A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF SELF-PERCEIVED MULTICULTURAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMPETENCE AMONGST A SAMPLE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Tsepiso Tumelo Thusi (213507060), declare that the research study is my original work. I declare that this research project has not been previously submitted for an academic qualification at any other university. All the sources used have been acknowledged in the reference list.

Tsepiso Thusi_____   Date_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Background:

The population of South Africa is characterised by cultural diversity and shares a rich socio-political history. Working in such a context can prove to be a very complex experience for psychologists. Due to its political history of apartheid, the country continues to have racial tensions and socioeconomic inequality. Though the new democratic South Africa guarantees the right to equality and protection from all forms of discrimination, it still presents itself with many forms of social injustice. Thus, there is a need for psychologists whom work in such a context to be equipped with the skills to address all issues of diversity. The study was done to explore whether psychologists feel adequately equipped to deal with multicultural issues that may surface during their sessions. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore whether psychologists feel equipped to bring about social justice for clients experiencing different levels of oppression.

Methods:

A sample of four psychologists participated in the study. Each participant was interviewed twice, with the second interview used as a follow up from the previous one in order get more in-depth information from the participants. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected.

Findings:

Participants revealed that they needed more training and experience to enhance their multicultural counselling competence. Participants reflected on their struggles of working with clients experiencing various issues of oppression such as those related to poverty, discrimination and violence. A significant finding was that the majority of the participants expressed that they felt inadequately prepared by their training program to address clients' issues of oppression/social injustice.

Conclusions:

There is a need for psychology training to seriously engage in critical understandings of multicultural and social justice counselling. In order for the field of psychology to become a powerful entity within the South African context, it needs to acknowledge the impact of historical, political and social influences on clients' lives.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter will describe some of the social issues that South Africa faces. Multicultural and social justice psychology will be explored. The theoretical framework that will guide the understandings of the research study will be detailed. The chapter concludes by providing a background to the current study and presents the aims/objectives of the research.

Introduction

South Africa is characterised by cultural diversity and has a blended population which consists of Western and indigenous practices and belief systems (Eagle, Haynes & Long, 2007). The country's population is characterised by diversity in culture, language as well as ethnicity (Johnston, 2015). Johnston (2015) argues that in the South African context, the concept of 'culture' carries with it multiple meanings and is often associated with race, poverty, inequality and material deprivation. South Africa's sociopolitical history has significantly influenced constructs of culture. The early apartheid system, for example, marginalized indigenous ethnic groups and privileged specific socio-cultural groups. This history continues to affect the lives of many individuals today.

Since the abolishment of the apartheid system in 1994, the country has made significant changes. However, despite its new constitution that guarantees the right to equality and protection from all forms of discrimination, South Africa still presents itself with many forms of social injustice. In 2016, Penny Sparrow, a white South African female sparked a public scandal after calling a large group of black South Africans 'monkeys' on social media. In early 2017, an aggressive confrontation between a white man and a black woman at a restaurant went viral on social media and raised debates about the issue of racism and violence against women in the country. Furthermore, in South Africa the LGBTI community is often targets of crime, violence and discrimination because of their sexual identity (Nel & Judge, 2008). There have been several incidents of rape directed at lesbians with the aim of 'curing them of lesbianism' and gay men are beaten by other males to turn them to 'real men' (Siwela, Sikhwari, & Mutshaeni, 2018). Brown (2012) contends that the high prevelance of this crime is a reflection of South Africa's social and cultural customs that view homosexuality as unnatural and in need of 'curing'. Addressing issues of culture and social justice is a very complex task for professionals working within the field of mental health in South Africa.

1.1 Social Issues in South Africa

1.1.1 LGBTI discrimination and prevalence in South Africa

In spite of political and legal transformations in South Africa, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community is still in a constant battle against the homophobia that exists in the country (Naidoo & Mabaso, 2014). Siwela, Sikhwari, and Mutshaeni (2018) argue that although South Africa is the only country in Africa that provides legal rights and legalised same sex unions to LGBTI people many of the the country's population do not support this community. Homophobia and discrimination towards the LGBTI community is an issue that is dominant within the entire African continent. In Africa, 38 of 54 countries criminalize homosexuality or same-sex behaviour (Siwela, Sikhwari, & Mutshaeni, 2018). Thobejane and Mohale (2018) posit that some African nations punish LGBTI relationships and the hate crimes that take place against LGBTI peoples often goes unpunished. Such attitudes towards the LGBTI community in Africa indicates that the continent has a long way to go towards reaching a culture of acceptance and equality towards this marginalized community.

Wells and Polders (2006) reported in their study that hate speech was the most prevalent form of victimisation experienced by LGBTI peoples. Thobejane and Mohale's (2018) study also revealed similar findings as results indicated that many members of the LGBTI community often face stigmatization, and negative public attitude. The study by Siwela, Sikhwari and Mutshaeni (2018) revealed that homosexual youths and their parents are vulnerable to experiencing marginalisation, sexual abuse and harrassment. Public attitudes and beliefs have a significant consequence on how the LBGTI community are treated in society.

Siwela, Sikhwari, and Mutshaeni (2018) argue that religious beliefs often affect acceptance as some churches do not approve of homosexuality. Thobejane and Mohale (2018) contend that social or moral values and political beliefs of the dominant group are some of the factors that reinforce homophobia. The authors point out that in most societies sexual orientation that is regarded as normal, good, or correct is heterosexual behaviour while homosexual behaviour is valued as unacceptable and incorrect. This has consequently resulted in many truamatic experiences for the LGBTI community as their identity is being attacked through crime, discrimination and abuse. Due to the stigma associated with the LGBTI community, there has been under reporting of hate crimes directed at the LGBTI community as members fear that

their victimisation would not be taken seriously or police may respond with hostility (Wells & Polders, 2006)

1.1.2 Gender-based violence

Violence against women is a pervasive issue in South Africa. Although the post-apartheid government has vowed to ensure women equality in every aspect of the economy and society, South African women continue to face high levels of violence (Kim & Motsei, 2002). The causes of the high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa are highly complex, but research suggests that to a large extent, the roots of violence against women lie in the partiarchal nature of our society (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, & Schrieber, 2001). Lange, Mitchell, and Bhana (2012) assert that societal views of masculinity perpetuates the ongoing violence against women. Masculinity is commonly associated with the view of women as inferior to men and in need of being led and controlled (Jewkes at el., 2001). Thus, there are social and cultural factors that shape gender roles. Such attitudes towards women and gender vastly contributes to the high levels of gender-based violence that exists in the country.

Lange, Mitchell, and Bhana (2012) suggest that in southern Africa, the first sexual experience of many women is often a forced encounter. Furthermore, the authors posit that one in every five women is a victim of sexual violence and there is a high prevalence of intimate partner violence. The study by Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, & Schrieber (2001) indicates that in South Africa, there is a high prevelance of physical abuse, rape, emotional and financial abuse towards women. Andersson, Cockcroft, & Shea (2008) argue that in three provinces in South Africa, 19 to 28 percent of women experienced intimate partner violence and 5 to 7 percent reported having been raped. Furthermore, a study conducted with women living in the township of Cape Town found that 42 percent of them reported sexual assualts. A study by Dunkle, et al. (2004) reveals that amongst a sample of women in Soweto, the prevalence of physical and/or sexual partner violence was 55.5 percent of the sample, 7.9 percent were sexually assualted by nonpartners and 7.3 percent of the women revealed that their first encounter of sex was coercive.

