company. Which is doing business with the mining company, and the guy was also funded by the mining company throughout his studies and now the guy is the CEO of a company within the community and some of their work that they're doing, they're doing this with the mining company. And I know they employ a lot of locals there. 4:34 ¶ 38 in PBR3

So, the purpose of these bursaries is to uplift. 3:37 ¶ 17 in PBR4

the learners or the students of those communities where they are, where they are operating and potentially build them to be able to also work in the same environment, because, as they say, you're surrounded by mines. It's sort of like easier for you to get work in the mine, so if you have a bursary from one of the surrounding mines, it's easier for you to get work in that mine. So, I think the purpose is just to uplift learners of the communities where they are operating. 3:4 ¶ 19 in PBR4

So obviously, as a bursary recipient, I got the opportunity to go to varsity, and I was the first one in my family to do so. So, it enabled me to also assist my siblings because going to varsity was not just. So when I got to varsity, as I'm saying, I got exposed to other careers that are out there. So, the opportunity that I got as a bursary student for me to actually go to varsity, not even just start, but for me to actually be in the environment that I was in, allowed me to actually educate other people, especially my younger siblings. 3:24 ¶ 81 in PBR4

I always tell people that I actually owe the mining company everything that I own, like, literally everything from my degree to the car that I have is because of the bursary that I received from the mining company. The job that I have is because of the person that I received from the mining company. Everything so literally the impacts are so much that it didn't just positively affect me, but also my family because now that now that I was out of home and my out of my financial, my parents financial responsibility, my parents were able to put more effort or financial efforts, the money to my siblings education, which also now positively influenced them because they were able to go to better schools than I did and they are flourishing because of the bursary that I got from the mining company So, it was a huge, huge, huge effect, not just for me, but also for my family. 3:12 ¶ 25 in PBR4

What I can say is on my side the impact that the bursary that I received from the mining company, it was not just for me as an individual, but it's affected by family as well as being an example to the people that are around me because as I said, I'm from the Township, so if people around me see it's okay, it's possible for a person who's like us to go to varsity. Then they also get motivated to. To work hard so that they can take advantage of the opportunities that they see are available. So yeah, it was. I will always vouch for the bursary programme. 3:34 ¶ 117 in PBR4
In the areas where we operate, to ensure that the locals in those areas benefit from having the operation, they benefit from receiving skills, you know, upskilling the youth and ensuring that the people in those communities are better off once our operations are no longer there. 15:6 ¶ 27 in PBR5
I think I've used my bursary opportunity once to secure my own career. I've obviously been able to financially help my family upgrade lots at home. 15:16 ¶ 44 in PBR5
The opportunities that you provided in the best way to have exposure also allow you to be able to invite other people into said opportunities to also give them the same exposure. So, I think that's how I've also expanded the branch, extended the branch to other family members in my family to say that, yes, I'm a mining engineer, and that's how I got this qualification. But did you guys know? But there are also things such as geology, there is funding for surveyors that are apparently very short also in the industry, that we really do need more of, introducing my family members to this whole new spectrum of careers that they were not aware of previously. 15:17 ¶ 44 in PBR5
However, due to financial constraints, I could not go into institutions, an academic institution and the following year, there were no funds at home. So, I took basically a three-year gap because of that issue. 1:2 ¶ 9 in PBR6
I've helped my family, you know. With money here and there, it has assisted quite a lot, because although my parents do work, it's not enough. 1:20 ¶ 42 in PBR6 How can I put it? Yeah, the money that they earn is not sufficient. So, I do help once in a while just to send them money. So, I save and then I send them a lump sum of money so that they can help cover the things that they need to cover at home. 1:19 ¶ 44 in PBR6

So it was just to close the bridge in terms of enhancing or improving education in nearby communities as well to bridge that gap. 1:4 ¶ 19 in PBR6

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.12 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.5.2.2 In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and the region

Participant HOCR1 indicated that a primary strategic objective of the bursary program is to foster development and investment within the communities where the mining company operates. The bursaries contribute socio-economic benefits by elevating educational attainment and increasing levels of employment opportunities, thereby increasing the livelihoods of families in these communities. This initiative not only enhances the mining company's corporate image and industry reputation but also reinforces its standing as an authentic investor in its areas of operation. The most significant positive impact on families and communities is realised when the former recipients successfully graduate and secure employment.

Participant LOCR2 corroborated HOCR2's statements regarding the socio-economic impact of the bursary program on families and communities. LOCR2 indicated that some of the recipients contribute to their families, once employed, such as building homes for their parents. Furthermore, LOCR2 noted that the bursary program has significantly altered the life trajectories of both the recipients and their families.

The former bursary recipients' participant group consistently acknowledged the socio-economic benefits gained by themselves and their families, but also extended to their broader communities as a direct result of obtaining a bursary-funded degree. Many of these participants shared that they were able to educate, influence and motivate siblings and others, regarding career choices.

PBR2 indicated that pursuing a university degree would likely have been financially unattainable without the bursary support. They explained that the financial allowances provided through the bursary enabled them to support their siblings, and upon employment, to send surplus funds home. Similarly, PBR3 was able to build their mother

a home and contribute to the community through mentoring and offering career guidance to students pursuing tertiary education, specifically highlighting opportunities in the mining industry. In addition, PBR3 referenced another former mining company bursary beneficiary who is now the chief executive officer of his own company, which trades with the mining company and employs the local community members.

PBR4 emphasised the primary aim of bursaries: to uplift the communities by enabling education and potential employment within the surrounding communities. PBR4 expressed deep gratitude for receiving a bursary, stating that it allowed their parents to redirect finances so younger siblings could attend better schools, thereby improving their prospects. Like PBR3, PBR5 extended socio-economic benefits to their family by upgrading their home.

Likewise, PBR6 reported that due to a lack of funds, they remained at home for three years before receiving the mining company bursary and enrolling at university. Their parents, though employed, were part of the 'missing middle' income group, unable to afford university fees despite employment. The bursary thus served as a crucial lifeline. Since gaining employment, PBR6 has consistently saved and remitted significant sums to their family to cover major expenses.

5.5.2.3 Conclusion on socio-economic benefits accruing to recipients, their families, the community and region

The findings indicate that the mining company's bursary programmes play a crucial role in fostering community development by providing educational opportunities and increasing employment among local community members. The bursaries have enabled recipients, many from financially constrained backgrounds, to access higher education and secure employment. Findings from former bursary recipients demonstrate that they described how the bursaries not only benefited them personally but also enabled them to support their families financially, improve living conditions, and inspire younger siblings and others to pursue higher education and diverse career options. Graduates often contributed to their families, for example, building homes, supporting siblings 'education and offering mentorship and career guidance within their communities. The program has also helped transform beneficiaries' life trajectories, with some starting businesses that employ local community members. Overall, the findings are that bursary programmes are seen as a vital driver of socio-economic upliftment, positively impacting recipients, their families and their broader communities.

5.5.3 Findings related to the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community. Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design increasing education and employment levels in the community

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.5.3.1 Evidence of the multipurpose bursary design increasing education and employment levels in the community

Table 5.13: Evidence of multipurpose bursary design

The feeder bursar scheme and the bursar scheme for students with disabilities, and then the one that's externally managed. 12:179 ¶ 11 in HO�R1 Because we know that we are offering bursaries, we are unable to employ all of them. We were just saying that on the social impact side, we've got medicine, doctors, teachers, you know, those are not occupations within the mining company. 12:157 ¶ 170 in HO�R1
But of course, also making sure that when we talk about talent within the mining company, we scope some of our bursary programmes to ultimately also help us to source talent for the future. So, it's got a social impact, giving back. But it's also about us finding talent for our business going forward. 12:17 ¶ 21 in HO�R1
So it's of course we're giving opportunities to bursars that have been disadvantaged in the previous, those that are coming from poor families, those that don't always have an opportunity, to be the best in the class. 12:56 ¶ 42 in HO�R1
And even when we recruit and the criteria that we're using, we're not that strict and saying ok, nobody will cut off when you perform below 60% because you really realise that you know people come from different environments, they are, they're social, and it can, you know. Issues in the communities where they're coming from, and we apply those criteria in making sure that everybody has an equal opportunity, you know, to apply for our bursaries, and that's also why we have a diverse. 12:63 ¶ 44 in HO�R1 Offering a bursary, we're not only offering bursaries for engineers, so that we can employ them within the mining company. We have multi disciplines that we're offering

bursaries for. We're looking at multi-income families, not only the ones that you know have access to a university. 12:65 ¶ 46 in HO CR1
And only those studying directions that are aligned with our social impact strategy and our talent strategy, et cetera. So that's how we try to cover that. 12:78 ¶ 54 in HO CR1
So I think largely our programmes are designed, and we've mastered the bursary programme and the experiential training for graduates that are going to be part of the mining value chain, but we have not done much. To do the same for bursaries that are non-mining related, which I think is where we are missing a great opportunity, because, as mining, I mean, this mine only has nine years. Now. What happens beyond that? So, if you look at bursaries, we should right now be looking at funding non-mining related qualifications so that we can then, at the end of or end of life of mine, we can say we've trained some number of people that can continue working. 6:76 ¶ 91 in LO CR1
So, for example, we give out bursaries in mining and engineering, then those learners will then have either an opportunity to do some vac work with us or become professionals in training. 11:51 ¶ 33 in LO CR2 Of which, then we just contribute and make sure that in terms of the pipeline, we've got those people from the community. I think, but that is over and above the fact that I mean, if you give a person to a previously disadvantaged child. It's an opportunity to change someone's life. A person will be employed in future, and we know that, at least in South Africa, one employed person in the family takes care of an average of about five to six people. 11:50 ¶ 35 in LO CR2 For most of the people in our communities, it really goes a long way in just changing the trajectory of someone's life or the trajectory of a certain family as well. 11:52 ¶ 41 in LO CR2
Okay, so we do have bursars that would have received a bursary from the mine, and they even end up working for the company, right? So, they get an opportunity to be employed here. 11:53 ¶ 77 in LO CR2
If the bursary programme could not only cater for what the company needs. 14:28 ¶ 145 in PBR1

One of the biggest challenges that the mines normally face around these neighbouring communities would be the challenge of employment. And when it comes to youth employment, another big thing would be the skills. So if the youth doesn't have those necessary skills, then they can be deemed employable, but it becomes an issue for the mine. 4:13 ¶ 14 in PBR3

Essentially, because there's a sort of social responsibility around the mine to uplift the neighbouring communities around them to make sure that at least the livelihood of everyone around the mine is improved in one way or another, so once you have a high number of unemployed youth around the neighbouring communities, it will become a challenge eventually for the mine. That's why most of the time you see a lot of strikes around the mine about job opportunities, job debt and you know you can only do so much if people don't have the skills, that you're looking for don't have the necessary qualifications at the end of the day. You'll have to go out and find the necessary people that you need to run the mine. But if you can develop from your local communities, then at least in a way, if you have one person in the family, they're able to help a bigger family by themselves. So it becomes really easy for the community now to grow, and you know, and move forward, even for the mind of the Community, if the communities around the mines are happy, I think everyone will be happy in that way. 4:14 ¶ 14 in PBR3

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.3 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.5.3.2 In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of the multipurpose bursary design, increasing education and employment levels in the community

HOCR1 mentioned that the mining company offers multipurpose bursaries. The company offers mining-related bursaries and non-mining-related bursaries that are focused on driving social impact in the local mining communities. Some Bursary recipients in non-mining related disciplines, therefore, have limited employment opportunities within the mining company but can be employed elsewhere.

LOCR1 emphasised that the mining company bursary focuses on mining value chain disciplines; less has been done to offer bursaries outside of mining. LOCR1 believes the mining company, by focusing on funding mainly mining-related disciplines, is missing out

on an opportunity to develop other disciplines. This is especially true for some of the mines that are approaching the end of the Life of Mine. They encouraged the mining company to fund non-mining-related qualifications so that locals from the community can secure jobs outside of the mining industry. LOCR2 concurred with LOCR1 that most of the bursaries fund mining-related qualifications, to feed the talent pipeline for local mining operations. This ensures that beneficiaries can be employed locally, contributing to increasing education levels and reducing unemployment levels in the surrounding communities.

The former bursary recipient participant group emphasised the importance of community members obtaining education and employment to improve the livelihoods within the communities. PBR3 drew attention to the skills gap among local youth, which has resulted in significant employability challenges. The participants identified the mining company's social responsibility to contribute to elevating living standards in the areas in which it operates. To address the skills deficiency, PBR1 recommended that educating at least one individual per household could mitigate the unemployment concerns, which have on occasion led to community protests that threaten to disrupt mining operations.

5.5.3.3 Conclusion on multipurpose bursary design increasing education and employment levels in the community

The mining company provides both mining-related and non-mining-related bursaries aimed at supporting local communities. While these bursaries help increase education and employment within the communities, some participants believe the company should expand support to other fields, especially as some mines reach the end of their operational life. Stakeholders argue that focusing more on non-mining disciplines would help community members find jobs beyond the mining industry. Participants also highlighted the company's social responsibility to uplift local living standards and suggested that improving educational opportunities, such as ensuring at least one educated individual per household, could reduce unemployment and related community unrest.

5.5.4 Overall conclusion on the benefits accruing to the communities

The bursary program administered by the mining company serves as a pivotal instrument for community development, primarily by facilitating access to education and enhancing employment prospects for local community members. These bursaries have enabled

recipients, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue higher education and attain gainful employment. Former recipients have attested to the program's significant personal impact, citing the ability to support their families financially, improve their living standards, and inspire younger relatives and peers to pursue higher education and varied career paths. Graduates frequently contribute by constructing homes, assisting with the educational expenses of siblings, and providing mentorship within their communities. The program has also altered the life trajectories of beneficiaries, with some establishing businesses that further generate local employment. In some, the bursary initiative is widely regarded as a catalyst for socio-economic advancement, benefiting recipients, their families and the broader community.

5.6 Research sub-question 4: Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

5.6.1 Introduction to the overviews of themes identified as opportunities required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact

Sub-question 4 relates to the identification of opportunities that exist for CSR bursaries, creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. During the literature review conducted in Chapter 2, one theme relating to the barriers to creating social impact was identified.

- Increasing awareness of the bursary programmes in the community.

Table 5.14 below presents the three themes supported with evidence collected in the research, the description of these themes, whether these were new themes and if they are discussed as part of the findings.

Table 5.14: Themes emerging from research sub-question four and supported by research findings

Themes	Theme descriptions	Existing or New theme	Discussed (Yes/No)
Theme 1 Awarding more bursaries	Enhancing the allocation of bursaries, with a particular focus on supporting individuals from disadvantaged communities and increasing opportunities for women, in alignment with achieving SDG 4.	Existing	Yes
Theme 2 Forming and improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders	Establish or expand collaborations with external partners to improve and advance learning and research outcomes, in alignment with the objective of achieving SDG 4.	Existing	Yes
Theme 3 Creating contractual community bursary recipient CSR participation programmes	Establish formal agreements with tertiary education bursary recipients, requiring their participation in corporate social responsibility initiatives within local communities.	New	Yes

Source: Author's own.

5.6.2 Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 1 – Increasing the number of bursaries awarded

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.6.2.1 Evidence of increasing the number of bursaries awarded is an opportunity to create social impact

Table 5.15: Evidence of increasing the number of bursaries awarded

Is the working environment transforming right? There are some positions that will become redundant. So, how do we look at the offering of our bursaries? Do we offer bursaries? 12:176 ¶ 184 in HO�R1
Is the working environment transforming right? There are some positions that will become redundant. So, how do we look at the offering of our bursaries? Do we offer bursaries in the digital era that we're going towards? 12:176 ¶ 184 in HO�R1
You know, so looking at the type of bursaries that we offer, the education and the direction that they are studying and making sure that there are always offerings for future skills. 12:177 ¶ 186 in HO�R1
That is something that we have to always, you know, look at and make sure that that is aligned with the company and the country is going. And then secondly, as well, is there an opportunity, and I think this is open for collaboration for us to say. 12:171 ¶ 188 in HO�R1
Sure. I think maybe by broadening it a bit and not restricting it to mining students. 13:92 ¶ 197 in HO�R2
Because not all of us can be, I mean, engineering students, because not all of us can be engineers. So maybe like broadening it a bit to welcome people that maybe are studying other disciplines. 13:109 ¶ 199 in HO�R2
I mean, we do have PIT programmes for those, but we don't have bursary programmes. So, what happens then to students who don't have funding and are

studying those disciplines, you understand? So, I think maybe extending it a bit to inviting other disciplines could. 13:110 ¶ 201 in HOCR2
So, I think largely our programmes are designed, and we've mastered the bursary programme and the experiential training for graduates that are going to be part of the mining value chain, but we have not done much. To do the same for bursaries that are non-mining related, which I think is where we are missing a great opportunity. 6:75 ¶ 91 in LOCR1
So we are not strategic enough, and we don't have a process that is intentional enough where we say the outlook of our communities or the socioeconomic standard and the educational level and literacy level in our communities is at this level, how do we then impact all these other streams besides mining? Because the idea is that mining is not infinite. 6:63 ¶ 85 in LOCR1
So, if you look at bursaries, we should right now be looking at funding non-mining related qualifications so that we can then, at the end of or end of life of mine, we can say we've trained some number of people that can continue working. 6:81 ¶ 91 in LOCR1
I think about how it can be expanded, so the one challenge that we have is that historically the scheme was focusing on mine-related qualifications and if you look at the communities that are hosting us. 6:82 ¶ 75 in LOCR1
It's only a certain percentage of learners that are doing maths and science, and then you've got other learners that are doing accounting, that are doing agriculture and all of that. I think it can be expanded in terms of making sure that we expand the bursaries beyond just offering bursaries for mining. 6:83 ¶ 77 in LOCR1
I think we can do more in the bursary space and buy more. I mean, we can try and take more bursars. That's the first thing. 11:35 ¶ 105 in LOCR2
I think overall, as much as we want to improve our talent pipeline and from the social bursary side, we also want to establish talent within our focus areas. I feel that maybe we can also focus on the direction of the region in terms of the municipality and the district, what skill sets are missing in that regard, and also try to find those bursars for, for example, eMalahleni doesn't have a local town planner. 7:49 ¶ 73 in LOCR3

If the bursary programme could just not only cater for what the company needs. 14:28

¶ 145 in PBR1

So you are essentially saying look as much as we are offering this impact towards society, but it's only for a selected few, and the selected few, most probably are just maths and science students in a nutshell, and then you exclude, I think, other students.

14:29 ¶ 150 in PBR1

I think the spectrum in which the scope for bursaries is viewed needs to be widened.

14:40 ¶ 152 in PBR1

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.15 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.6.2.2 *In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of increasing the number of bursaries awarded as an opportunity to create social impact*

Both head office participants noted that there is an untapped opportunity to enhance the social impact of the bursary program by broadening the range of career fields it supports, particularly beyond those related to mining. HOCR1 highlighted the importance of transforming career field selections to reflect global changes, accommodate future and emerging skills such as digital competencies and expand beyond traditional engineering disciplines. Broadening the scope would result in more bursaries being awarded to community members.

All local business operations participants concurred with the head office participant group, but emphasised the importance of transforming to focus on skills required in the communities, rather than solely those required by the mine. LOCR1 highlighted that this approach is vital due to the finite operational lifespan of mines. Supporting a broader range of career disciplines would enable residents to maintain employment opportunities within the region beyond the closure of mining activities. Additionally, LOCR2 suggested that the mine could increase the number of bursaries awarded to better address the community's demand for tertiary education funding.

A former bursary recipient participant also expressed support for expanding the scope of the bursaries, aligning with other participant groups. The participant suggested that

widening funding to include other disciplines that do not require maths and science as a prerequisite could increase the overall impact on society.

5.6.2.3 Conclusion of increasing the number of bursaries awarded is an opportunity to create social impact

The research findings indicated that participants from both the head office and local business operations agreed that the bursary program could achieve greater social impact by supporting a broader range of career fields, especially those beyond mining and traditional engineering disciplines. They emphasised the importance of aligning the bursary program with global trends, emerging digital skills and the needs of local communities, particularly given the limited lifespan of some of the mines. Suggestions included increasing the number of bursaries and expanding eligibility to disciplines that do not require maths and science, thereby improving employment opportunities and societal benefits in communities.

5.6.3 Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.6.3.1 Evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders is an opportunity to create social impact

Table 5.16: Evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders

But what can we do to make sure that there are employment opportunities for them in the communities where they're coming from? And there is, you know, municipality, municipal bodies that we can a little bit leverage on to say, but you don't, you have a space for a teacher, don't you have a space for a doctor? 12:158 ¶ 172 in HOCR1
For the coming 10 years, we have social problems in our communities, drug abuse and all of that. Why don't we start a programme and say we're going to take five learners and fund them for social work? I think the government has been doing that.

We fund 10 learners on agriculture because our strategy is saying we must 6:69 ¶ 87 in LOCR1
Looking at repurposing the land that we are mining and making sure that we give back, so how do we find a certain percentage of those learners around agricultural skills? How do we then go and partner with the University of Mpumalanga and say we'll fund ten of your students in the last year who are in agriculture, so. So that once they are done or part of their challenge or part of their last year, programme will say if any of you would come up with a nice agricultural project that we can implement in our mining operations, you will get funding from the mining company, from the ESD (Enterprise and Supplier Development) programme, then you get this learner because I think how, what, what, our programme. 6:74 ¶ 89 in LOCR1
Why not incorporate some of it there to say, you know what, let's start a business of young people who are 3rd year graduates at the University of Mpumalanga. Let's partner with the university and say we need a group of five learners. A group of 10. They need to come up with a very sustainable programme or whatever. We will fund them and then once they have come up with a project that we can implement in one of our operations and as part of the bursary programme, you bring them to the operations to see what's happening, and they come up with an energy project, and then you fund them beyond their graduation for 30 30-year owners level or we. We also give them an opportunity to come, whether it's for instance, if it's, if it's the agriculture space, we say to them our strategy, our focus is on YYS. Please come to mind, do an assessment, go back, and come up with a design. A project where you would come and implement this, you can give them an opportunity to come the same way that we do with the mining guys. 6:87 ¶ 91 in LOCR1
Including career Expos and just providing that career guidance, and also just their expectations, I mean, just the other week we had a programme where we are partnering with school principals, and we had some of the engineers who are part of the PIT programme previously, who came to do an assessment at. 7:30 ¶ 69 in LOCR3 The school, so that we can assist the project partner principle to improve the school years, so it also ties up with our social impact strategy that focuses on education. 7:50 ¶ 71 in LOCR3

We can also look into partnering with the different departments and the municipality, just to also help them grow talent and have talent in those positions. 7:37 ¶ 77 in LOCR3
I think one will be the awareness part. I think most people in the communities are not aware of these opportunities. As for me, it was highlighted by a former class teacher, even though I'm from the community. But I was not aware of such opportunities. So, for me, I think it will be the awareness raising, so that. 1:13 ¶ 32 in PBR6 especially from grade 10 to metric. They are aware that there are facilities that can help them further their studies. So, if there is visibility in that area, there's awareness as well. I think it will also help bridge the gap between students. Knowing that there are such facilities that can help them in terms of navigating them to go to varsity without having financial burdens as well. 1:22 ¶ 34 in PBR6

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.16 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.6.3.2 In case and cross-case analysis of evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders, it is an opportunity to create social impact

Participant HOCR1 identified an opportunity to collaborate with local municipal authorities by supplying them with bursary-funded graduates for internships, graduate training roles or permanent positions. This approach would yield multiple benefits: the mining company would contribute to improved education levels and employment; the municipality would gain access to qualified professionals; and the community would benefit from an increased number of skilled, employed individuals, ultimately enhancing overall livelihoods.

Participant LOCR1 concurred with HOCR1 regarding collaboration with local municipalities and government departments. LOCR1 emphasised the importance of addressing social issues within the community and recommended engaging

municipalities to support career disciplines that meet community needs, such as funding social workers, who could help municipalities in combating prevalent challenges like drug abuse. Furthermore, LOCR1 proposed partnering with local institutions such as the University of Mpumalanga to identify and sponsor students in Agriculture, enabling them to later contribute by transforming land previously used for mining.

PBR6 observed that the mining company may need to strengthen its engagement with local communities, as there appears to be limited awareness of the bursary program among community members. Enhancing awareness would likely result in a greater number of applicants from these communities.

5.6.3.3 Conclusion of evidence of improving collaborations with stakeholders as an opportunity to create a significant impact

Several participants highlighted the value of collaborating with local municipalities by providing bursary-funded graduates for internships or employment. This strategy benefits the mining company, the municipality and the community by improving education, increasing employment and enhancing livelihoods. There was consensus on the need to address community social issues, with recommendations to fund roles like social workers and to partner with local educational institutions to develop skills in areas such as agriculture. Additionally, it was noted that the mining company should improve awareness of its bursary program to boost community participation.

5.6.4 Findings related to the opportunities that exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries. Theme 3 – Contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients

This theme was selected for discussion of findings due to the frequency it came up from the different participant groups, giving diversity of insights from diverse lived and or professional experiences as well as cross-case.

5.6.4.1 Evidence of contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients is an opportunity to create social impact

Table 5.17: Evidence of contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients

If we do sign a contract with your bursary agreement with you, do we want you to go back to the Community for at least one year and give back? But then again, that is the network and those relationships that we need to leverage because you know, we also need to create. That opportunities for them to go back, maybe in brackets, we can talk about a Zuma year, right? 12:172 ¶ 190 in HOCR1 Are there opportunities for that because that is not built into our current agreements, but you can't just build it in and expect them to go back, and you're not helping them, you know, to source these opportunities. 12:178 ¶ 192 in HOCR1
And even maybe, and even maybe in high schools of the communities that we are in, we can go beyond just giving to our bursary recipient, but making it an obligation to say every now and then, we will take you to. 13:86 ¶ 189 in HOCR2 The schools in the communities that we mine in, so that you guys can go and share. Because now, when it's something that you just let be, the person who thinks about it never happens with some of them, but if it's an obligation. 13:91 ¶ 191 in HOCR2 Then you are sure that that impact will be created. They will go and transfer what they learn in university to the next generation. 13:88 ¶ 193 in HOCR2
I think maybe the other hindrance could be that once they get into the system in the bursars, we don't have a system or way for them to go back to the community, then sort of like plough back. 6:22 ¶ 25 in LOCR1
We don't have a programme where we take these learners who have benefited from, let's say, maybe the office has five learners that are funded. We don't have a programme where we say to them, please go back and motivate other lenders that are in grade 12 this year, so that they can see that there is. Possibilities. You know, it doesn't matter where you come from, as long as you work hard and you study hard, then you will get a bursary from, you know, a local mind that will fund you for the full tuition. So, I think maybe that's also a hindrance that we treat them as individuals. And we treat them as learners and not necessarily as people who are from the community,

who could become ambassadors for the mining company and spread the word about the programme that we are running. 6:79 ¶ 27 in LOCR1
I think the biggest one for me would be us actually utilising them as ambassadors for the mine. I think we're not tapping into that opportunity to strategically position these learners such that they are the ones that tell the good story about the mine. 6:80 ¶ 63 in LOCR1
I think my biggest one will be what I'm just thinking about. That is one of the ways to make sure that the learners. They are not forgotten in the system, you know, and the fact that they've been given an opportunity becomes a living thing that they will be reminded of throughout. 11:54 ¶ 117 in LOCR2 Let's say they are tertiary education, so that even after they can then think about what am I going to do? Post my degree to assist my community, right? 11:55 ¶ 119 in LOCR2

Source: Author's own.

The quotations in Table 5.17 above are the actual quotations obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the different research participants and are utilised for the analysis below.

5.6.4.2 In case and Cross-case analysis of evidence, contractual and structured community CSR initiative participation for bursary recipients is an opportunity to create social impact

The head office participants agreed that the involvement of past bursary recipients remains informal, as there is currently no documented or contractual arrangement requiring graduates to participate officially in CSR programmes within the communities. Those graduates who are involved do so on a voluntary basis, and their participation is not formally monitored. Both participants acknowledged the potential to leverage the graduates' contributions in a structured manner by engaging them in initiatives such as a "Zuma year" or similar formal programmes. This would enhance social impact in the communities by raising awareness about the bursary program in the communities, as well as other CSR initiatives in the communities.

The local operating business participants aligned with the head office participant group's perspective. They further noted that bursary-funded graduates represent an untapped opportunity for the mining industry to leverage them as brand ambassadors, not only for

the bursary program but also for broader CSR initiatives and the mine itself. These graduates, currently serving as interns, professionals in training and permanent employees, have experiences to share; therefore, a formal platform should be established for this purpose. To avoid these graduates being overlooked within the organisation, the implementation of a contractual give-back program is recommended.

5.6.4.3 Conclusion on evidence for contractual and structured community CSR participation for bursary recipients

Currently, past bursary recipients participate in CSR programs informally and voluntarily, without formal agreements or monitoring. Both head office and local business participants see value in formalising and leveraging these graduates' involvement, suggesting programs like a

Zuma year or a contractual give-back initiative. Graduates are viewed as potential brand ambassadors, whose contribution could benefit the organisation and the community.