Lange, Mitchell, and Bhana (2012) argue that women's vulnerability is exacerbated by socio-economic factors. According to Onyejekwe (2004), a great majority of South African women are poor and this situation aggravates their victimization. The author argues that "The lack of economic opportunities that will help most abused women to seek either freedom of redress from justice therefore makes matters worse. Poverty limits their ability to access antiretroviral,

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the female condom and microbicides, and this exposes them to more violence" (2004, p.34). With the country's high socioeconomic inequalities, there are a number of causes for poverty.

1.1.3 Poverty and inequality

With the country's population characterised by high socioeconomic inequalites, poverty, becomes the roots of many social issues that the country faces. Since the emergence of the democratic South Africa, the South African government has since developed policies which have focused on poverty alleviation and improving economic growth (Triegaardt, 2006). Despite the continous strategies to fight against poverty and inequality, South Africa continues to be challenged with high levels of poverty and inequality (Triegaardt, 2006: Govender, 2016). Govender (2016) argues that poverty, unemployment and exclusion is the (un)democratic experience for most South Africans. Although South Africa is an upper-middle-income country according to economic factors,resources and human capital, these are inequitably distributed (Van der berg, 2014). In South Africa, poverty and inequality are structually embedded, with race being the the most significant factor. As Woorlard (2002) suggests, there is a significant difference in poverty levels between population groups in South Africa, with the majority of the poor population group being black people. While the White population in South Africa, according to Van der berg (2014), enjoy living standards comparable with the average in the richest countries in the world. The apartheid era, which privileged a specific racial group at the expensive of oppressing the other has consequently led to the high disparities in social class that exists today amongst population groups.

Unemployment is one of the leading factors that contributes to the high level of poverty and inequality in South Africa. According to Triegaardt (2006) and Govender (2016) report that over 8 million people in South Africa are unemployed. According to research by Woorlard (2002), 37 percent of households in South Africa survive on less than R1000 per month. Triegaardt's (2006) research suggests that just over 22 million people in South Africa live in poverty. It's important to note that the roots of inequality and poverty that exists in South Africa can be traced back to its sociopolitical histoty of the apartheid era (Khumalo, 2013).

The marked inequalities that exists in South Africa poses a challenge for psychologists in South Africa aiming towards providing well-being for all people. The social issues that continue to impact on the lived experiences of South African people, call for psychologists to possess the necessary tools to address the social ills of society.

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1.2 Introducing multiculturalism and social justice in psychology

1.2.1 Multiculturalism in Psychology

Culture is an essential element of one's personal identity and sense of belonging. In their study of multiculturalism within counselling, Gallardo, Parham, Johnson and Carter (2009,) suggest that "Culture is more than race and ethnicity and should include identities such as religion and spirituality, gender, sexual orientation, class, and disability…" (p.428).This understanding of culture invites counsellors to have a broader perspective on what constitutes an individual's culture.

Increasingly, counsellors will come into contact with individuals that are culturally diverse, who may not share the counsellor's worldview of what constitutes normality and abnormality (Corey & Corey, 2011). Corey and Corey (2011) note culture is an essential part of the counselling process and influences counsellor's interventions with their clients. The ability of counsellors to work with culturally diverse clients is commonly referred to as multicultural counselling competence. Multicultural Counselling Competence can be broadly described as the efficiency with which a counsellor is able to provide counselling services to individuals whose cultural worldviews and cultural group associations differ from those of the counsellor (Ivers, Johnson, Clarke, Newsome & Berry, 2016).

Having the ability to provide services for clients from diverse cultural backgrounds that differ from their own can prove to be a very challenging task for most psychologists. As noted by Gallardo, Parham, Johnson and Carter (2009) applied psychology is still struggling to effectively translate its theory and discourse into non-Western cultures. This is particularly true for the South African context as the recent 'Fees must fall' movement highlights the continuing colonization of most knowledge systems and psychology is not immune to this criticism.

It is important that counsellors are aware that clients come from various cultural backgrounds and this is important to acknowledge during the counselling process. It is easy for the counsellor to misinterpret the meaning of the client's behavior or presenting problem if they ignore the significance of culture. As Corey and Corey (2011) suggest, the counsellor is likely to misinterpret the behaviour or make an inaccurate diagnosis of a particular client if their cultural factors are not carefully taken into consideration.

1.2.2 Social justice counselling

As noted in the definition above, one's culture includes an array of identities which impact's one's social identity. Thus, if psychologists are to recognise culture, they should be aware of the various social issues that are involved (for example, issues of race, class, gender etc). It is essential that psychologists are aware of, and are able to address, the various forms of social oppression and discrimination that exist in society. It is therefore essential for psychologists to acquire skills relevant for societal intervention or social action. This brings in the element of social justice action in counselling.

Crethar and Winterowd (2011) argue that counsellors need to be aware of the links between culture and social justice. Kennedy and Arthur (2014, p. 188) argue that there is no single definition of social justice, nonetheless, within psychology, "the overall aim of social justice practices is to minimize oppression and injustice in favour of equality, accessibility, and optimal develeopment opportunities for all members of society". Counselling from a social justice framework involves the valuing of an active helping approach which is committed to systemic change processes that work from a multisystem perspective.

Vera and Speight (2003), emphasized that if the field of psychology is to commit to multicultural competence, then it should also be committed to social justice. The authors further argue that "social justice is at the heart of multiculturalism in that the existence of institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia is what accounts for the inequitable experiences of people of color, women, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (among others)" (p.254).

1.3 Theoretical framework of the study

The main conceptual framework that framed and guided this research emerges from critical psychology. Critical psychology presents a range of approaches that challenge mainstream psychology (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009). The core ideas of critical psychology are based on a broader view of promoting human well-being which is something that has often been ignored by mainstream psychology. Through a broader view of promoting well-being, critical psychology encompasses social progress and human development through pursuing social justice, welfare of communities and oppressed groups (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002: Fox et al., 2009).

Central to the ideas of critical psychology is the belief that mainstream psychology has a narrow view of promoting human welfare by overemphasizing individualistic values (Fox et al, 2009). Thus, critical psychology argues that mainstream has depoliticized our understanding of ourselves by ignoring pressing political, economic and social powers that impact the well-being individuals. (Hook, et al., 2004). A more in-depth discussion on the ideas of critical psychology will be discussed in chapter two of this dissertation where multicultural and feminist psychology ideas will also be integrated in the theoretical framework of the study.

1.4 Focus of current study

Leach and Akhurst (2003) argue that psychologists working in South Africa would benefit from becoming more proactive through contributing to alleviating some of the social ills that the country faces. Furthermore, the authors posit that the field of psychology would have a greater impact if it moves towards better serving community needs. As South Africa is a country coloured with a diverse population and is troubled with cases of social injustice, it is important that psychologists are adequately prepared for this in their work. Therefore, essential for this research is to give feedback on how psychologists can be trained to improve their practice in ways that can address multicultural and social justice issues that affect South African people.