5.7 Overall conclusion on the findings on the opportunities that exist for increasing social impact in the community

Participants from both the head office and local business operations identified significant opportunities to broaden the social impact of the mining company's bursary program. They recommended expanding the range of supported career fields beyond mining and traditional engineering to include emerging skills like digital competencies and disciplines relevant to community needs. This shift is seen as essential due to the limited operational lifespan of some mines, as it would help ensure ongoing local employment for residents, even after mine closure. Suggestions included increasing the number of bursaries, funding disciplines not requiring math and science, collaborating with local municipalities, government départements, and educational institutions to better address social issues and support community-specific careers, such as social work and agriculture.

Additionally, participants noted the need for greater community awareness of the bursary program and highlighted the informal nature of past recipient involvement in CSR initiatives. Formalising graduate participation as brand ambassadors and instituting a contractual give-back program were recommended to maximise the program's benefits and to ensure that graduates contribute meaningfully to community development and CSR efforts.

5.8 Revised conceptual framework from the research data analysis

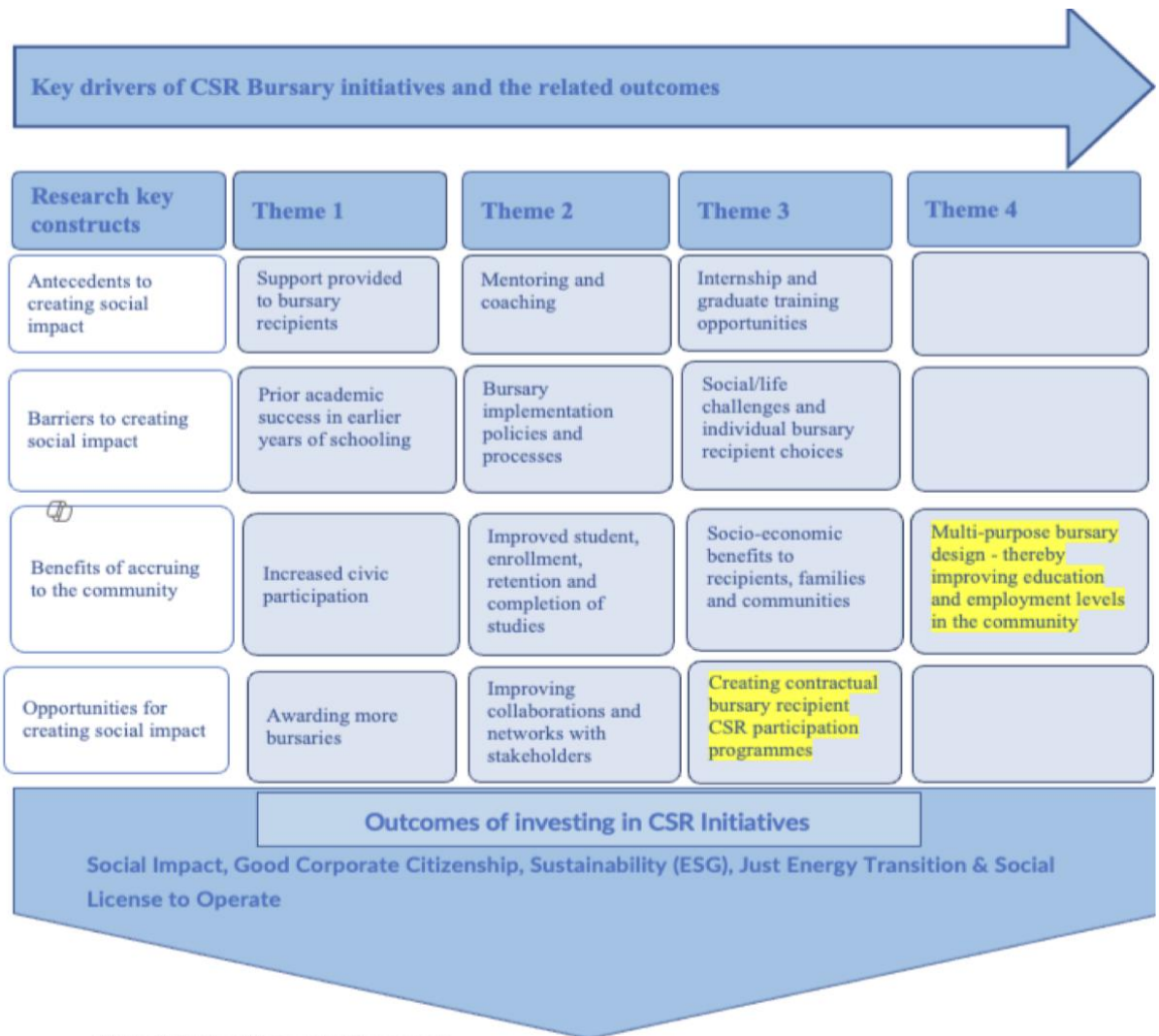


Figure 3: Revised Conceptual Framework

Source: derived by the researcher

Key

- Existing themes identified from the literature review (Chapter 2) – text not highlighted
- New themes identified from research data analysis – text highlighted yellow

Figure 5.1: Revised Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own.

5.9 Chapter summary

The revised conceptual framework figure 5.1 above is the outcome of the research data analysis. It shows how the two new themes identified. In the next chapter the researcher will provide a comprehensive analysis of the research findings documented in this chapter against the literature review conducted in chapter 2.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the findings outlined in Chapter 5, aligning them with relevant literature. The structure follows the research questions, mirroring the organisation presented in Chapter 5. Each research question, along with its associated themes and or sub-themes, is examined and critically compared with the literature review as discussed in Chapter 2.

This chapter undertakes further analysis to determine whether the findings presented in Chapter 5 align with existing literature and whether such literature was sufficiently addressed during the literature review process. Where the researcher identified shortcomings in the discussion of a particular theme, additional information sourced from relevant literature was incorporated to enhance those sections of the literature review.

In instances where the literature review sufficiently addressed a specific theme or sub-theme yet required emphasis on nuances unique to this study as revealed by the research findings, these aspects have been addressed in this chapter.

When the findings led the researcher to identify new themes or sub-themes not previously discussed in the literature, these elements were incorporated into themes in the conceptual framework and highlighted as gaps within the literature.

The iterative process highlighted above is described in the steps below:

Step 1: A word search of each theme or sub-theme was conducted by the researcher on articles reviewed and referenced in Chapter 2.

Step 2: Where no literature was identified in step 1, the researcher identified top scholars already reviewed as part of the literature review in Chapter 2 and searched for additional relevant articles written by these scholars and published in the last five years. A word search of the theme or sub-theme in the recent articles was conducted. Where the word search yielded literature relating to the theme or sub-theme, the researcher analysed the literature to identify similarities and or differences to the research findings. Where no literature was identified relating to a theme or sub-theme, step 3 was followed.

Step 3: A search of the relevant construct was performed on Google Scholar. Where literature was returned relevant to the theme or sub-theme, this was analysed for

similarities and or differences from the research findings. Where no relevant literature was returned, this was deemed a potential new contribution to the literature.

This approach provided valuable insights for scholars seeking to enhance their understanding of how CSR bursaries can be leveraged to achieve social impact.

6.2 Research sub-question 1 – Antecedents to creating social impact with CSR bursaries

6.2.1 Theme 1 – Support

6.2.1.1 Recap of theme 1 – support

Ontong and Smit (2023) identified several key factors contributing to the successful completion of tertiary education by bursary recipients. These include comprehensive support for bursary holders, such as full financial assistance (Ntshoe & De Villiers, 2008; Ontong & Smit, 2023), access to mental healthcare services, and the provision of customised academic support, particularly for individuals from low-income households and historically disadvantaged backgrounds (Ontong & Smit, 2023). Additional measures involve ongoing academic monitoring during university studies, mentorship opportunities, and pathways to internships or graduate traineeships following the conclusion of academic programs.

6.2.2 Sub-theme 1 – Comprehensive financial support

6.2.2.1 Recap of findings on comprehensive financial support

The findings indicated that comprehensive financial support was an important component of the bursary program's design. The organisation prides itself on not providing the bare minimum in terms of financial support, but goes out of its way to ensure that all the students' needs are catered for whilst at university. Both the head office participant group and the former bursary recipients stressed the significance of comprehensive financial support in allowing students to focus on their studies and being relieved of any financial-related pressures.

The comprehensive financial aid was found to enable students to prioritise their academic studies, without being anxious about financial responsibilities. It promotes

academic success and offers bursary recipients' independence from family financial obligations.

Participants noted that partial funding could result in increased pressure and anxiety related to finances.

6.2.2.2 *Recap of the literature on comprehensive financial support*

Comprehensive financial support encompasses coverage of tuition fees, provision of essential resources such as laptops and textbooks, accommodation, and all other living expenses. Numerous studies have highlighted the pivotal role of such support in fostering academic achievement and well-being among bursary recipients. According to Hatt et al. (2005), bursaries contribute significantly to student retention, and recipients are typically more motivated and determined to achieve academic success. Ryan et al. (2016, p. 67) contend that "scholarships are, however, an important tool where financial hardship is seen as the greatest barrier to participation."

Similarly, Ntshoe and De Villiers (2008) emphasise that comprehensive funding reduces the risk of student drop-out by alleviating the stress associated with financial insecurity. Barac (2015) also notes that financial support can be transformative for students from low-income backgrounds, enabling them to fully engage with their studies and extracurricular opportunities. Furthermore, Ontong and Smit (2023) highlight that comprehensive financial aid, when paired with academic and psychosocial support, is instrumental in promoting equitable access to higher education and improving overall graduation rates.

6.2.2.3 *Discussion on the findings with the literature on comprehensive financial support*

The findings indicate that the organisation acknowledges the importance of providing comprehensive support as a fundamental component of the bursary program. This approach not only alleviates student stress and anxiety but also contributes to improved academic performance. These insights align with the observations of Ryan et al. (2016), who assert that bursaries serve as an effective mechanism for addressing financial barriers to university entry.

Ntshoe and De Villiers (2008) and Ontong and Smit (2023) highlighted that comprehensive financial support enhances university access, alleviates financial anxiety, and improves student retention and completion rates. The findings indicated that most of the bursary recipients would not have been able to pursue higher education

without the bursary. Additionally, recipients reported significant reductions in stress and anxiety, enabling them to concentrate more effectively on their academic pursuits.

6.2.2.4 Conclusion of the findings for comprehensive financial support

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on comprehensive financial support being an antecedent for creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries.

The research findings supported the literature, which demonstrated that comprehensive financial support within the bursary programme is not only essential for easing the financial and psychological pressures faced by students but also plays a decisive role in their academic success and overall well-being. By reducing barriers to university access and alleviating anxiety, the bursary scheme empowers recipients to focus on their studies and thrive academically. This multifaceted support structure, as highlighted by both the findings and supporting literature, is fundamental to promoting equitable opportunities and improving retention and completion rates among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

There were no differences noted between the research findings and the literature on comprehensive financial support as an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The findings, therefore, confirm the existing body of knowledge.

6.2.3 Sub-theme 2 – Mental health support

6.2.3.1 Recap of findings on mental health support

The findings underscored the significance of mental health support for students, for both well-being and academic achievement. Participants from the head office emphasised that bursary recipients have access to the same mental health support program provided to employees of the mining company.

The former bursary recommended implementing additional measures to enhance the existing services for students, such as offering access to specialist mental health professionals capable of addressing complex or undiagnosed conditions. The importance of robust mental health support is particularly evident given the diverse pressures faced by students. Inadequate levels of mental health support could lead to poor academic performance and the resultant termination of the bursary. Termination of the bursary due to inadequate mental health support could mean that students,

especially those who are from disadvantaged communities, may potentially not complete their studies and therefore not be able to fully benefit from the bursary program. The anticipated benefits to the individual, their family and the community may therefore not be fully realised.

6.2.3.2 *Recap of literature on mental health support*

Mental health is a critical issue for university students. Many students could potentially experience mental health difficulties. It is not clear how often they seek mental health services. University students who develop mental health problems may not perform well academically due to mental health challenges, affecting their successful completion of their studies (Cage et al., 2021).

Harrison et al. (2018) define mental well-being as the absence of anxiety or fear that negatively affects learning. Ontong and Smit (2023) emphasise that incorporating mental health awareness and support is a critical element of bursary schemes, particularly by ensuring access to qualified professionals such as psychiatrists and social workers. Nonetheless, their research indicates a stigma associated with seeking professional mental health services. Consequently, the authors recommend that bursary programs provide group and individual mental health sessions to better address these concerns.

6.2.3.3 *Discussion on the findings with the literature on mental health support*

The research findings indicate that the mining company representatives were cognisant of the vital role of the provision of mental health support services as part of the bursary program. This was supported by the academic literature, which acknowledged the growing awareness of the importance of the mental well-being of students. Ontong and Smit (2023) propose incorporating mental health awareness and support as a vital element of bursary schemes.

Ontong and Smit (2023) also recommend the use of qualified health professionals such as psychiatrists and social workers. This recommendation was similar to the findings indicated by the past bursary recipient participants, who recommended the provision of access to specialist health professionals, to address complex mental health challenges and to supplement the mental health support services currently offered to students.

Cage et al. (2020) refer to mental health challenges as one of the key risk factors for students not performing well academically and not successfully completing their studies. This was also a finding presented by the former bursary recipient participant group, which highlighted that sometimes students underperform because of mental health challenges.

6.2.3.4 Conclusion of the findings for mental health support

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on mental health support being an antecedent for creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries.

Both the research findings and supporting literature clearly demonstrate that robust mental health support is a crucial component of bursary programs. The awareness and actions of the mining company in providing mental health services align with academic recommendations for incorporating mental health awareness and access to qualified professionals. The former bursar participant group echoed the recommendation from Ontong and Smit (2023) that bursary schemes should include access to specialist professionals such as psychiatrists. This multifaceted support is essential for addressing the complex mental health needs of students, which, if left unaddressed, can negatively impact academic performance and hinder degree completion. Therefore, enhancing and expanding mental health services within bursary programs is fundamental to promoting student well-being and academic success. The researcher therefore proposes that the mining company consider the recommendation to supplement the current mental health support provided to students by providing access to specialist health professionals, such as psychiatrists. The provision of mental health support is therefore one of the antecedents to creating a cascading social impact that extends from the beneficiary to their family and to the community and wider society.

There were no differences noted between the research findings and the literature on mental health support as an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The findings, therefore, confirm the existing body of knowledge.

6.3 Theme 2 – Mentoring and coaching

6.3.1 Recap of findings on how mentoring and coaching are antecedents for creating social impact

The research findings demonstrated that substantive feedback from most of the participants indicated that mentoring and coaching are critical in supporting bursary recipients by offering academic guidance, aiding with course and project decision-making, and providing support during vacation work placements. These interventions contribute significantly to maintaining students' motivation and overall well-being. Several former bursary recipients acknowledged the value of mentorship and coaching,

emphasising their importance for consistent academic achievement and emotional support. Access to reliable mentors and senior professionals, as well as guidance on useful resources, were identified as key contributors to the successful completion of academic studies.

Achieving academic success not only prepares students for prosperous careers but also fosters personal motivation and the aspiration to give back. This desire to uplift themselves and their families, coupled with a commitment to inspiring others within their communities to pursue higher education and secure funding, such as bursaries, plays a crucial role in helping them realise their academic goals.

By offering mentoring and coaching as a key design element of the bursary programs, this also trains and exposes the students to valuing the role of mentoring and coaching as a key tool to deliver service to people like them from the communities, and to play a role in transforming their lives in the journey to attaining higher education and the resultant better quality of life.

6.3.2 Recap of literature on mentoring and coaching is an antecedent for creating social impact

Mentoring and coaching are pivotal for supporting bursary students, helping them overcome academic challenges, stay motivated, and access useful information. While these terms are often used interchangeably, this study treats them as synonymous. Ontong and Smit (2023) and Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) highlight that mentoring is especially important for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with guidance from both seniors and peers, such as through a buddy system, providing extra academic and emotional support (Cage et al., 2021). These initiatives foster a supportive network, enhance open communication, and help students navigate university life more effectively.

Furthermore, combining mentoring, tutoring, and mental health services helps disadvantaged students build resilience and succeed academically (Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024). Such comprehensive support not only increases students' likelihood of graduating but also encourages them to become future mentors, sustaining a cycle of support and community within higher education.

6.3.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on mentoring and coaching

The research findings demonstrate a consensus among participants regarding the critical importance of mentoring and coaching. These results corroborate prior scholarship by Ontong and Smit (2023) and Chiramba and Nyoni (2024), who emphasized the value of mentoring and coaching for students from disadvantaged communities.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that participants identified professionals from mining companies as primary providers of mentoring and coaching. However, Cage et al. (2021) proposed that small group mentoring could also be effective, introducing a “buddy” system among students and fostering a supportive peer community.

Additionally, Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) suggested that comprehensive support, including mentoring, tutoring, and mental health care, may assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds in mitigating the adverse effects of socio-economic challenges on their academic progress. The findings indicate that the mining company incorporates mentoring and mental health support as integral components of its bursary programs. However, the mining company bursary programs do not include academic tutoring. Therefore, the researcher proposes that the mining company consider including academic tutoring to complement the current bursary program offering. This would be especially beneficial to the bursary recipient, considering that many come from disadvantaged communities.

6.3.4 Conclusion of the findings for mentoring and coaching

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on mentoring and coaching being an antecedent for creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries.

The findings consistently highlight the vital role of mentoring and coaching in supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, reinforcing the conclusions of Ontong and Smit (2023) and Chiramba and Nyoni (2024). Professionals from mining companies are

identified as key mentors, though peer support through small group and “buddy” systems also contributes to a supportive learning environment (Cage et al., 2021). Comprehensive support, including mentoring, tutoring, and mental health care, further assists students in overcoming socio-economic barriers (Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024). Overall, the incorporation of these elements into bursary programs is essential for fostering academic success and resilience among marginalized students.

There were no differences noted between the research findings and the literature on mentoring and coaching as an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

6.4 Theme 3 – Internship and graduate training opportunities

6.4.1 Recap of findings on Internship and graduate training opportunities

The findings indicate that head office and local operations participants emphasised that practical work experience, such as vacation work, internships, and the Professional in Training (PIT) program, play a vital role in integrating students into the company culture, preparing them for future employment, and supporting career development.

Participants value mentorship, coaching, and the career foundation these opportunities offer. However, community representatives remain concerned about unemployment among graduates, suggesting that the program's effectiveness could be enhanced by offering guaranteed internships or placements after graduation. Internal placements via internships and PIT programmes support graduates' career success, financial independence, and ability to contribute to their families and communities, thus fostering positive social impact.

6.4.2 Recap of literature on internship and graduate training opportunities

Tertiary education bursaries in South Africa do not inherently include internship or graduate training opportunities. Some corporations employ these bursaries as a strategic means to reinforce their talent pipelines, ensuring a continuous influx of graduates into

training programs who may later fill roles vacated by permanent staff. Hunt and Scott (2020) note that the labour market is increasingly competitive, and academic qualifications alone are insufficient to guarantee employment. As a result, internships and graduate training opportunities are widely acknowledged as vital components in enhancing graduate employability.

Sustainability considerations are particularly significant for the mining industry, especially regarding the achievement of sustainable development goals. From a sustainability standpoint, collaborative partnerships between universities and companies offering bursaries can augment students' education by incorporating practical work experience through internships or graduate training programs. Such initiatives ensure that university students are informed about the SDGs and understand their broader importance (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

6.4.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on internship and graduate training opportunities

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on internship and graduate opportunities being an antecedent for creating social impact.

The research findings confirmed the literature regarding the significant role of internship and graduate training opportunities in embedding academic learning with practical work experience. As stated by Hunt and Scott (2020), internships and graduate training give students a competitive advantage when competing for permanent work placement, in addition to the degrees obtained. The findings indicated that former bursary recipient group participants recognised the value provided by the programmes to not only cement academic learning but also to be financially independent and be able to support their families and give back to communities. The literature also highlighted the importance of such programmes in the context of the mining industry to bring graduates back into the workplace to teach and empower other mining employees on sustainability matters (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

6.4.4 Conclusion of the findings for internship and graduate training opportunities

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on internship and graduate training opportunities being an antecedent for creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries.

The findings confirmed the literature that tertiary education bursaries in South Africa do not automatically include internship or graduate training opportunities. Some companies strategically use these bursaries to maintain strong talent pipelines, offering graduates access to training programmes that may lead to permanent roles (Hunt & Scott, 2020). Given the increasingly competitive labour market, internships and graduate training are widely recognised as essential for enhancing employability.

The findings did not emphasise the literature in terms of the importance of the internship and graduate training opportunities as an opportunity to enrich students' education by providing practical experience and raising awareness of the SGDs, a particular concern in the mining industry (Leal Filho et al., 2023). This can be achieved through partnerships between universities and companies.

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on internship and graduate training opportunities being an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The recommendations would be for the mining company to embed sustainability issues into the internship and graduate training programmes. The findings, therefore, add to the existing body of knowledge.

6.5 Research sub-question 2 – Barriers to creating social impact with CSR bursaries

6.5.1 Theme 1 – Prior academic success

6.5.1.1 Recap of findings on prior academic success

The findings highlight that one of the aims of the mining company's bursary program is to develop a pipeline of talent that aligns with industry needs, particularly in mining and STEM disciplines. The focus on prior academic achievement and specific subject prerequisites, such as mathematics and science, can create obstacles for many applicants from host communities.

Although these criteria are important for fulfilling business objectives and ensuring candidates succeed in demanding university programs, they may unintentionally restrict access for students who have not had equitable educational opportunities. The company has taken meaningful steps toward inclusivity by introducing bridging programs and community-sponsored academic support.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist in balancing the recruitment of qualified candidates with the broader goals of social impact and equitable access. For the bursary program to maximise its societal benefit, ongoing investment in educational initiatives and adaptable pathways to higher education will remain critical.

6.5.1.2 *Recap of literature on prior academic success*

The literature review highlighted the challenges presented by prior academic success as a predictor of academic success at university. Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) identify historical disadvantages resulting from apartheid as one of the most substantial obstacles to achieving success in higher education. These disadvantages manifest through inadequately resourced schools that provide low-quality education to historically disadvantaged students. Similarly, Kaye (2020) notes that insufficient support early in the educational journey exacerbates inequities before high school completion, thereby shrinking the pool of potential bursary applicants. The adverse effects of this inadequate support are especially pronounced within disadvantaged communities, such as those found near mining operations. Additionally, once enrolled in university, bursary recipients often encounter a range of non-financial challenges, stemming from social and life circumstances, that may further impede their ability to complete tertiary studies.

These factors can ultimately undermine the effectiveness of bursary programmes and diminish the broader social impact associated with obtaining a higher education qualification (Ryan et al., 2016).

6.5.1.3 *Discussion on the findings with the literature on prior academic success*

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on prior academic success being a barrier to creating social impact.

The research findings highlighted the mining company's focus on mining and STEM fields as a possible barrier to creating social impact. This is due to the emphasis being on academic success in subjects like mathematics and science, which is a problem for most of the pupils from the mining communities who come from under-resourced schools. This finding confirmed Chiramba and Nyoni's (2024) and Kaye's (2020)

assertions that historical disadvantages are a significant barrier to future academic achievement.

The findings also highlighted that the participants were aware of the limitations posed by prior academic achievement to some of the pupils and had therefore introduced bridging programs and community academic support to promote inclusivity. This was not necessarily addressed in the literature, but it highlighted that the mining company is aware and taking steps to address the historical disadvantages of pupils from mining communities.

The findings also highlighted the need for the mining company to further invest in educational initiatives to mitigate the negative impact of the challenge of historical disadvantage, and to create social impact with the bursary programs.

6.5.1.4 Conclusion of the findings for prior academic success in earlier years of schooling

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on prior academic success being a barrier to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries.

In conclusion, both the research findings and the literature recognise that prior academic success, particularly in mathematics and science, serves as a significant barrier to achieving social impact through the mining company's bursary program. This challenge is rooted in historical disadvantages and under-resourced schools, as noted by Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) and Kaye (2020). While the company has made efforts to address these barriers by introducing bridging programs and community academic support, further investment in educational initiatives is needed to fully overcome the persistent effects of historical disadvantage and maximise the bursary program's social impact. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing, targeted support to ensure equitable access and meaningful outcomes for students from mining communities.

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on prior academic success being a barrier to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. Continued investment in educational initiatives and alternative access routes to higher education remains important for the bursary program's overall societal contribution. The findings, therefore, confirm the existing body of knowledge.

6.5.2 Theme 2 – Bursary implementation

6.5.2.1 Recap of findings on bursary implementation policies and procedures

The findings indicate that the main challenges facing the implementation of the mining company's bursary programs include limited financial and human resources, which restrict the number of bursaries awarded and place added responsibilities on a small management team. The lack of an effective bursary management system further complicates administration.

Aligning different bursary programs to meet diverse strategic goals is also difficult. Additionally, there is a need for greater engagement with bursary recipients by local company representatives, as current involvement is mainly during recruitment. Reaching potential applicants in rural areas remains problematic due to infrastructural barriers and costs associated with the application process, highlighting the need to make applications more accessible by conducting them directly in rural schools. These bursary implementation policy and procedure challenges create barriers in maximising the reach of the bursary program and the benefit to potential beneficiaries, as well as the social impact that could be created in the mining communities.

6.5.2.2 Recap of literature on bursary implementation

The mining company bursary programs, are an CSR initiative therefore the principles of how they need to be implemented to maximise social impact, are largely like those of any other CSR initiative. CSR managers, manage initiative directed at both specific stakeholder groups, like communities, and the wider society (Dmytriyev et al., 2021). The process of implementing CSR is intricate, shaped by interactions with internal and external stakeholders and by contextual factors such as regional differences, national politics, location, and industry type (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). As a result, the context in which a business operates significantly influences its CSR strategies and execution. Because of this complexity, companies need a robust CSR strategy to ensure effective implementation, communication, and evaluation. For organizations focused on sustainability, it is crucial that their corporate strategies integrate CSR from the outset. When a CSR strategy is embedded within the overall business strategy, it becomes a proactive effort to benefit society, not just a reactive measure to avoid negative outcomes. Companies can leverage their familiarity with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to create actionable plans, track relevant CSR key performance indicators (KPIs), and report progress to all stakeholders, especially the communities where they are active (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

6.5.2.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on bursary implementation

The research findings reveal that significant challenges in bursary implementation are primarily due to constraints on financial and human resources. Furthermore, the absence of an effective and efficient bursary management system presents a notable difficulty. While these specific issues are not explicitly addressed in existing literature, analysis can be conducted in relation to recommendations by Dmytriyev et al. (2021) and Fatima and Elbanna (2023), who suggest that corporate implementation strategies should account for stakeholders and operational context. Considering this, resource and system limitations in bursary implementation may stem from program designs that do not sufficiently consider resource availability or the unique needs of disadvantaged communities, where bursary demand is high.

Additionally, although the bursary system is well-structured to support students through comprehensive services such as mentoring and coaching, it does not adequately facilitate administrative oversight. This gap hinders the ability to effectively track bursary recipients and monitor key performance indicators associated with the bursary programs.

6.5.2.4 Conclusion of the findings for bursary implementation

There were similarities between the findings and the literature on bursary implementation being a barrier for creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries.

In summary, the research findings highlight that major challenges in implementing the bursary programs stem from limited financial and human resources, as well as the lack of an efficient management system. These difficulties, though not directly discussed in the literature, align with recommendations by Dmytriyev et al. (2021) and Fatima and Elbanna (2023), who emphasise the importance of designing corporate strategies that consider stakeholder needs and operational context. The analysis suggests that these resource and system constraints may result from program designs that insufficiently account for the realities of disadvantaged communities, where demand for bursaries is particularly high. Moreover, while the bursary system provides strong student support through mentoring and coaching, gaps in administrative oversight hinder effective monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes. Overall, these findings underscore the need for more context-sensitive program design and improved management systems to enhance both operational effectiveness and social impact.

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on bursary implementation being a barrier to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The researcher suggests that companies' invest adequately in human resources involved in the administration of its bursary programs as well in an effective and efficient bursary management system. These two proposed improvements will enhance the social impact of the tertiary education bursary programs. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

6.6 Sub-question 3 – Benefits accruing to communities

6.6.1 Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits accruing to communities

6.6.1.1 Recap of findings on socio-economic benefits accruing to communities

The findings indicate that the mining company's bursary programmes contribute to community development by providing educational opportunities and increasing employment among local community members. The bursaries have allowed recipients from financially constrained backgrounds to access higher education and secure jobs. Former bursary recipients reported that the bursaries benefited them personally and enabled them to support their families financially, improve living conditions, and encourage younger siblings and others to pursue further education and different career paths. Some graduates contributed to their families by building homes, supporting siblings' education, and providing mentorship and career advice within their communities. The program has also influenced beneficiaries' life trajectories, with some starting businesses that employ residents. Overall, the findings suggest that bursary programmes are viewed as a driver of socio-economic development, impacting recipients, their families, and the wider communities.

6.6.1.2 Recap of literature on socio-economic benefits accruing to communities

Bursary-funded degrees offer significant advantages to individuals, such as enhanced capabilities, greater access to financial resources and information, supportive societal norms, and expanded social networks and cultural exposure, as noted by Harrison et al. (2018). These factors help recipients unlock their full potential and prepare for successful careers and lives.