There are substantial research studies available detailing the importance and effects of multicultural counselling competence (for example, Constantine (2002), Holcomb-McCoy and Myers' (1999) and Dillon et al. (2016)). However, these research studies are largely based on quantitative methods and therefore have little descriptive information detailing the issues embedded in this area. Little qualitative research is available that explores psychologists' self-perceived multicultural and social justice competence in South Africa. There is certainly literature on various models designed to help counsellors address the issues pertaining to cultural diversity, however, little descriptive research is available which explores psychologists' self-perceived multicultural and social justice competence in the South African context. My drive for this particular study was inspired by my concern for how psychologists experience practicing in a vast population of multiplicity such as South Africa. In such a context, I wanted to understand how they perceive their competence in terms of multiculturalism and addressing issues of social justice or societal concerns. There are different fields within psychology, however, this study focuses on the group of psychologists whom are practicing applied psychology. This group involves those whom are largely doing counselling,

therefore includes: Counselling Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists and Educational Psychologists.

Aims

My research aimed to:

1) To explore self-perceived multicultural and social justice competence among psychologists.
2) To explore psychologists' views on the importance of multicultural competency and social justice
3) To gain awareness into the obstacles that psychologists face working within a multicultural context
4) To explore gaps in the current training regarding addressing multicultural and social justice competence
5) To explore suggestions for ways to improve the training of psychologists when it comes to multicultural and social justice competence.

Questions

My research aimed to answer the following questions:

1) Do psychologists perceive themselves as having multicultural and social justice competencies?
2) What are psychologists' perceptions on the importance of multiculturalism and social justice competence?
3) What are the challenges faced by psychologists related to multicultural and social justice issues?
4) What are the current gaps in the training of psychologists regarding skills for addressing multicultural and social justice competence?
5) How can training of psychologists be improved from the perspective of practicing psychology?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter will discuss the existing literature pertaining to the topic of multicultural and social justice within psychology. The chapter will discuss the meanings of multicultural and social justice competencies within the counselling context. Furthermore, this chapter will present a theoretical framework to further understand the knowledge and practical implications of multicultural and social justice practice for the discipline of psychology.

The following literature review is separated into two different sections, multicultural and social justice counselling competence respectively. Due to the close connections between multicultural and social justice counselling (Ratts, 2011), when discussing multiculturalism, reference is also made to ideas of social justice. The reason for this is because social justice is embedded in a critical understanding of multiculturalism. It is impossible to not mention social justice in the discussion of multiculturalism. As Vera and Speight (2003) argue, psychology's agenda of multiculturalism must also be committed to a social justice orientation. For the purposes of the review, I have separated multiculturalism and social justice into different sections and will therefore address social justice more extensively in its own section after having discussed multiculturalism.

2.1 Multicultural counselling in psychology

2.1.1 Meaning of Multicultural Counselling Competence

The field of counselling has witnessed a significant shift towards appreciating the value of racial and cultural variables as fundamental considerations in research, training and practice (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009). This had led to the emergence of the multicultural counselling movement for the discipline of psychology. The history of the multicultural movement offers various definitions and approaches to multicultural counselling competence (Pieterse at al., 2009), however, here I will provide a broad overview of the essential underpinnings of this concept. Multicultural counselling competence involves a counselling relationship that crosses racial and ethnic differences (Abreu, Chung, & Atkinson, 2000). In this regard, the counsellor that develops multicultural counselling competencies will have developed knowledge, awareness and skills that relate to the ability to work in racially

and ethnically diverse societies (Abreu, Chung, & Atkinson, 2000). Sue et al. (as cited in Abreu, Chung, & Atkinson, 2000) defined cross cultural counselling as a counselling relationship in which the participants differ with respect to cultural background, values, and lifestyle. The multicultural counselling movement has also been committed to fostering positive changes in the social-environmental contexts with which clients are situated (Crethar, Rivera, and Nash, 2008). In this regard, multicultural counselling competence is linked to valuing an understanding of an individual from within their context.

The recognition of the negative consequences that social injustice has on the lives of people has been crucial in helping many psychologists identify effective interventions to address issues more broadly to effect social change (Vera & Speight, 2003). This awareness has been recognized in the emergence of the multicultural counselling competence movement. As stipulated by Crethar, Rivera, and Nash (2008), multicultural competence counselling is associated with the view that individuals are constantly affected by environmental systems and contexts. Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi and Bryant (2007) stipulate that multicultural counselling competence involves awareness of various worldview orientations, the histories of oppression experienced by marginalized populations and the cultural values that influence the collective experiences of marginalized groups. In the skills dimension, multicultural counselling competence involves the ability to commit to mental health interventions that address social inequalities and are relevant for marginalized groups (Constantine et al., 2007).

2.1.2 Early Developments of Multicultural Counselling Competencies

Sue, Arredondo and McDavies (1992) had a noteworthy influence on the early literature on multicultural counselling competencies. To respond to the American Psychological Association's need for a multicultural perspective in counselling, Sue et al. (1992) developed multicultural counselling competencies to provide the helping professionals with skills to address racial, ethnic and cultural matters. Furthermore, they felt it was important for the counselling profession to respond to (1) America's rapid growth in the diversity of the population, (2) the ineffectiveness of traditional training programs to address cultural matters and the (3) sociopolitical matters facing various groups. Sue et al. were the first to propose that multicultural work needs to establish distinct competencies (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009). In this regard, cross-cultural competence is identifiable through the counsellor's attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and skills. Specifically, this involves the counsellor's "awareness of personal values and biases, understanding the worldview of the "culturally different", and development of cultural intervention strategies and techniques"

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(Pieterse et al., 2009, p. 2). The authors note that it is important for counsellors to be aware of their cultural differences with the client as well the sociopolitical system of which they are both part. If the counsellors are not sensitive to such differences, they may find themselves engaging in inappropriate or ineffective interventions with diverse populations in society. It was therefore essential that a framework be designed to help professionals have a guide to address this issue.

The Conceptual Framework designed by Sue et al. (1992) was developed as a three by three matrix. The framework describes three characteristics of multicultural competence and these three characteristics consists of three dimensions to it. Professionals needed to possess the following characteristics: (1) counsellor awareness of own assumptions, values and biases, (2) understanding the worldview of culturally different clients, and (3) developing appropriate intervention strategies. The three dimensions that all these characteristics should incorporate consists of: (1) beliefs and attitudes, (2) knowledge and (3) skills.

The first characteristic, *counselor awareness of own assumptions,* stresses that counsellors become aware of how their cultural background and attitudes may influence psychological processes and are comfortable with the existence of difference. Counsellors must have knowledge about how their cultural heritage can personally and professionally affect their definitions and biases of normality and abnormality. Sue et al. (1992) point out that counsellors must have knowledge about how discrimination, racism oppression and stereotypes affect them personally and their work. Counsellors should continually increase their education skill to minimize cultural impediments.

The second characteristic, *understanding the worldview of culturally different clients*, highlights that counsellors are aware of their prejudices of culturally different clients and are willing to contrast these beliefs in nonjudgmental ways (Sue et al., 1992). Counsellors also possess knowledge/information about the particular group they are working with. This includes the sociopolitical influences on the lives of racial and ethnic minorities.

The third characteristic, *developing appropriate intervention and strategies and techniques,* involves the counsellors respecting client's spiritual beliefs and indigenous helping practices (Sue et al., 1992). They are aware of the potential bias of test assessments and administer such test with the client's culture in mind. Counsellors are also aware of institutional barriers that prevent minority groups from accessing mental health services. A lot of early work that has

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been done on multiculturalism has been influenced by the perspective and approach of Sue et al. (1992).