By alleviating financial pressures, bursaries enable students to focus on academics without the need for part-time work. This support allows for participation in extracurricular and social activities, fostering a sense of loyalty and belonging to the university. The comprehensive university experience motivates bursary recipients to excel beyond graduation and encourages them to give back to their families and communities, as highlighted by Reed and Hurd (2016).

Quality tertiary education, facilitated by bursaries, contributes to improved development outcomes for individuals, communities, and regions. It helps eradicate poverty and social inequality, empowering graduates to address complex social and economic issues and drive transformative change, as discussed by Ferguson and Roofe (2020), Brennan et al. (2013), and Smolentseva (2023).

6.6.1.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on socio-economic benefits to communities

There were similarities between the research findings and the literature on socio-economic benefits accruing to the community due to the presence of bursary recipients.

The research findings support the literature concerning the socio-economic benefits experienced by communities because of former bursary recipients. As noted in academic sources such as Harrison et al. (2018), bursary recipients are primary beneficiaries who often obtain higher education qualifications, improved employability, and increased social and cultural awareness, positioning them for successful careers and higher earnings. Consequently, they can contribute to the advancement of their families, significantly improving both their own and their families' socio-economic circumstances, often lifting households out of poverty.

Furthermore, Reed and Hurd (2016) highlight that the enhanced experiences gained at university motivate graduates not only to give back to their families but also to their broader communities. In some cases, former bursary recipients have progressed beyond employment to establish businesses within their communities, generating local jobs and stimulating economic development, thereby helping to alleviate economic challenges faced by the community.

6.6.1.4 Conclusion of the findings for socio-economic benefits accruing to communities

The research findings support the literature concerning the socio-economic benefits experienced by communities because of former bursary recipients.

The findings confirmed that, as indicated in the literature, bursary-funded tertiary education is a powerful tool for advancing social mobility, equity, and sustainable development. As stated by Harrison et al. (2018), the individual and societal benefits are closely intertwined; as more students from disadvantaged backgrounds access and complete higher education, the broader community benefits from the resulting social and economic upliftment. The findings also confirmed what was indicated by Reed and Hurd (2016), that CSR tertiary education bursary programmes ensure that the advantages of tertiary education extend across generations and contribute to the long-term development of society.

There were no differences noted between the research findings and the literature on the socio-economic benefits accruing to the community because of the presence of bursary recipients. The findings, therefore, add to the existing body of knowledge.

6.6.2 Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design

6.6.2.1 Recap of findings on multipurpose bursary design

The research findings indicate that the mining company provides both mining and non-mining bursaries aimed at increasing social impact in local communities. While mining-related bursaries help fill the company's talent pipeline and reduce unemployment locally, there is concern that focusing mainly on these disciplines overlooks broader community needs, especially as some mines near closure. Additionally, the findings also indicate that most participant groups advocate for expanding support to non-mining fields to offer diverse employment opportunities and improve community living standards. Addressing the local skills gap and educating at least one individual per household are recommended strategies to mitigate unemployment and prevent community unrest.

6.6.2.2 Recap of literature on multipurpose bursary design

The researcher conducted in-depth literature review as set-out in Chapter 2. Whilst there isn't any literature that specifically refers to designing bursaries that serve multiple strategic objectives, the literature review on corporate social responsibility is relevant to this discussion.

In today's business environment, companies are increasingly aligning their CSR approaches with their core business strategies, recognizing the significant impact CSR has on operational goals and long-term viability. Managers bear the responsibility for overseeing CSR activities, which range from initiatives benefiting local communities to broader efforts targeting society at large (Dmytriiev et al., 2021). The process of

implementing CSR is intricate, shaped by both internal and external stakeholders, as well as contextual factors like regional differences, national politics, and industry specifics (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Consequently, the environment in which a company operates largely influences how its CSR strategy is crafted and executed. This complexity underscores the need for a robust CSR framework to guarantee effective execution, communication, and evaluation. Companies focused on sustainability must integrate CSR into their overall corporate strategies. By doing so, CSR becomes a proactive component designed to create societal value, rather than a reactive measure or mere compliance. Organizations can leverage their knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to develop specific strategies, define relevant initiatives, monitor CSR-related key performance indicators (KPIs), and transparently report progress to all stakeholders, particularly the communities where they are active (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

Corporate social responsibility is instrumental in empowering businesses to foster positive societal change. The emphasis of CSR investments has shifted from superficial acts of goodwill to genuinely tackling global challenges, such as those outlined in the United Nations SDGs (Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Sachs, 2012). Well-structured CSR strategies aimed at promoting socio-economic progress can yield mutual benefits for both companies and the communities in which they operate (Gurun, 2023; Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Zhou et al., 2025).

6.6.2.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on multipurpose bursary design

Both the research findings and the literature review emphasise the importance of aligning bursary programs with broader community and societal needs, but they approach the subject from slightly different perspectives and levels of specificity.

Both the findings and the literature highlight the necessity for companies to move beyond narrow, discipline-specific bursaries (primarily mining-focused) and instead design programs that address wider community needs and strategic objectives. The findings advocate for expanding support to non-mining fields to diversify employment opportunities, while the literature stresses integrating CSR into corporate strategy to proactively generate societal value (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

There is alignment of the research findings and literature, that well-structured programs, whether bursaries or broader CSR initiatives, can yield mutual benefits for both companies and the communities in which they operate. Both reference the need to

address local skills gaps and promote sustainable development (Gurun, 2023; Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Zhou et al., 2025).

The research findings are more concrete and context-specific, focusing on practical strategies such as expanding the range of supported career fields, educating at least one individual per household, and directly addressing local unemployment and community unrest. In contrast, the literature review provides a higher-level theoretical framework for CSR, discussing the integration of CSR with business strategy and referencing global benchmarks like the United Nations SDGs (Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Sachs, 2012).

6.6.2.4 Conclusion of the findings on multipurpose bursary design

Both the research findings and the literature review underscore the necessity for bursary programmes to be aligned with broader community and societal priorities, albeit from different vantage points. The research advocates for expanding bursary support beyond mining to diversify employment and directly tackle local challenges, while the literature situates such efforts within a strategic CSR framework that seeks to generate societal value (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024). Both agree that well-designed programmes benefit both companies and communities, particularly by addressing skills gaps and fostering sustainable development (Gurun, 2023; Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Zhou et al., 2025).

In conclusion, integrating actionable, locally informed bursary strategies with broader CSR principles can maximise social impact and contribute to sustainable business practices, as supported by both empirical findings and the wider body of literature (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024; Gurun, 2023; Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Zhou et al., 2025).

6.7 Sub-question 4 – Opportunities to create social impact in communities

6.7.1 Theme 1 – Awarding more bursaries

6.7.1.1 Recap of findings on awarding more bursaries

The findings demonstrate that participants from both head office and local business operations acknowledge the potential to broaden the social impact of the bursary

program by extending support to a wider variety of career fields, not solely those associated with mining. There is clear agreement on the importance of aligning bursary offerings with global trends and local community needs, including new digital competencies and careers outside of traditional engineering roles. Such expansion is anticipated to help sustain employment opportunities within mining communities after mine closures and more effectively address local demands for tertiary education funding.

Furthermore, incorporating disciplines that do not require mathematics and science prerequisites could increase the number of bursaries awarded, as these fields may have less rigorous academic requirements compared to mining-related disciplines, thereby further enhancing the program's societal impact. Another significant insight was that supporting diverse career paths has the potential to maximise social impact, particularly as communities transition away from mining-dependent economies.

6.7.1.2 Recap of literature on awarding more bursaries

The literature review highlighted that CSR-funded tertiary education bursaries offer significant societal benefits and opportunities for expanding positive social impact, particularly when awareness among eligible and disadvantaged applicants is increased (Reed & Hurd, 2016). Outreach to rural schools can boost applications from disadvantaged learners, and successful bursary recipients often disseminate knowledge to their families and communities, leading to intergenerational educational advancement (Chiramba & Nyoni, 2024). Each graduate contributes to lasting socio-economic improvements.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) serve as important venues for addressing complex societal issues and supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). CSR bursaries facilitate access for students from marginalised backgrounds, allowing them to engage with sustainability and development topics relevant to their experiences (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2024). Increasing female enrolment through mining bursary schemes can further promote gender equity in line with SDG 4.

Ferguson and Roofe (2020) emphasise that HEIs in developing countries can enhance SDG 4 by partnering with a range of stakeholders, including international organisations and local businesses, to secure additional funding. Such collaborations, supported by CSR bursaries, can expand access to quality tertiary education, thereby advancing socio-economic development for individuals and communities.

6.7.1.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on awarding more bursaries

Both the findings and the literature review recognize the potential for expanding the social impact of bursary programs by broadening the range of supported career fields beyond those directly associated with mining. The findings from participants at both head office and local business operations highlight the importance of aligning bursary offerings with global trends and the evolving needs of local communities, especially by including digital competencies and non-traditional engineering careers. Similarly, the literature underscores the societal benefits of CSR-funded tertiary education bursaries, particularly when outreach efforts increase awareness among eligible and disadvantaged applicants (Reed and Hurd, 2016).

A key point of agreement is the value of increasing access to bursaries for disciplines that do not require mathematics and science prerequisites. The findings suggest that such a move could lead to a greater number of bursaries awarded and a broader societal impact, as these fields may have less stringent academic requirements. The literature also supports this approach, noting that outreach to rural schools can boost applications from disadvantaged learners and that successful bursary recipients can foster intergenerational educational advancement within their communities (Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024).

The literature emphasizes the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in addressing complex societal issues and advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The findings anticipate that expanding bursary support to a wider array of disciplines will help sustain employment opportunities within mining communities post-mine closure and better meet local demands for tertiary education funding. The literature aligns with this, indicating that CSR bursaries facilitate access for marginalized students, enabling them to engage with sustainability and development topics pertinent to their backgrounds (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019).

However, the literature review adds an explicit focus on promoting gender equity through increased female enrolment in mining bursary schemes, directly linking this to SDG 4, a nuance less emphasized in the findings. Additionally, the literature provides more detail on the mechanisms for expanding impact, such as targeted outreach and the dissemination of knowledge by successful bursary recipients to their families and communities, thereby fostering lasting socio-economic improvements.

While both the findings and the literature converge on the need to diversify bursary offerings and enhance social impact, the literature provides broader context on systemic benefits, such as intergenerational advancement and gender equity, while the findings are more focused on immediate programmatic changes and local employment sustainability. Both perspectives reinforce the importance of adapting bursary programs to meet evolving social and economic needs, with in-text references supporting these conclusions (Reed and Hurd, 2016; Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024; Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019).

Ferguson and Roofe (2020) emphasise that HEIs in developing countries can enhance SDG 4 by partnering with a range of stakeholders, including international organisations and local businesses, to secure additional funding. Such collaborations, supported by CSR bursaries, can expand access to quality tertiary education, thereby advancing socio-economic development for individuals and communities.

6.7.1.4 Conclusion of the findings for awarding more bursaries

Both the findings and the literature review agree that broadening bursary programmes to include a wider range of career fields, especially beyond mining, can significantly enhance their social impact. Aligning bursary offerings with current global trends and the evolving needs of local communities, such as digital skills and non-traditional disciplines, is highlighted as essential. There is consensus on the value of increasing access to bursaries for fields without strict mathematics and science prerequisites, which can lead to more opportunities for disadvantaged learners and a wider societal benefit (Reed and Hurd, 2016; Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are identified as critical in addressing complex societal challenges and supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The literature sources underscore the importance of CSR bursaries in providing marginalised students with access to tertiary education and enabling them to contribute to sustainable development (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019). The literature further stresses the significance of increasing female enrolment and outlines mechanisms such as targeted outreach and community engagement for fostering intergenerational advancement and gender equity.

In conclusion, both perspectives reinforce the need to diversify bursary schemes and adapt them to changing social and economic priorities. While the findings focus more on

immediate, practical changes to support local employment, the literature situates these changes within a broader context of systemic benefits, including gender equity and lasting community development. Ultimately, adapting bursary programmes in these ways is vital for maximising their positive impact on individuals and communities (Reed and Hurd, 2016; Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024; Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019).

6.7.2 Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

6.7.2.1 Recap of findings on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

The research findings showed that participants identified potential opportunities for the mining company to work with local municipalities by offering internships, graduate training, or employment to bursary-funded graduates, which could contribute to higher education levels and employment in the community. Participants also noted the value of addressing community social issues through funding roles such as social workers and collaborating with institutions like the University of Mpumalanga to support students in fields relevant to the community, such as agriculture. It was also suggested that increasing awareness of the bursary program within local communities may enhance participation and its overall societal impact.

6.7.2.2 Recap of literature on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

Integrating CSR strategy into overall business strategy ensures that CSR is proactively designed to create positive societal impact rather than serving merely as an afterthought or a means of risk avoidance. Organisations can leverage their understanding of the SGDs to develop specific strategies and initiatives, establish measurable CSR-related KPIs, and transparently report progress to all stakeholders, especially within the communities in which they operate (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

Ferguson and Roofe (2020) propose that HEIs in developing countries can further the achievement of SDG 4 by forging strategic partnerships with stakeholders such as developed nations, multinational corporations, and local business entities typically possessing more substantial financial resources than the governments of developing countries. These collaborations have the potential to enhance access to tertiary education and secure funding for both learning initiatives and research, thereby

contributing to improved educational outcomes and broader socio-economic advancement for individuals, families, and communities. In this context, CSR bursaries within tertiary education serve as a valuable mechanism for initiating or reinforcing collaborative efforts among universities and third parties, ultimately aiding progress towards achieving quality education as stipulated by SDG 4.

6.7.2.3 Discussion on the findings with the literature on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

The research findings revealed that participants identified potential opportunities for the mining company to collaborate with local municipalities by offering bursaries in career fields required by the communities, such as social work. The community would be best placed to know which service delivery programmes are falling behind due to skills shortage in the community. The research also found that collaborating with local municipalities could provide alternate placement of bursary-funded graduates, in internship or graduate training directly with the municipality, and in this way make a two-fold societal impact, firstly increasing education levels as well as employment in the communities. This research finding confirmed the literature by Carcia-Sanches et al. (2024), who stated that CSR strategy must be proactively designed to create positive societal impact, instead of merely avoiding risk.

Another research finding was that the mining company could collaborate with HEIs to develop strategic partnerships whereby bursary-funded students from the community, studying specific programmes at the local university, could be funded for targeted learning and research initiatives. This research finding confirmed work by Ferguson and Roofe (2020), who recommended that HEIs in developing countries collaborate with other stakeholders, such as corporates, to further the attainment of SDG 4.

6.7.2.4 Conclusion of the findings for improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

The research findings support the literature on improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders as an opportunity to create social impact.