The first dimension, *beliefs and attitudes*, describes the ability of counsellors to move from being culturally unaware to being sensitive to their own culture and valuing difference. These counsellors are aware of how their background may influence psychological intervention and are therefore able to recognize their limitations. Counsellors who are culturally skilled are comfortable working across differences such as race and ethnicity.

Sue et al (1992) describe the second dimension, *knowledge*, as the counsellor's specific knowledge about how their cultural background affects their understanding of normality and abnormality within the counselling process. Furthermore, culturally skilled counsellors possess knowledge about how oppression, racism and inequality affect them personally and professionally. Culturally competent counsellors need to be knowledgeable about how societal oppression has impacted on their clients and how this may impact the counselling process.

The third dimension, *skills*, emphasizes the need for counsellors to seek out training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different people. Sue et al (1992) stipulate that counsellors need to actively seek consultation and reach out to more qualified individuals or resources whenever they recognize limits to their competence in helping clients.

2.2 A multicultural counselling perspective

2.2.1 The need for a multicultural emphasis

A Multicultural counselling perspective provides a conceptual framework that recognizes the diversity of a multicultural society (Corey & Corey, 2011). Furthermore, the multicultural perspective explores the unique dimensions of a person as well as the common themes that different people share (Corey & Corey, 2011). Essential for counsellors who adopt a multicultural perspective is the awareness of their own personal culture and awareness of the client's culture (Collins & Arthur, 2010). Cultural factors represent the group associations that is held by its members and includes gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientaion, religion, language, social class, sociopolitical background and formal and informal affiliations (Collins & Arthur, 2010: Corey & Corey, 2011). As a result of increased globalisation, many societies are characterised by multicultural populations and according to Tomlinson-Clarke (2000), this calls for the need for multicultural perspectives within the counselling profession.

Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, and Wise (1994) assert that if therapists are to be aware of how their race or ethicnicty influences their own interpersonal style, they would be better abled to recognise how their clients' ethnicity influences their behaviour, interactions and life objectives. Corey and Corey (2011) argue that effective counsellors can't afford to ignore cultural influences as culture controls our lives and defines our subjective reality. Furthermore, there is substantial evidence for the association between multicultural competence and positive therapeutic outcomes (Tummala–Narra, Singer, Li, Esposito , & Ash , 2012).

2.2.2 Research studies on multicultural counselling competence

Although there exists substantial research studies on multicultural counselling competence, most research studies in this area have a strong focus on using quantitative methods which do not allow for an in-depth exploration of the multicultural experiences faced by the therapists. The following research studies illustrates this point.

Constantine (2002) conducted a study to investigate the extent to which general counselling self-efficacy beliefs were predictive of self-reported multicultural counseling competence. The study participants consisted of 94 counsellor trainees whom were asked to participate in a survey. The design of the measurement tools consisted of three Likert- scale questionnaire to assess respondents' counselling self-efficacy and cross cultural competence. The findings suggested that general beliefs about the counsellor's ability to work effectively with clients are related to their beliefs about their ability to work with culturally diverse clients.

Holcomb-McCoy and Myers' (1999) study measured professional counsellors perceptions of their multicultural competence and the nature of their professional preparation in this area. 500 professional counsellors were recruited from the American Counselling Association to participate in a survey. A questionnaire was emailed to each participant assessing their multicultural counselling competence and the basis of their training in this area. The findings indicated that the counsellors perceived their multicultural counselling training as less than adequate, however, they perceived themselves as multiculturally competent. The researchers hypothesised that these findings may suggest that counsellors' multicultural competence evolves as a result of cross-cultural experience rather than through their training program.

Tummala–Narra, Singer, Li, Esposito , and Ash's (2012) study suggests that counsellors' self-perceived multicultural competence was associated with their perceptions of the effectiveness of their multicultural training. One hundred and ninety six participants participated in a survey

which assessed their self-perceived multiccultural competence and training preparations in this area. The findings were gathered through a Likert-scale questionnaire.

Dillon et al. (2016) conducted a study to investigate the association between counsellor's multicultural counselling competence (MCC) and client psychological well-being among 133 clients. The study required the participants (counsellors) to rate themselves on their perceived MCC and the clients working with the counsellors also rated their perception of their counsellor's MCC. The assessment tool that was used was The Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised which was characterised by a Likert-type scale. The findings suggested that according to both client and counsellor perspectives, some counsellors possessed higher MCC than others, however, counsellors' self-report of MCC did not relate with the clients' ratings of their counsellor. Findings also indicated that clients who generally perceived their counsellors as multiculturally competent, did not necessarily report improved psychological well-bring after working with their counsellor for four sessions.

A study by Arthur and Januszkowski (2001) investigated 181 counsellors' multicultural competencies in the domains of self-awareness, knowledge, skills, and the counselling relationship. The participants were emailed questionnaires that assessed various aspects of their knoweledge and skills regarding working with culturally diverse clients. The questionnaires include: The Multicultural Counseling Inventory scale, the Multicultural Counseling Awareness scale, the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge scale, the Multicultural Counseling Skills Scale and the Multicultural Counseling Relationship scale. The questionnaires used a Likert-scale design in order to gain quantitative findings. The results of the study indicated that Counsellors recognized the difficulties when working with cultural diverse clients and the value of having more education based on multicultural competencies.

It is essential that trainee counsellors are provided with sufficient training to have the competencies to address the needs of the diverse population. The studies above indicate that the discipline of psychology has placed a strong focus on expanding the knowledge of multicultural competence. Much research studies have predominantly focused on quantitative research approaches and these studies have had a significant contribution in indicating the issues regarding multicultural counselling competence. There is however, scarce qualitative research that explores counsellors' perspectives of their multicultural competence. There is a need for more indepth descriptive research on multicultural counselling competence to enhance knowledge in this area.

2.2.3 Multicultural training

Literature suggests that there is a need to infuse multiculturalism into all aspects of counselling training programs (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009: Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000: Malot, Paone, Maddux & Rothman, 2010). When it comes to addressing the importance of multicultural competence in the training of counsellors, Tomlinson-Clarke (2002) posits that there is a lack of information detailing the training philosophy, commitment to multicultural issues and the objectives of multicultural courses that are being taught. Pieterse (2009) also emphasises that there is no unfying framework that guides the training of multicultural competence. His research study to review the courses related to multucultural competence in counselling training programes indicated that though the content of the courses emphasised knowledge and awareness of multicultural competence, infrequent attention is given to skills training and counselling inerventions. Tomlinson-Clarke's (2002) study indicated that most students enrolled in the counselling training program felt there is a need for a more in depth training on multicultural competence. Malott et al. (2010) posits that the training of multicultural competency could benefit from utilizing cross-discipline strategies. The authors state that literature from professionals in sociology, political science and health sciences can provide trainees with a more systemic understanding of the complex environmental factors that affect client's lives.