The research findings demonstrate that mining companies have significant opportunities to collaborate with local municipalities and higher education institutions in ways that directly address community needs and skill shortages. By offering bursaries tailored to critical career fields, such as social work, and facilitating internship or graduate placements within municipalities, these collaborations generate a dual societal benefit, raising education levels and boosting employment within local communities. These

findings support the assertion by Garcia-Sanchez et al. (2024) that CSR strategies should be intentionally crafted for positive societal impact, rather than simply as risk mitigation measures.

Furthermore, the research findings also emphasise that strategic partnerships between mining companies and higher education institutions, particularly those that fund community-based students in targeted academic and research programs, reinforce the recommendations of Ferguson and Roofe (2020). The research findings emphasise that such collaborations are instrumental for advancing SDG 4 by expanding access to quality tertiary education through multi-stakeholder engagement.

Overall, these findings not only confirm existing literature but also highlight the potential for mining companies to play a transformative role in local development through proactive and well-integrated CSR initiatives.

There were no differences noted between the research findings and the literature on the improved collaborations and networks with stakeholders, providing an opportunity to create social impact. The findings, therefore, confirm the existing body of knowledge.

6.7.3 Theme 3 – Creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes

6.7.3.1 Recap of findings on creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes

The findings indicated that both head office and local business participants recognised that past bursary recipients currently participate in CSR programs informally and voluntarily, without formal documentation or contractual obligations. There was consensus on the potential benefits of establishing structured programmes, such as a "Zuma year" or similar initiatives, to formally engage these graduates in CSR activities. Such programmes would not only amplify social impact and raise awareness of the bursary and other CSR initiatives within communities but also utilise graduates as brand ambassadors for the mine and its broader social efforts. To ensure graduates' contributions are fully leveraged and not overlooked, participants recommended the implementation of a contractual give-back program, providing a formal platform for sharing their experiences and enhancing organisational and community outcomes.

6.7.3.2 Recap of literature on creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes

The researcher conducted in-depth literature review as set-out in Chapter 2. Whilst there isn't any literature that specifically refers to the creation of contractual and structured bursary recipient community CSR participation programmes, the literature review on corporate social responsibility is relevant to this discussion.

Integrating CSR into business strategy allows organizations to proactively generate positive social impact, rather than treating CSR as a secondary concern. By aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), companies can set specific initiatives, measurable KPIs, and report progress transparently to stakeholders, particularly local communities (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024). Companies increasingly align CSR with core strategies, acknowledging its influence on operational and long-term success. Managers are responsible for a range of CSR activities, from local community projects to broader societal initiatives (Dmytriiev et al., 2021).

The implementation of CSR is a multifaceted process, influenced by a combination of internal and external stakeholders, as well as factors such as regional variations, national politics, and the specifics of the industry (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). As a result, the context in which a business operates plays a significant role in shaping and delivering its CSR strategy. This level of complexity highlights the necessity for a strong CSR framework to ensure thorough execution, clear communication, and effective assessment. Organisations committed to sustainability should embed CSR within their overarching corporate strategies, ensuring that it functions as a forward-thinking initiative aimed at generating societal benefit, rather than being simply a compliance activity or a reactive response.

6.7.3.3 Discussion on the findings with literature on creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes

The research findings emphasise the practical, on-the-ground realities of engaging bursary recipients in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Head office and local business participants observed that graduate involvement has been largely informal and voluntary, lacking structured agreements or monitoring mechanisms. They suggested leveraging graduates as brand ambassadors and formalizing their participation through contractual give-back programs, such as a dedicated "Zuma year," to enhance the visibility and impact of CSR efforts within communities.

The research findings are concrete and context-specific, recommending actionable strategies like creating formal platforms and contractual obligations to ensure graduates' active involvement in CSR and community development. This approach aims to maximize the value of bursary programs for both the company and the local community.

Conversely, the literature acknowledges the multifaceted nature of CSR implementation, shaped by internal and external stakeholders, regional differences, and industry specifics (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). It calls for a robust CSR framework that is embedded in corporate strategy, emphasizing proactive and sustainable impact, but does not detail operational mechanisms such as contractual participation for bursary recipients.

6.7.3.4 Conclusion of the findings for creating contractual bursary recipient CSR participation programmes

In conclusion, the research findings reveal that bursary recipients' involvement in CSR has mostly been informal and voluntary, with suggestions to formalise their participation through structured programmes such as a contractual “Zuma year.” These recommendations are practical and context-driven, aiming to enhance both company and community outcomes. In contrast, the literature presents a broader, strategic approach, highlighting the complexity of CSR implementation and the need for alignment with company strategy and sustainable development goals, but without detailing operational mechanisms like contractual obligations for bursary recipients (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Overall, while both perspectives recognise the importance of integrating CSR into business practice, the research advocates for actionable, formalised participation, whereas the literature focuses on overarching frameworks and strategic alignment.

6.8 Chapter summary

In conclusion, Table 6.1 is a summary of the outcomes of the discussion of the findings with the literature. The themes and sub-themes are grouped by construct. For each sub-theme identified in Chapter 5, Table 6.1 below indicates whether this theme was similar or there were some nuanced differences compared to the literature.

Table 6.1: Summary of revision resulting from the comparative analysis of findings with literature

Research construct	Theme/Sub-theme	Similarities or nuanced differences or differences with the literature	Existing/New Theme/Sub-theme
Antecedents	Theme 1 -Support - Sub-Comprehensive Financial Support - Mental Health Support - Academic tracking & monitoring	- Similarities - Similarities - Not discussed	- Existing - Existing - Existing
	Theme 2 – Mentoring and coaching	Similarities	Existing
	Theme 3 – Internship and graduate training opportunities	Similarities	Existing
Barriers	Theme 1 – Prior academic success	Similarities	Existing
	Theme 2 – Bursary implementation policies & procedures	Similarities	Existing
	Theme 3 – Social & life challenges	Not discussed	Existing
Benefits	Socio-economic benefits	Similarities	Existing
	Multipurpose bursary design	Differences	New theme
	Improved student enrolment, retention and completion of studies	Not discussed	Existing
	Increased civic participation	Not discussed	Existing
Opportunities for creating social impact	Awarding more bursaries	Nuanced differences	Existing
	Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders	Nuanced differences	Existing
	Creating contractual bursary recipient bursary CSR participation	Differences	New theme

Source: Author's own.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research outcomes derived from the discussion of the research findings with the literature in Chapter 6.

The research set out to explore the antecedents, barriers and opportunities to create social impact with CSR tertiary education bursary programs. The setting was a mining company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. There were four participant groups:

- Past bursary recipients.
- Head office company representatives.
- Local operations company representatives.
- Community representatives.

This chapter presents the research conclusions for each of the four research sub-questions, that the study aimed to answer. Part of the research aim was to develop a conceptual framework for the use of CSR tertiary education bursaries to create social impact.

The research outcomes are organised by research question, as done in chapters 5 and 6. The theoretical conclusions for each research question are derived from the discussion of the literature. The discussion in this chapter included identification of additions to the literature as well as potential extensions and or potential refinements to the revised conceptual framework presented at the end of chapter 5. In this chapter the research contributions are highlighted and recommendations made to management and other internal stakeholders. The limitations of the study are also presented and discussed, and the chapter is concluded with suggestions for future research.

7.2 Principal Theoretical Conclusions

7.2.1 Research sub-question 1: Antecedents to creating social impact with CSR tertiary education bursaries

7.2.2 Theme 1 – Support

The research outcomes on the antecedents to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries, resulted in the identification of three themes. Support, mentoring and coaching and internship and graduate training opportunities. The rest of this sub-section provides conclusions and recommendations for each of these three themes.

The literature identified three sub-themes under the support theme: comprehensive financial support, mental health support and academic monitoring and tracking. However, there were no research findings and no notable literature on academic monitoring and tracking. As a result, while this sub-theme appears in the conceptual framework, it is not discussed further mention in chapters 5,6 or in this chapter.

7.2.2.1 *Similarities with literature for research*

The findings consistently align with the literature in affirming that comprehensive financial and mental health support are critical components of tertiary education bursary programs for achieving meaningful social impact. Comprehensive financial support not only lessens the financial and psychological burdens on students from disadvantaged backgrounds but also enhances their academic success, retention, and completion rates. Similarly, robust mental health support, including access to specialized professionals, addresses the complex challenges students face, further empowering them to thrive academically and contribute positively to their communities.

No significant differences emerged between the research findings and the literature, underscoring a strong consensus on the importance of these support structures. These results reinforce the existing body of knowledge, highlighting that holistic bursary programs foster equitable educational opportunities and produce lasting benefits for individuals, families, and broader society.

7.2.2.2 *Nuanced differences to literature for research*

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the support theme as an antecedent to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.2.3 *Distinct differences to literature for research*

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the support theme as an antecedent to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.2.4 *Conclusions for research sub-question 1*

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on support being an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

7.2.3 Theme 2 – Mentoring and Coaching

7.2.3.1 *Similarities with literature for research*

The findings confirm the essential role of mentoring and coaching for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, aligning with previous research by Ontong and Smit (2023) and Chiramba and Nyoni (2024). Professionals from mining companies are recognized as key mentors, though peer-led initiatives like "buddy" systems also offer valuable support (Cage et al., 2021). Comprehensive support, including mentoring, tutoring, and mental health care, is recommended to address socio-economic challenges (Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024). While the mining company's bursary program includes mentoring and mental health support, it currently lacks academic tutoring.

7.2.3.2 *Nuanced differences to literature for research*

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the mentoring and coaching theme as an antecedent to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.3.3 *Distinct differences to literature for research*

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the mentoring and coaching theme as an antecedent to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.3.4 *Conclusions for research sub-question 1*

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on mentoring and coaching being an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

7.2.4 Theme 3 – Internship and graduate opportunities

7.2.4.1 *Similarities with literature for research*

The findings and the literature both highlight that internship and graduate training opportunities linked to tertiary education bursaries are important for creating social impact. Both sources agree that South African bursaries do not automatically include such opportunities, but companies often use them strategically to develop their talent pool and enhance graduate employability (Hunt & Scott, 2020). The literature further notes the value of practical experience and promoting awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in the mining sector, through partnerships between universities and companies (Leal Filho et al., 2023). There were no notable differences between the findings and the literature on the social impact created by these programmes.

7.2.4.2 *Nuanced differences to literature for research*

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the internship and graduate training opportunities theme as an antecedent to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.4.3 *Distinct differences to literature for research*

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the internship and graduate training opportunities theme as an antecedent to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.4.4 *Conclusions for research sub-question 1*

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on internship and graduate training being an antecedent to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

7.2.5 Research sub-question 2: Barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

7.2.6 Theme 1 – Prior academic success

7.2.6.1 *Similarities with literature for research*

Both the research findings and existing literature indicate that previous academic achievement, especially in mathematics and science, constitutes a substantial obstacle to realising social impact through the mining company's bursary program. This issue is attributed to historical inequalities and inadequately resourced schools, as highlighted by Chiramba and Nyoni (2024) and Kaye (2021). Although the company has implemented bridging programmes and community academic support to address these challenges, additional investment in educational initiatives remains necessary to effectively mitigate the enduring consequences of historical disadvantage and optimise the programme's social impact. These findings highlight the critical need for sustained, targeted support to promote equitable access and meaningful outcomes for students from mining communities.

7.2.6.2 *Nuanced differences to literature for research*

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the prior academic success theme as a barrier to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.6.3 *Distinct differences to literature for research*

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the prior academic success theme as a barrier to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.6.4 *Conclusions for research sub-question 2*

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on prior academic success being a barrier to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. Continued investment in educational initiatives and alternative access routes to higher education remains important for the bursary program's overall societal contribution. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

7.2.7 Theme 2 – Bursary implementation

7.2.7.1 *Similarities with literature for research*

The research findings indicate that key challenges in implementing bursary programs arise from constraints in financial and human resources, as well as the absence of efficient management systems. While these issues are not extensively addressed in existing literature, they align with recommendations by Dmytriiev et al. (2021) and Fatima and Elbanna (2023), who advocate for corporate CSR strategies that incorporate stakeholder needs and operational realities. The analysis further suggests that such resource and system limitations may be attributed to program designs that do not fully consider the specific circumstances of disadvantaged communities, where the demand for bursaries is notably high. Additionally, although the bursary system offers robust student support through mentoring and coaching, deficiencies in administrative oversight impede effective monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes. Collectively, these findings highlight the necessity for contextually informed program design and enhanced management systems to improve operational efficiency and maximize social impact.

7.2.7.2 *Nuanced differences to literature for research*

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the bursary implementation theme as a barrier to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.7.3 *Distinct differences to literature for research*

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the bursary implementation theme as a barrier to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.7.4 Conclusions for research sub-question 2

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on prior academic success being a barrier to creating social impact with tertiary education bursaries. Continued investment in educational initiatives and alternative access routes to higher education remains important for the bursary program's overall societal contribution. The findings therefore add to the existing body of knowledge.

The researcher recommends that the company dedicate adequate resources to staff managing its bursary programs and to the deployment of an effective bursary management system. These improvements are anticipated to enhance the social impact of tertiary education bursary initiatives by streamlining administrative processes, allowing personnel to concentrate on value-adding activities, and enabling precise tracking, monitoring, and reporting of social impact outcomes.

7.2.8 Research sub-question 3: Benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community

7.2.9 Theme 1 – Socio-economic benefits

7.2.9.1 Similarities with literature for research

The findings reaffirm that, as noted in the literature, bursary-supported tertiary education serves as a significant mechanism for promoting social mobility, equity, and sustainable development. Consistent with Harrison et al. (2018), the research highlights that individual and societal benefits are intrinsically linked; increased access to higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds yields broader social and economic improvements. Furthermore, the study supports Reed and Hurd's (2016) assertion that CSR-sponsored tertiary education bursaries facilitate intergenerational benefits and play a critical role in the long-term advancement of society.

7.2.9.2 Nuanced differences to literature for research

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the socio-economic benefits theme as a benefit accruing to communities due to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.9.3 *Distinct differences to literature for research*

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to the socio-economic benefits theme as a benefit accruing to communities due to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.9.4 *Conclusions for research sub-question 3*

There were no significant differences noted between the research findings and the literature on the socio-economic benefits theme as a benefit accruing to communities due to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact. The findings therefore confirm the existing body of knowledge.