2.3 Psychology in the South African context

2.3.1 Multicultural Counselling in the South African Context

Counselling psychology has been a recognised discipline in South Africa since 1974 (Leach & Akhurst, 2003). The importance of psychology incorporating culturally appropriate practices comes as no surprise given the diverse ethnic make-up of the country. Ngcobo and Edwards (2008) argue that psychologists working within the South African context have a challenge to gain competence in working with diverse groups so that they can develop the skills to cut across dimensions of diversity and be able to work with specific populations. The authors suggest that because of South Africa's apartheid legacy, which overemphasized racial and ethnic differences through oppressive legislations towards specific groups, recognising the importance of multicultural counselling serves to be useful practice in addressing the imbalances of the population. Johnston (2015) also argues that there is a strong need to extend knowledge on multicultural counselling within the South African context so that psychology practice develops relevant services to address the mental health needs of the diverse population

of the country. According to Edwards, (2015, p.38) "multicultural counselling recognizes the cultural context of all counselling and the importance of a balance between universal and particularistic aspects of culture". Ngcobo and Edwards (2008) stipulate that cultural counselling skills involves the proficiency with regards to the values, language and other core cultural values of the individual or group needing counselling.

Johnston (2015) argues that though there is substantial South African work on the implications of culture within counselling practice, much work on this is unpublished and discussions of cross-cultural exchanges are often reliant on American research. This has also been emphasized by Ngcobo and Edwards (2008) who stated that scant attention has been given regarding relevant theory and practice of multicultural practice within the South African context. The following two following research studies echo this view.

A quantitative South African study was done by Chitindingu (2012) to investigate psychology student's views on the inclusion of multicultural perspectives in their curriculum. Findings suggest that students felt that the psychology curriculum had not effectively addressed issues of diverse ethnic groups and the students considered themselves not competent enough to service the multicultural population of South Africa. Furthermore, evidence from Ngcobo and Edward's (2008) quantitative study suggests that most psychologists working in the South African context are not adequately prepared and do not have proper knowledge on how to deal with people who come from different racial, ethnic and/or home language groups where predominant values and attitudes may be different from theirs. The study aimed to investigate psychologists' self-perceived multicultural counselling competences through a brief self-administered questionnaire provided to the research participants. Though the researcher obtained significant information about the need and importance of multicultural counselling competence, the quantitative approach provided limited descriptive information about the topic. Much like international studies, in South Africa much research on multicultural counselling competence have been quantitative approaches and there is thus a lack of qualitative explorations of what counsellors think about this topic area.

2.3.2 Socio-political relevance of psychology for the South African context

Given the political history of South Africa with its legacy of colonialism, apartheid, inter-racial conflict and the consequences of it all leading to extreme wealth and social disparities, it's not surprising that the psychology profession has been challenged in terms of its legitimacy within this context (Eagle, 2005). Leach and Akhurst (2003) argue that exposure to psychology is

limited in many parts of the country's population. The authors stipulate that psychology is often perceived by Black Africans as a Western system which is designed to allow the continuation of oppressive philosophies and interventions which does not acknowledge the paramount issues of the larger community. The authors, therefore, argue that for changes to occur in the way psychology is currently viewed by the majority of the South African population, psychology must be seen as having relevance for the larger community. Kagee and Price (1995) argue that South Africa's apartheid era continues to affect the mental well-being of the majority of the country's population and this presents a challenge to psychologists to make their services as relevant as possible. The authors argue that psychology practice needs to acknowledge that most of individual psychological suffering is tied to social, economic and political roots of South Africa. Johnston, (2015) argues that the ongoing socio-economic inequalites contributes to the vicious cycle between mental health illness, poverty and social deprivation. To emphasise this point, Kagee and Price (1995) argue that living under impoverished conditions is likely to result in poor mental health as factors such as overcrowding, hunger and limited education expose people to greater everyday stresses which is likely to lead to a higher rate of psychological distress. However, the role of psychologists in addressing social change continues to be under-emphasied in South Africa. As pointed out by Pillay (2016), there is a limited relationship between the discipline of psychology and the current progressive politics that call for social change. There is a need for the training of psychologists to more adequately equip them to address the various needs of South Africans.

2.3.3 Multicultural training for psychology in South Africa

The multicultural population of South Africa presents a challenge to psychologists to be more sensitive to the diverse identities of their clients. It is crucial that the goals of training psychologists in South Africa facilitates learning that is geared towards the development of knowledge and skills in cultural counselling. Ngcobo and Edwards (2008) argue that knowledge and understanding of cultural differences between the counsellor and the client can reduce misuderstandings within the therapeutic space. Furthemore, the authors stipulate that multicultural competency enhances the accuracy of case formulation and minimizes diagnostic errors. Edwards (2015) stipulates that the training of multicultural counselling should include developing knowledge about the significance of the cultural context of counselling. This involves the counsellors understanding the value that culture plays within the counselling context . Furthermore, there needs to be improvement in the assessment and management of the cultural factors when it comes to illness and healing. Edwards (2015B) stipulates that effective multicultural counselling should have a focus on how cultural, spiritual, worldview,

values, language, political, economic and other contexts play a role within the counselling space.

Criticisms have been leveled at the elitism of psychology practice and it's limited psychological interventions in the current state of the country's material deprivation, rendering its existing training models as Western and biased towards other societies (Eagle, 2005). Ngobo and Edward (2008) stipulate that there is a need for the development of practice, education, training and research based on relavant principles of multicultual counselling for the South African context. The authors argue that such research should fully inculde the social, historical, economic and political context. Johnstone (2015) argues that psychologits working in South African are faced with the following challenges:

- Recruitment and training of clinicians prepared to work in contexts of diversity and disadvantage
- Develop relevant policy, curricula and practice
- address issues of inequality and injustice to assist with the process of reparation for individuals and communities

Edwards (2015) suggests that multicultural counselling competence training in South Africa should include equipping psychologists with the skills to prevent human rights abuses and discrimination. A study by Eagle, Haynes and Long (2007) observed that psychologist trainees in South Africa had challenging experiences while they were doing their community service training. They had difficulties working with clients from diverse and unfamiliar cultural backgrounds. The majority of these clients were poor or working class individuals who came from the extremes of socio-economic and political oppressions.

Much research on psychological practice in an African context highlights the importance of developing indigenous paradigms and being sensitive to cultural influences (Johnston, 2015). The apartheid era characterized by socio-economic inequalities and political discrimination still affects many of the lives of individuals and consequently impacts on their psychological well-being or mental health. Thus, psychologists attempting to understand issues of culture must recognize the social issues faced by individuals. In South Africa, little qualitative literature is available that explores psychologists' self-perceived competencies in addressing cultural and social action. As suggested by Johnston (2015), compared to other parts of the

world, there has been little literature pertaining to issues of multicultural experiences for psychologists practicing within the South African context.

2.4 Critiques for the current scope of practice

Critiques on the scope of practice of psychologists have been presented by multicultural counselling scholars (Vera & Speight, 2003). Vera and Speight (2003) posit that the psychology profession is frequently placed in a position of treating clients who represent the repercussions of the society's oppressive policies and inequalities. In this regard, psychologists are faced with the challenge of alleviating the individual's aftermath of failed oppressive policies as opposed to taking a proactive and preventative approach to address the socio-political oppressions that exist in society. Kennedy and Arthur (2014) argue that psychologists should expand their scope of practices through interventions that are connected to addressing the needs of the larger society. Furthermore, the authors stipulate that complex clients may require interventions that extend beyond office based work and may be approached through collaboratively working with other professionals for comprehensive approaches to mental health services. Constantine et al., (2007) argue that psychologists can take an active role in collaborating with community members, professionals from other disciplines and levels of government in an effort to promote social change. Vega and Speight (2003) stipulate that it is of vital that the psychology profession strives for interventions that end social conditions that maintain social inequalities as these factors are often associated with psychological distress and emotional problems.