7.2.10 Theme 2 – Multipurpose bursary design

7.2.10.1 *Similarities with literature for research*

Both the findings and the literature highlight the necessity for companies to move beyond narrow, discipline-specific bursaries (primarily mining-focused) and instead design programs that address wider community needs and strategic objectives. The findings advocate for expanding support to non-mining fields to diversify employment opportunities, while the literature stresses integrating CSR into corporate strategy to proactively generate societal value (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

There is alignment in the research findings and literature that well-structured programs, whether bursaries or broader CSR initiatives, can yield mutual benefits for both companies and the communities in which they operate. Both reference the need to address local skills gaps and promote sustainable development (Gurun, 2023; Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Zhou et al., 2025).

There is further alignment in the research findings and literature, in that both recognize the critical role of management in implementing and overseeing these programs. The research findings mention strategies to mitigate unemployment and prevent unrest, while the literature underscores the complexity and necessity of a robust CSR framework for effective execution, communication, and evaluation (Dmytriyev et al., 2021; Fatima & Elbanna, 2023).

7.2.10.2 Nuanced differences to literature for research

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to as a benefit accruing to communities due to tertiary education bursaries creating social impact.

7.2.10.3 Distinct differences to literature for research

The research findings are more concrete and context-specific, focusing on practical strategies such as expanding the range of supported career fields, educating at least one individual per household, and directly addressing local unemployment and community unrest. In contrast, the literature review provides a higher-level theoretical framework for CSR, discussing the integration of CSR with business strategy and referencing global benchmarks like the United Nations SDGs (Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Sachs, 2012).

The research findings are centred on the design and implementation of bursary programs within the mining industry, examining local impacts and operational needs. The literature, however, addresses CSR as a broader concept, applicable across industries and geographies, and does not specifically address bursary design but rather the guiding principles for effective CSR.

The findings are rooted in empirical insights from participant groups, reflecting lived experiences and observed needs within specific communities. The literature review, meanwhile, synthesizes theoretical perspectives and research on CSR, offering generalizable concepts and frameworks rather than direct, actionable recommendations for bursary design.

7.2.10.4 Conclusions for research sub-question 3

The research findings present tangible, locally grounded strategies for bursary programmes, such as broadening career support, ensuring educational opportunities in each household, and directly tackling unemployment and unrest. In contrast, the literature review adopts a broader, theoretical lens, focusing on the integration of CSR with business strategy and referencing international standards like the United Nations SDGs (Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Sachs, 2012).

While the research findings are specific to the mining sector and reflect the lived experiences and needs of local communities, the literature review offers general CSR

principles applicable across industries and does not provide detailed guidance on bursary design. The findings, therefore, contribute practical insights that complement the literature's more conceptual frameworks.

In conclusion, the research adds valuable, context-specific perspectives to the existing body of knowledge, bridging the gap between high-level CSR theory and the practicalities of implementing bursary programmes in particular sectors and communities (Distelhorst and Shin, 2023; Sachs, 2012).

7.2.11 Research sub-question 4: Opportunities for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries

7.2.12 Theme 1 – Awarding more bursaries

7.2.12.1 Similarities with literature for research

Both the research findings and the literature align on societal impact and community transition. They conclude that limiting bursaries to mining and traditional engineering disciplines is restrictive. The findings emphasise the need to include emerging skills and fields aligned with global trends and local needs, such as digital competencies and disciplines outside engineering. Similarly, the literature highlights the value of expanding bursaries to a wider array of academic fields, particularly those relevant to marginalized and disadvantaged communities (Reed and Hurd, 2016; Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024).

Both the research findings and the literature align on inclusivity and access. The findings suggest that incorporating disciplines with fewer academic prerequisites (such as those not requiring mathematics and science) can increase bursary accessibility and societal benefit. The literature review further advocates for outreach to rural schools and marginalized groups to boost applications and promote equity (Reed and Hurd, 2016).

7.2.12.2 Nuanced differences to literature for research

There were nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to awarding more bursaries being an opportunity create social impact.

The literature uniquely emphasises the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by partnering with stakeholders,

including international organizations and local businesses, to secure funding and expand access (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019). While the findings focus more on the immediate operational expansion of bursary offerings, the literature situates bursary programs within a broader framework of sustainable development and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The literature specifically addresses the potential for bursary programs to support gender equity by increasing female enrolment, aligning with SDG 4. This point is not explicitly covered in the findings, which focus more broadly on expanding access and impact.

7.2.12.3 Distinct differences to literature for research

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to awarding more bursaries being an opportunity create social impact.

7.2.12.4 Conclusions for research sub-question 4

While both the findings and the literature emphasise the value of expanding bursary offerings to maximize social impact, the findings concentrate on practical steps for broadening career fields and increasing accessibility within mining communities. The literature provides a wider lens, linking bursary expansion to sustainable development goals, stakeholder collaboration, and equity, and reinforces the transformative potential of CSR-funded higher education initiatives (Reed and Hurd, 2016; Chiramba and Nyoni, 2024; Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019).

7.2.13 Theme 2 – Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

7.2.13.1 Similarities with literature for research

The research findings and the literature both emphasise the importance of collaborations and networks with stakeholders to generate social impact, but they approach this goal from distinct perspectives and levels of detail.

Both the research findings and the literature recognise the transformative potential of collaboration between companies, municipalities, and educational institutions. They agree that such partnerships can address skill shortages and promote community development through education and employment opportunities. Furthermore, both reference the role of CSR bursaries as catalysts for these collaborations.

7.2.13.2 Nuanced differences to literature for research

There were nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders being an opportunity create social impact.

The research highlights practical, context-driven opportunities for the mining company to collaborate directly with local municipalities and educational institutions. For example, participants identified that offering internships, graduate training, or employment to bursary-funded graduates could directly improve education levels and employment rates within the community. Additionally, the research underscores the value of addressing specific community needs, such as funding social worker roles and supporting students in agriculture through partnerships with the University of Mpumalanga. It also points to the need for increased awareness of bursary programmes to enhance community participation and maximise societal benefits. These findings focus on actionable, locally tailored strategies to drive immediate and measurable impact in the community.

The research findings have an operational focus, providing concrete, context-specific recommendations such as increasing bursary awareness, targeting community-specific fields like agriculture and social work, and offering structured pathways for graduates. In contrast, the literature maintains a strategic, high-level perspective, advocating for the alignment of CSR with SDGs, the establishment of KPIs, and transparent reporting. While the research findings suggest how collaborations can be implemented on the ground, the literature outlines why these collaborations are essential and how they should be strategically positioned within organisational frameworks (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024; Ferguson and Roofe, 2020).

7.2.13.3 Distinct differences to literature for research

There were no distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders being an opportunity create social impact.

7.2.13.4 Conclusions for research sub-question 4

While both the research and the literature affirm the value of stakeholder collaboration for social impact, the research findings are more focused on practical implementation within a specific context, whereas the literature provides a strategic rationale and global framework for such efforts.

7.2.14 Theme 3 – Creating contractual bursary recipient community CSR programmes

7.2.14.1 Similarities with literature for research

Both research findings and existing literature highlight the importance of aligning CSR with business strategy and addressing community needs. While the research recommends that bursary recipients formally participate through contracts to promote engagement and community upliftment, the literature generally focuses on broad justifications for integrating CSR with strategic goals and international standards like the SDGs (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2024).

7.2.14.2 Nuanced differences to literature for research

There were no nuanced differences between the research findings and the literature relating to creating contractual and structured bursary recipient community CSR participation programmes being an opportunity create social impact.

7.2.14.3 Distinct differences to literature for research

There were distinct differences between the research findings and the literature relating to creating contractual and structured bursary recipient community CSR participation programmes being an opportunity create social impact.

The research findings emphasise the practical, on-the-ground realities of engaging bursary recipients in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Head office and local business participants observed that graduate involvement has been largely informal and voluntary, lacking structured agreements or monitoring mechanisms. They suggested leveraging graduates as brand ambassadors and formalizing their participation through contractual give-back programs, such as a dedicated “Zuma year,” to enhance the visibility and impact of CSR efforts within communities.

The research findings are concrete and context-specific, recommending actionable strategies like creating formal platforms and contractual obligations to ensure graduates' active involvement in CSR and community development. This approach aims to maximize the value of bursary programs for both the company and the local community.

Conversely, the literature acknowledges the multifaceted nature of CSR implementation, shaped by internal and external stakeholders, regional differences, and industry specifics (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). It calls for a robust CSR framework that is embedded in

corporate strategy, emphasizing proactive and sustainable impact, but does not detail operational mechanisms such as contractual participation for bursary recipients.

7.2.14.4 Conclusions for research sub-question 4

The research findings reveal that bursary recipients' involvement in CSR has mostly been informal and voluntary, with suggestions to formalise their participation through structured programmes such as a contractual “Zuma year.” These recommendations are practical and context-driven, aiming to enhance both company and community outcomes. In contrast, the literature presents a broader, strategic approach, highlighting the complexity of CSR implementation and the need for alignment with company strategy and sustainable development goals, but without detailing operational mechanisms like contractual obligations for bursary recipients (Fatima & Elbanna, 2023). Overall, while both perspectives recognise the importance of integrating CSR into business practice, the research advocates for actionable, formalised participation, whereas the literature focuses on overarching frameworks and strategic alignment.

7.3 Research contribution

This study aimed to explore the existing body of knowledge regarding the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in generating social impact, particularly to address societal challenges within developing countries. Given the broad scope of CSR, education was selected as the primary focus due to its widely acknowledged role as a catalyst for socio-economic change. Specifically, this research concentrated on tertiary education bursaries. Ultimately, the study contributed to the development of a conceptual framework outlining the principal constructs and themes related to leveraging tertiary education bursaries for creating social impact. The research contributions are categorized into three, additions to the body of knowledge, refinements of the body of knowledge.

7.3.1 Potential confirmation and validation to the existing body of knowledge

Based on the work done in this study, there appears to be similarities and therefore a potential confirmation and validation of the existing body of knowledge, as presented in Table 7.1 below.

Despite the study setting, context and scope, being different to other studies, that have been done, these similarities show that the conclusions from other studies were also experienced in this study's settings and context. These are therefore considered confirmations of the existing body of knowledge.

Table 7.1: Potential confirmation and validation of the existing body of knowledge

Theoretical construct	Themes	Sub-themes
Antecedents	Support	• Comprehensive financial support • Mental health support
Barriers	Prior academic success	
	Bursary implementation	

Potential refinements to the existing body of knowledge

Based on the work done in this study, there is potential contribution in the following areas, that appears to be distinct differences and therefore a potential extension to the body of knowledge, as presented in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2: Potential refinements of the existing body of knowledge

Theoretical construct	Themes
Opportunities to create social impact	Awarding more bursaries
	Improving collaborations and networks with stakeholders

7.3.2 Potential extensions to the existing body of knowledge

Based on the work done in this study, there is potential contribution in the following areas, that appears to be nuances of differences and therefore a potential refinement to the body of knowledge, as presented in Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3: Potential extensions to the existing body of knowledge

Theoretical construct	Themes
Benefits	Multipurpose bursary design
Opportunities to create social impact	Creating contractual and structured bursary recipient community CSR programmes

7.4 Recommendations to Management and Stakeholders

The practical conclusions inform the recommendations for management and other stakeholders, especially where nuances of differences and distinct differences were identified. These recommendations

- Research sub-question 1
 - Comprehensive financial support not only lessens the financial and psychological burdens on students from disadvantaged backgrounds but also enhances their academic success, retention, and completion rates. Similarly, robust mental health support, including access to specialized professionals, addresses the complex challenges students face, further empowering them to thrive academically and contribute positively to their communities. The researcher therefore recommends that all bursary program managers and corporates who offer bursaries, consider implementing full comprehensive support and mental health support as a core design of their bursary programs.
 - The findings confirm the essential role of mentoring and coaching for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. While the mining company's bursary program includes mentoring and mental health support, it currently lacks

academic tutoring. The researcher recommends adding academic tutoring to enhance any bursary program's benefits for recipients from disadvantaged communities.

- The findings and the literature both highlight that internship and graduate training opportunities linked to tertiary education bursaries are important for creating social impact. South African bursaries do not automatically include such opportunities, but companies often use them strategically to develop their talent pool and enhance graduate employability. The literature further notes the value of practical experience and promoting awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in the mining sector, through partnerships between universities and companies (Filho et al., 2023). The researcher therefore recommends that mining company integrate sustainability issues into their internship and graduate training initiatives.
- Research sub-question 2
 - Although the company has implemented bridging programmes and community academic support to address these challenges, additional investment in educational initiatives remains necessary to effectively mitigate the enduring consequences of historical disadvantage and optimise the programme's social impact. These findings highlight the critical need for sustained, targeted support to promote equitable access and meaningful outcomes for students from mining communities. The researcher therefore recommends that bursary program managers and corporates to add academic tutoring to enhance the program's benefits for recipients from disadvantaged communities.
 - The research findings indicate that key challenges in implementing bursary programs arise from constraints in financial and human resources, as well as the absence of efficient management systems. The researcher therefore recommends that bursary programs are contextually designed and include efficient and effective bursary program management systems.
- Research sub-question 3
 - The research findings and the literature review advocate for a multipurpose approach that maximizes social impact through targeted educational support and integrated CSR strategies, the findings offer actionable, locally grounded recommendations, whereas the literature provides a wider theoretical context

for embedding such initiatives within sustainable business practices. The researcher therefore recommends that bursary program managers consider reviewing the portfolio of bursaries offered and consider widening the career fields, to cover other fields other than purely required for talent pipeline. CSR bursary programs should consider the history of the country and the context in which many students come from disadvantaged communities and therefore may not meet strict academic criteria especially for STEM related studies.

- Research sub-question 4
 - The research highlights practical, context-driven opportunities for the mining company to collaborate directly with local municipalities and educational institutions. The researcher therefore recommends that corporates offering bursaries, look beyond the traditional methods of sourcing bursary recipients from university but to engage with stakeholders such as community representatives and university to identify prospectives for future skills development and research and design bursaries that meet these future needs.
 - The research findings reveal that bursary recipients' involvement in CSR has mostly been informal and voluntary, with suggestions to formalise their participation through structured programmes such as a contractual “Zuma year.” The researcher therefore recommends that bursary programs to include contractual CSR programs for bursary recipient and for corporates to utilise these former recipients as brand ambassadors for the bursary program as they are proof of what can be achieved, one person at time.

7.5 Study limitations

The study was located at a specific mining company and in a specific region of a province. As discussed in chapter 4.

- The study was conducted in south Africa.
- The study only looked at the mining industry.
- The study did not look at those bursary recipients who were not able to successfully complete their studies.
- The researcher was unable to interview the local community school principals, who would potentially have given more insights.

7.6 Areas for future research

- Further research could be conducted across various industries and sectors and not just the mining industry. To obtain further nuances and distinct differences.
- Further research could be conducted by doing a comparative study on the antecedents, barriers and opportunities to create social impact with the NSFAS government bursary scheme.
- Further research could be conducted to follow-up on the students who received the mining company bursaries but didn't complete their studies. How did the termination of the bursary impact their lives?
- Further research could be conducted to follow-up on the students who received the mining company bursaries but didn't secure an internship or graduate training programme or employment within two years of graduation. How were their life trajectories affected?