2.5 Multicultural competence: Advancing a social justice agenda

As a profession, counselling psychology has traditionally relied on models that explain client's problems from an intrapsychic framework (Ratts, 2009). This means that counsellors are inclined to understand psychological distress and behaviour based on biological or internal influences. Vega and Speight (2003) argue that it is important for the field of psychology to move from a microlevel to macrolevel analysis when it seeks to address issues of multicultural competence. This would mean that psychological practice goes beyond individual interventions and acknowledge interventions that considers contextual factors such as oppression, discrimination and imbalances of society that impacts the wellbeing of people. In this regard, the authors further argue that a multicultural competence framework needs to add the element of social justice in order to effectively address the psychological concerns of all people. Research indicates that several experts from the counselling profession have realised

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the need to conisder a more contextual approach when working with clients, recognizing that individuals are belong to a larger ecosystem and are shaped by their contextual experience (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, and McCullough, 2016: Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). Counselling psychologists, therefore, need to understand, from a social justice perspective, the effects of political, social and economic forces on the mental health of individuals.

Ratts (2011) posits that there is strong connection between multiculturalism and social justice counselling. He highlights that both multicultural and social justice counselling perspectives acknolweledge the importance of alleviating the effects of oppression on indivdual's lives. In this regard, multicultural competence, when employing a social justice orientation, helps psychologists to think more broadly and contextually about psychological dysfunction and wellbeing (Vera & Speight, 2003). This way of thinking will help the discipline of psychology to not only work with intrapsychic models to understand human functioning but also adopt a critical approach which explains the effects of poverty, oppression and other social ills on individual's lives (Vera & Speight, 2003).

2.6 Social Justice

2.6.1 Defining social justice orientation

The term social justice has been increasingly used in counselling psychology literature, however, the term exists with multiple meanings referencing various kinds of practices. Social justice reflects the valuing of fairness in rights and treatment of marginalized individuals and groups (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi & Bryant, 2007). It is based on the idea that oppression and social inequality exists and has an impact on peoples' lives. There is no unified definition of social justice, nonetheless, counselling psychology generally agrees that "the goal of social justice action is to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunity to reach their personal, social, academic, and career potential, free from barriers in society" (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014, p.188). Kennedy and Arthur (2004) explained that the overall aim of social justice practices involves actions to minimize oppression and injustice with the purpose of promoting equality, accessibility and developmental opportunities for all members of society. Crethar & Winterowd (2011) pointed out that in the field of counselling psychology, the term social justice speaks to the process and a goal for counsellors who believe in developing a society in which all people receive equal opportunities to access resources and participate in policy and law development that affect their lives.

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Ultimately the social justice perspective reflects an understanding and framework that is orientated towards actions that result in a society that embodies harmony between the needs of individuals and the needs of the whole regardless of class, race, gender, sexuality, economic status or any other master statuses that people belong to or are identified by. The social justice paradigm is grounded in the idea that all people have the right to appropriate health care services, quality education and equal employment opportunities (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014).

2.6.2 Social Justice Counselling Paradigm

Counsellors who are driven towards having a society that is humane and just incorporate a social justice perspective when working with their clients (Paladino, Lewis, Ratts, & Topreck, 2011). It has been a longstanding concern for the profession of counselling to provide services that promote social environmental changes that foster healthy human development, particularly among those persons whom are adversely affected by social injustices (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). This concern has, however, been hampered by theories, paradigms and practices of counselling psychology that often focus soley on the individual without regard for environmental factors that may impacting on their mental health (Ratts, 2009). The traditional individualistic methods ignores the effects of social issues such as poverty, abuse and homelessness and subsequently blames individuals for not taking responsibility for their own lives. However as stipulated by Kennedy and Arthur (2014), this view is problematic as it assumes background contextual conditions are fair and place causation solely on personal choices (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014). This approach poses limited interventions for addressing the wellbeing of people. Thus, there is a pivotal need for counselling to include a social justice counselling paradigm that will effectively serve the needs of oppressed and marginalized individuals and/or groups.

Social justice counselling represents a multifaceted approach to mental health care in which counsellors make every effort to promote human development by addressing issues related to both individual and distrubutive justice (Crethar & Winterowd, 2011). Active involvement in advocacy, community outreach and public policy making are some of the examples of primary interventions that promote awareness to social justice issues among practicing counselling psychologists (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007). Crethar, Rivera, and Nash, (2008) stipulate that counselling professionals who work from a social justice framework apply principles of equity access, participation and harmony when assesseing the needs of clients in order to develop interventions. *Equity* is the fair distribution of resources, rights and

responsibilities of all members of a society. This implies that social justice counsellors are aware of the effects that inequalities have on clients and further direct their attention to the contextual situations that place the clients in unfair situations. For instance, this may involve a counsellor doing advocacy services for their client whom has had their human rights violated. *Access* involves the ability for clients to access services, resources, information and knowledge critical to self-determination and personal development (Crethar & Winterowd, 2011). This is an important principle for social justice counsellors because lack of access to knowledge and resources affects the welfare of diverse clients (Crethar et al., 2008). *Participation* refers to the right of every person in society to participate in and/or be consulted on and contribute to decisions that affect their lives. Counsellors can facilitate this by helping their clients through educating them about issues related to participatory rights and helping clients develop strategies for situations where they are affected by being denied participation, particularly in decisions and organizational processes that are implemented in the workplace/communities/schools. These counsellors also help clients through networking with other people and resources available in their communities that may be helpful to enhance the clients' sense of empowerment. *Harmony* is a principle which refers to societal balance. The term emphasizes that the needs of an individual should produce the best possible outcomes for the community as a whole (Crethar at al., 2008). Thus, an example of a counsellor operating from this perspective could be one whom is advocating for the implementation of policies and practices that are intended to result in greater equity for their clients' health and development.

The work of counselling from the social justice perspective also includes the empowerment of mariginalized individuals and family systems so that they can better stand for their needs (Crethar & Winterowd, 2011). This involves counsellors helping clients to acquire skills to secure support from relevant allies who are committed to confronting institutional barriers to their well-being. The empowerment process works to assist the client to develop new strenghts, knowledge and abilities that will help clients know how to access the right avenues without the assistance of a mental health practitioner or other similar service providers (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). Counellors assist clients by empowering them to develop skills to gain control over their lives within the constraints of their environment. This is done by increasing the person's understanding of the various forms of oppression that exist in society so that they are better able to reject the perceptions of inequality in society (Crethar et al., 2008).

In addition to helping individuals understand their lives in context and being equipped with the necessary skills to remove external barries that contibute to psychological stress, empowerment

strategies also involes counsellors implementing their skills as consultants, psychoeducators and organizational development agents (Ratts, 2011: Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008. Ultimately, social justice counselling encourages counsellors to intervene within the social system when they recognise institutional barriers negatively impacting on the well-being of clients (Ratts, 2009).