7.7 Study conclusion

The research problem considered what the antecedents, barriers and opportunities are to create social impact with CSR tertiary education bursaries. A literature review was conducted as a starting point. There were many academic articles on CSR strategy and implementation but very little on how and when societal impact is achieved through CSR initiatives. Many corporates report on how much money is spent on CSR initiatives but there is not reporting on the lives touched and the ripple effect on the wider community for every rand spent on CSR initiatives. Education (sustainable development goal 4) is said to not only effect social transformation, but it is also said to be a key activator of the attainment of all the other sustainable development goals. There are many CSR initiatives in South Africa, however some focus on education infrastructure. Bursaries in particular, tertiary education bursaries have the potential to accelerate socio-economic transformation one person at a time. A conceptual framework was developed at the end of chapter 2, based on the literature review. Through the research data analysis this conceptual framework was revised. The revised conceptual framework identified

confirmation of previous studies, refinements of previous studies and potential additions to previous studies.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Informed consent form for interviews

Appendix B – Interview protocol

Appendix C – Organisation consent

Appendix D – Ethical clearance approval

Appendix E – Proforma editor non-disclosure agreement

Appendix F – Code book from Atlas.Ti

Appendix A – Informed consent form for interviews

Dear participant

I am currently student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MPhil CS degree. I am conducting research on the social impact of tertiary education bursaries. Our interview is expected to last 30 minutes, and will help us understand the antecedents, barriers, and opportunities for social impact through bursaries. **Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.**

By signing this letter, you are indicating that you have given permission for:

- The interview to be recorded;
- The recording to be transcribed by a third-party transcriber, who will be subject to a standard non-disclosure agreement;
- Verbatim quotations from the interview may be used in the report, provided they are not identified with your name or that of your organisation;
- The data to be used as part of a report that will be publicly available once the examination process has been completed; and
- All data to be reported and stores without identifiers.

If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher name:

Research Supervisor name:

Email:

Email:

Phone:

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B – Interview protocol

Below is the interview protocol for the bursary recipients the questions will be adapted for the community and company stakeholders.

Question	Detailed question
Introduction	• Greet the participant and introduce myself as the interviewer • Explain the purpose of the study • Confirm informed consent to record the interview • Ask the participant if they have any questions before proceeding with the interview
Q1 Introduction	1. Please tell me your journey to becoming a bursary recipient?
Research question 1 <i>What are the antecedents, barriers, and opportunities for the CSR bursary programs to create social impact in the community?</i>	
Q2 Research Sub-question 1 <i>What antecedents are required for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	2.1 Why do you think the mine offers these bursaries? 2.2 Please tell me, how has obtaining a bursary-funded degree influenced your life? 2.3 Please tell me, how has obtaining a bursary-funded degree influenced your family? 2.4 What support did you get whilst studying, and how did that help you as a student to complete your studies successfully?
Q3 Research Sub-question 2 <i>What are the barriers to CSR bursary programs creating social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	3.1 In your view what are the key challenges to ensuring that the bursary program benefits more than just the individual bursary recipients? 3.2 Have there been any unintended consequences of this bursary program in the community? If yes, please give examples?

Question	Detailed question
Q4 Research Sub-question 3 <i>What opportunities exist for CSR bursary programs to create social impact beyond the individual beneficiaries?</i>	4.1 How have previous bursary recipients from your community impacted the community? How did that impact affect your role in the community? 4.2 How have you used your opportunities as a bursary recipient to impact your family? 4.2 How have you used your opportunities as a bursary recipient to impact the wider community? 4.3 How could the bursary program in its current form create wider societal impact in the community, beyond the impact on individual bursary recipients?
Q5 Research Sub-question 4 <i>What are the benefits accruing to the community because of having mining company bursary recipient graduates in the community?</i>	5.1 What could the mine do differently, or improve to increase the impact of the bursary programme?
Closing question	Thank you very much for attending this interview and answering the interview questions, do you have any further comments?

Appendix C – Organisation consent

We are aware that [REDACTED] is conducting research in partial fulfilment of MPhil Corporate Strategy degree. We hereby give permission for [REDACTED] to conduct research relating to this topic in order to understand The Social Impact of awarding Tertiary Education Bursaries. We acknowledge that this research will involve collecting data using interviews from four different participant groups and a total sample size of 12:

Graduates of the bursary scheme who originate from the Mpumalanga region (sample size 6), [REDACTED] employees who are responsible for the bursary scheme (sample size 2), [REDACTED] employees who work in a business unit in in the Mpumalanga region (sample size 2), and Community representatives from the Mpumalanga region (sample size 2).

The interviews will be conducted for a period not exceeding 90 days from date of commencement.

We understand that participation in this research is voluntary, and that the principle of informed consent will be applied to each individual involved in the data collection process. We confirm that the researcher will protect the identity of the organisation and that of the individuals involved in the research by keeping this information confidential in any stored data, reports or publications that may emanate from this research.

We also confirm that this permission is granted by a person duly authorised to do so.

Name: [REDACTED]
Signature: [REDACTED]

Title: [REDACTED]
Date of signing: 31/07/25

Name: [REDACTED]
Signature: [REDACTED]

Title: [REDACTED]
Date of signing: 31/07/25

Appendix D – Ethical clearance approval

Gordon Institute of Business Science University of Pretoria	Ethical Clearance Approved
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[REDACTED]

Please be advised that your application for **Ethical Clearance** has been approved.
You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.
We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Ethical Clearance [Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

Appendix E – Proforma editor non-disclosure agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

It is a condition of engagement that students will assist in preserving all confidential information, ideas and plans; any confidential information or any information in respect of any data gathered, captured or analysed in respect of the research work they undertake in fulfillment of GIBS masters or doctoral degree programmes, in this case the research project titled *[insert title of research]* conducted by *[inset name of researcher]*. The parties under this agreement agree to the following:

1. To apply their best efforts to keep any information confidential which has been acquired or may acquire pursuant to the research work. For the purposes of this clause, confidential information excludes information which:

1.1 is publicly available or becomes publicly available through no act or default of any Party;

1.2 was in the possession of a Party prior to its disclosure otherwise than as a result of a breach by any party of any obligation of confidentiality to which it is subject;

1.3 is disclosed to the student by a person which did not acquire the information under an obligation of confidentiality; and

1.4 is independently acquired by a student and as a result of work carried out by a person to whom no disclosure of such information has been made;

2. No party shall use or disclose confidential information except with the prior written consent of GIBS or in accordance with an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or in order to comply with any law or governmental regulations by which any Party concerned is bound or as may be lawfully requested in writing by any governmental authority.

3. The party undertakes to permanently delete any electronic copies of confidential information received, and destroy any confidential printed documentation or similar material in their possession promptly once they are no longer required, usually on completion of the service contracted by the student.

4. On completion of the contracted service on behalf of the student, the party is to confirm to the student that they are not in possession of any confidential information.

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 20____.

On behalf of:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

duly authorised and warranting such authority

Witness: _____

Appendix F – Code book from Atlas.Ti

Code
○ Antecedents to creating social impact with bursaries
○ Barriers to creating social impact with bursaries
○ academic performance
○ Antecedents - academic monitoring
○ Antecedents - additional support & skills workshops
○ Antecedents - financial support eased pressure
○ Antecedents - full financial support
○ Antecedents - full support - bursary staff always available
○ Antecedents - full support able to focus on performance
○ Antecedents - Holistic support - mental health support
○ Antecedents - internships & graduateships - learnerships & artisans
○ Antecedents - mentors
○ Antecedents - Mentorship
○ Antecedents - Mentorship & guidance
○ Antecedents - personal support
○ Antecedents - practical work experience
○ Antecedents - Support - in the form of a community of students
○ Antecedents - support - mental healthcare
○ Antecedents - support -care about us
○ Antecedents - support, eliminate worry, setup 4 success
○ Antecedents - track & monitor - accountability
○ Antecedents full support - relieves anxiety
○ Antecedents support & tracking and monitoring bursary recipients
○ Barriers - application process inaccessible
○ Barriers - bursary implementation policies
○ Barriers - Bursary process implementation - no system
○ Barriers - bursary schemes require a lot of administration
○ Barriers - career fairs, options info made available
○ Barriers - challenges, such as budget, resources, business performance
○ Barriers - inadequate access to info on bursaries
○ Barriers - inadequate awareness in the communities
○ Barriers - prior academic success
○ Barriers - Prior academic success invest in schools
○ Barriers - recipients treated as individuals instead of ambassadors
○ Barriers - Resource constraints head office staff
○ Barriers - rigorous criteria such as NBT tests
○ Barriers - some bursary students struggle to adapt
○ Barriers - unintended consequences
○ Benefit - also include middle-income families
○ Benefit - diverse bursary type portfolio
○ Benefit - educate and employ community members
○ Benefit - multiple bursary disciplines offered
○ Benefit to society - bursaries benefit the previously disadvantaged
○ Benefits - Bursary programmes complement other CSI initiatives

o Benefits - educational equity & inclusivity
o Benefits - employment creation -focus on STEM high demand JOBS
o Benefits - employment & socio-economic benefits to family & society
o Benefits - social impact
o Benefits - socio-economic benefits - increase no. of graduates
o Benefits - socio-economic benefits send money to family
o Benefits - Socio-economic benefits to family and society livelihoods
o Benefits - source talent create increase local employment
o Benefits - talent pipeline - employment creation
o Benefits - Youth employment
o Benefits social impact - socio-economic develop communities
o Benefits to family & community -awareness of other career options
o Benefits to family & society
o Benefits to family & society - build a family house
o Benefits to society - financial responsibility eased, benefited siblings
o Bursars also access to Employee Assistance Programme
o bursars and the company need to co-create the future together
o Bursary recipients impact community -advocate for bursary scheme
o career expos
o change a life
o changed my life
o changes outlook
o changes the family
o Clearly integrated strategy - considers all stakeholders
o closer to community
o coaches
o coaching and mentoring
o communicate
o communicate their needs
o community ambassador
o community structure
o community within a certain radius from the operation
o confidence impacted
o continuous engagement
o create jobs
o create student networks
o Multipurpose bursary design - CSR Integrated with business strategy - BEE certificate
o Multipurpose bursary design -CSR strategy integrated with business strategy - offering bursaries strategic
o Multipurpose bursary design - DE&I strategy
o develop skills
o Multipurpose bursary design -differently abled
o difficulty transition to university
o Multipurpose bursary design - DMPPR
o doors opening
o doorstep community
o educational levels

o employment
o empower
o encourage pupils at school to take education seriously
o expand bursaries
o explore more opportunities
o exposure
o family able to use finances to support other siblings
o family livelihood
o five-year funded bursary
o five-year SLP cycle
o forfeiting the bursary
o friction in community
o Antecedent – Full financial support - therefore alleviated financial stress
o fund others
o gives hope
o giving back - a live thing
o good relationships
o good story
o high performing learners
o highly disadvantaged background
o hold their hands
o identify with social impact
o influence others
o inspirational support
o intangible benefits
o it's not impossible
o knowledge transfer
o labour market
o lacked exposure in a lot of things -disadvantaged at varsity
o lived experience
o local dynamics
o local host communities
o manage expectations
o Barrier – Bursary implementation - manual processes
o Barrier – Bursary implementation - manual reporting
o measuring impact
o mental wellness
o mentors
o method of communication
o mining not infinite
o mining value chain
o misaligned
o missing middle
o missing skills sets
o monetary incentives - best performing students
o monitoring & evaluation

○ motivation
○ needs taken care-of
○ Multipurpose bursary design - non-mining related
○ Opportunities - bursaries awarded to multi-income families
○ Opportunities - more inclusive selection criteria/process
○ Opportunities - Building communities for the future
○ Opportunities - bursaries offered for future skills
○ Opportunities - bursary recipients give back- contractual giving back
○ Opportunities - change scope of bursary disciplines
○ Opportunities - collaborations & networks with other stakeholders
○ Opportunities - collaborations & networks, more placements
○ Opportunities - connect with other companies
○ Opportunities - extend bursary offerings by offering technical qualifications
○ Opportunities - Extend social impact - broadening scope of bursaries
○ Opportunities - extend social impact by partnering with universities
○ Opportunities - greater social impact through incorporating ESD
○ Opportunities - increasing scope of bursaries
○ Opportunities - linking other CSI initiatives to create social impact
○ Opportunities - measuring and reporting on Social Impact KPIs
○ Opportunities - social impact measurement to make informed decisions
○ Opportunities - transforming scope of bursaries offered
○ Opportunities -extend benefits - bursary recipients become active citizens
○ Opportunities for social Impact - collaborations with stakeholders
○ Opportunities to change scope to include TVET colleges
○ Opportunities to meet specific skills required in the community
○ Opportunities - tracking, monitoring social impacts
○ Opportunities - collaborate with others
○ other career streams
○ Opportunities - Contractual CSR outreach programmes
○ partner with schools
○ partner with us
○ partnering
○ peace of mind
○ performing
○ person's heart or willingness
○ personal needs
○ personality traits
○ pipeline
○ PIT programme
○ plough back
○ Prior academic support - e.g. after school programmes
○ Prior academic success - bridging programmes
○ proudly share
○ purpose of bursaries is to uplift the community
○ Purpose of bursary scheme is to uplift educational levels
○ psychometric assessments
○ recruitment process
○ relate better

○ require more than technical knowledge
○ room for improvement
○ school fees
○ serve
○ share experiences
○ share your story
○ shared learnings
○ skills base
○ Multipurpose bursary design - social and labour plan
○ Social Impact Benefits - employment creation opportunities
○ Social Impact of bursary - it was a life changer
○ social impact strategy
○ social investment
○ Social license to operate - Enhance corporate standing - be an authentic investor
○ Social License to operate - social obligation
○ Social License to Operate - social responsibility
○ social license to operate
○ social problems
○ social standing
○ socio economic standards
○ Socio-economic benefits - better lives
○ solve for business requirements
○ solving for business
○ stakeholders
○ start a business
○ strategic objectives
○ strategically position bursars
○ stringent conditions
○ stringent testing & evaluations
○ struggle to adapt
○ study hard
○ successful bursars are placed at specific business units
○ sustainable community
○ systemic perspective
○ Multipurpose bursary design - talent pool
○ Multipurpose bursary design - talent strategy
○ tertiary education is expensive
○ tracking learners
○ Underprivileged homes
○ values
○ volunteerism
○ walked the journey
○ what it takes to succeed
○ wider community
○ Wider Social impact - by using bursaries to diversify skills set in the community
○ world class bursary
○ wouldn't have been able to afford going to university