2.6.3 Social Justice As A Core Value of Counselling Psychology

Baluch, Pieterse and Bolden (2004) stipulate that for counselling psychology to grow as a profession, social justice is a core value that it should incorparate. The authors argued that the counselling psychology field needs to be committed to social change in order to become a vibrant powerful force. Corey and Corey (2011) suggests that counsellors must be aware of the ways oppression and discrimination operate in the lives of their client as this is part of ethical practice. Ratts (2009) also argues that there is a very important need for social justice to be an intergral part of the practitioner in the field of counselling psychology. Social justice advocacy is fuelled by forces such as the continued marginalization of those who live on the fringes of society (Ratts, 2009). A social justice perspective in counselling is an essential perspective because it acknowledges issues of power, privilege and oppression in peoples' lives (Ratts, 2009). Furthermore, the approach uses social advocacy and activism to challenge the inequitable social and political conditions that impede on individuals and communities. Crethar and Ratts (2008) argue that counsellors should incorporate a social justice perspective in their work because there is an imperative need to acknowledge that oppression exists and negatively impacts on the mental health of clients and communities.

Approaching interventions from this perspective there implies that counsellors should balance both individual counselling and advocacy in their work. Through social justice interventions counsellors can be powerful catalysts for societal change and the well-being of the larger society. Baluch et al., (2004) noted that counselling psychology must embrace and fully understands that individuals are located within an unjust system and that the field of psychology must be able to articulate how its practices contributes to the maintenance and perpetuation of unjust systems. There is, however, a growing awareness that counsellors are not adequately trained to be able to draw on the connection between oppression and mental health issues (Ratts, 2009).

2.6.4 Directions for social justice education for psychology

Although there are no formalized social justice training standards for counsellors, it remains an important element for psychologists as it ensures ethical and relevant practice. According to Kennedy and Arthur, (2014) training of counsellors should expose students to a more broad conceptualization of cultural competence and socioeconomic inqualities. The starting point when engaging in social justice orientation involves a focus on self-awareness. If counsellors are to incorporate social justice learning, they should start by being aware of their own assumptions and values, this includes their role of privilege in their own lives and how this influences their professional practices (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014: Burnes & Singh, 2010). Moreover, learning should be designed to connect students with social issues, awareness of oppression and social inequalities (Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy , 2010). Though learning about the social justice orientation is crucial in informing the role of psychologists, active appraoches are needed to train counsellors towards actions directed to adressing social justice issues.

Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, and Mason (2009) stipulate social justice education should include approaches that involve student placements in community agencies that emphasise social justice intervenyions. This approach is seen as a relevant strategy to guide trainees to obtain a more practical component into their learning. Constantine et al., (2007) suggests that training of counsellors should include legal, educational and public policy institutions as applied learning sites for the development of social justice competencies. To include more hands-on field experience in social justice training, Kennedy and Arthur (2014) also suggest that students should be involved in public policy and community projects. According to Contantine et al (2007), collaboration with legal entities or institutions may provide counsellors with increased ability to navigate governmental processes. Burnes and Singh, (2010) suggest that social justice training should involve giving the trainees an opportunity to learn to design, implement and evaluate workshops, outtreach projects and prevention programs. Leaders of social justice work emphasise a more comprehensive learning strategy to help trainee counsellor develop the necessary practical skills to become agents for social change.

Pieterse et al, (2009) conducted a study to investigate multicultural and diversity-related courses from counselling psychology programs. The purpose of the study was to provide information about current approaches in multicultural counselling competence and social

justice training. Psychology graduate prograns in the United States were reviewed to determine whether a course related to multiculturalism and/or social justice was offered. Fifty four course syllabi were gathered to analyse the content covered in the programs. Results suggested that most courses adhere to multicultural knowledge, however, results indicated that there is a need to more clearly outline social justice orientation.

A study conducted by Beer, Spanierman, Greene, and Todd (2012) suggested that counsellor trainees desired greater social justice training than they experienced in their programs. The study used a quantiative method to gather 260 participant to complete a web based survey assessing commitments to social justice. The Activism Orientation Scale was used to measure participant's susceptibility for general activist behavior.

A study by Odegard and Vereen, (2010) examining how counsellor educators' found the experience of integrating social justice constructs into their teaching process revealed that the educators felt that they did not have sufficient material on social justice counselling to train students. This qualitiative study consisted of four accredited counsellor educators whom were asked to give an indepth account of their experiences in integrating social justice content into their teaching methods.

One of the central themes that emerged from Collins, et al's, (2010) study on counsellors and practicum supervisors' reflection on their professional education preparation was that, to a large extent, their training programmes did not fully prepare them to meet the diverse needs of clients or to expand professional roles to address the contextual and systemic factors that shape and impact clients' lives or well-being. Furthermore, the participants reflected on how they feel there is a need for more applied experience and specific skills training on social justice advocacy. This study, conducted in Canada, collected the data through an online survey that requested participants to reflect on their views in response to prompts that questioned their education's preparation to help them to be competent in social justice and multicultural competencies. A total of seventy three particapants responded to the survey.

2.7 Connections between multicultural and social justice competencies

There is a strong connection between multicultural and social justice counselling. Together, both perspectives acknowledge the importance of diversity and recognize the effects of oppression on mental health (Ratts, 2011). In addition, both perspectives promote advocacy for marginalized populations and the valuing of cultural diversity. The heart of multicultural

practice is recognizing that the struggles of individuals are embedded in oppressive social, political and cultural influences and these struggles can't be resolved without changing the systems from which they come from (Goodman et al, 2004). Though the work on multicultural counselling competencies indicate that counsellors should address practices within institutions that affect a client's psychological well-being, it does not explicitly direct counsellors on how to advocate for social justice (Vega & Speight 2003). A combination of both multicultural and social justice competencies is therefore essential. As explained by Ratts (2011), multicultural counselling competencies are useful in that they help counsellors understand the role that oppression, bias and culture play in the client's lives. Conversely, social justice competencies allow for alternative means to put awareness of systemic barriers into community action. Oppression and discrimination is a major problem that affects the psychological (sometimes physical) well-being of women, gay people, people of colour and other marginalized groups. Vega and Speight (2003) note that the current understanding of multicultural counselling competencies might be viewed as apolitical as it does not direct professionals on how to become agents of social change, thus making the need for a balance of both multicultural and social justice competence.

Social justice is an essential element of multiculturalism. As suggested by Arredondo (1999), multicultural competence involves the counsellor being aware of their privileges and experiences that are related to social or historical oppression. Scant literature is available exploring both psychologists' perceived multicultural and social justice competencies. South Africa has one of the worst inequalities in the world (Watson, 2010), thus working as a psychologist in South Africa may be a complex experience that requires multicultural and social justice competencies. Therefore, there is a need for research that explores a combination of both multicultural and social justice competence of psychologists. As has been indicated by the literature, multicultural counselling and social justice competence is an important skill for counsellors. It is of primary importance that the field of psychology moves from the micro-level to a macro-level of analysis when addressing multicultural issues of clients (Vera & Speight, 2003). This movement would enable counsellors to go beyond individual interventions and be aware of how social ills contribute to the mental health of the diverse clients that they come across. Constantine et al (2007) point out that future counsellors should be trained in ways that assist them to develop competencies to intervene at broader levels so that they develop social justice competencies. Though many authors recognize the concerns

around social justice and advocacy for counsellors, it continues to be lacking or absent from most counsellor training programs (Steele, 2008).

2.8 Theoretical framework of current study

The overarching theoretical framework that informs the major ideas of this study is critical psychology. There is no one form of critical psychology, rather, critical psychology is characterized by multiple perspectives of psychology which bear resemblance to one another (Hook, et al., 2004). It is important to understand that critical psychology is more of an approach to the kind of knowledge and practice of psychology rather than one kind of theory with a set of concepts. One element that is common within the multiple perspectives of critical psychology is that it challenges the knowledge and practice of traditional psychology. As stipulated by Fox, Prilleltensky, and Austin (2009), critical psychology presents a range of approaches that challenge mainstream psychology. Mainstream psychology represents the psychology that is taught and practised by most researchers and practitioners in the field. Fox et al (2009, p.3) describes mainstream psychology as one that "is presented as a science whose researchers use objective methods to understand human behavior and whose practitioners help individuals cope with distress". Crirical pschololgy sees mainsteam psychology as possessing a narrow view of understanding human functioning and effective interventions towards promoting human welfare. Critical psychology believes that mainstream psychology too often ignores the multiple facets that promote human well-being which are associated with socio-political implications (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002).

Due to the different structural factors that influence people, such as social class, gender, and race, people enjoy different levels of well-being. This is a central concern for critical psychology scholars. As Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) posits, critical psychology aims to understand how cultural norms and systems of social regulation shape the experiences of peoples' lives. More precisely, critical psychology is concerned with critiquing oppressive uses of the discipline of psychology and enhancing forms of practice which have social equality as their goal (Hook, et al., 2004). As argued by Fox et al. (2009), mainstream psychology often over emphasises individualistic values which consequently hinders interventions that have a focus on the well being of the larger community and thus perpetuating unjust or oppressive institutions. Furthmore, the authors claim that because of mainstream psychology's individualistic approach, psychology distances itself from democracy participation and

distributive justice. Prilleltensky & Nelson (2002) stipulates that critical psychology acknowleges that interventions are affected politics.

Scholars from critical psychology posit that meanstream psychology research and practice has effectively isolated the individual from the social and political sphere (Hook, et al., 2004). As Hook et al (2004) argue, meanstream psychology has actively depoliticised our understanding of ourselves. By ignoring pressing political contexts of culture, economics and poverty, mainstream psychology hurts members of powerless or marginalized groups (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Doing psychology critically means moving towards interventions that acknowledges different levels of analysis and having a holistic understanding of psychological distress. Critical psychology wants to avoid mainstream psychology's tendency to overlook pressing sociopolitical circumstances in favour of prioritising purely psychological terms which suggests that individual's problems can be understood as an internal phenomenon, cut off from the social and political circumstances that give rise to it (Hook, et al., 2004). As argued by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002), to experience quality life, we require well-enough social and political conditions free from the human rights abuses and oppression. Critical psychology does not necessarily argue that there is a need for social change but rather what can be done to bring about that change.

This study will integrate a theoretical framework derived from ideas of multicultural and feminist counselling psychology. Feminist and multicultural perspectives to counselling emerged as a result of the dissatisfaction with the theories of traditional mainstream psychology (Goodman et al, 2004). Multicultural and Feminist writers argued that traditional theorists of psychology largely ignored how social oppression (e.g. racism, sexism) and discrimination contributes to the client's presenting problems (Goodman et al, 2004). The feminist and multicultural perspectives acknowledge the limitation of the traditional counselling psychology which has increasingly directed more time and energy in assessing what can be viewed as 'individual deficits' when helping people. By doing so, counsellors merely strive to help people develop strategies to cope with environmental stressors rather than engaging with their clients in facilitating environmental change efforts (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). Based on this understanding, feminist and multicultural counselling psychology chooses to move towards interventions that are targeted at social justice work (Goodman et al., 2004). As suggested by Crethar et al. (2008, p. 269) "not only do counsellors who operate from multicultural, feminist, and social justice counseling paradigms direct time and energy toward stimulating positive changes among the individual clients with whom they work, they also strive to intentionally

ameliorate social injustices that adversely affect the mental health of larger numbers of persons in oppressed and marginalized groups in contemporary society.".

Multicultural and feminist psychology approaches, therefore, share the view that clients belong in an environmental system which constantly shape their lived experiences. Secondly, these approaches emphasize that effective helping of a client involves being aware of the environmental context with which the client belongs to and how this affects their mental health (Crethar et al, 2008). The heart of feminist and multicultural psychology is the recognition that systems and structures (i.e. social, political, socio-economic and cultural etc) need to be changed to alleviate the source of individual suffering (Goodman et al, 2004).

Goodman et al (2004) discussed a set of principles that can help guide psychologists in social justice action. These principles were derived from some of the leading sources on multicultural counselling and feminist therapy. The principles will be used in the current study as a frame of reference to understanding psychologists' actions towards social justice work. The first principle is called *Ongoing Self-evaluation.* This principle emphasizes that for psychologist to work with a client without influences of bias, discrimination or prejudice, they should continually engage in critical self-assessment. This assessment will make the psychologist become aware of how their cultural background may potentially influence their understanding of the presenting client who comes from an unfamiliar cultural group. *Sharing Power* is the second principle and is about the psychologist and clients establishing a collaborative relationship to work towards solving problems. Psychologists should not establish themselves as expert that will remove social injustice, however, they should allow individuals and community members to have some ownership and self-efficacy to make change. The third principle is *Giving Voice.* This principle involves therapist allowing clients to tell their problems from their own cultural context and belief system and then helping clients amplify these concerns. Psychologists should engage with individuals and communities by allowing them to voice their concerns in the way they experience it. The psychologist's task would be to make their needs, wishes, and visions heard by significant others (in position to facilitate change). The fourth principle is *Consciousness Raising and* this principle involves the psychologist raising the marginalized groups awareness about the extent to which their problems are rooted into larger historical, social and political forces. This principle is feasible to community groups rather than individual counselling as it is focused on community based social action. The fifth principle is *Focus on Strengths* which emphasizes helping clients identify their own internal sources of strength (skills) to solve their problems of racism,

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discrimination and oppression. The last principle *Leaving Clients with Tools* is about the psychologist working collaboratively with group/community members to provide them with the necessary tools/skills to affect social change. These tools/skills are to sustain the community for an extended period, post collaboration.

Steele (2008) also developed The Liberation Model to describe the principles that can be used by counselling educators to prepare counselling students to advocate for social justice when working with clients from marginalized groups. The model consists of four phases that educators should follow collaboratively with their students. The first phase involves the educator educating the students about social justice advocacy in counselling. It includes evaluating current dominant cultural and political ideas of the society to recognize its influences on peoples' thoughts and social policies. The second phase involves examining explicit and implicit cultural and political ideology of counselling. The aim of the second phase is to deconstruct or remove the dominant counselling literature or models that work with or against the cultural and political ideas discussed in phase one. The third phase is about the multidisciplinary study of the themes that emerged from phases one and two. It involves the students finding out from multidisciplinary approaches what initiates and perpetuates social injustice issues of clients. The fourth phase involves a plan of action to advocate for social justice. The plan to address the problem is about including all the stakeholders (learned through the third phase) involved in the client's relevant issue.

2.9 Summary of literature review

This literature review chapter has attempted to indicate the importance of multicultural counselling competence for counsellors. As has been shown, culture incorporates a range of multiple identities that shape the lived experiences of individuals. These identities include ethnicity, race, gender, language, class and socioeconomic status. Thus, counsellors need to equip themselves with multicultural competence skills to be able to address the needs of the diverse population. Much existing research on counsellors' multicultural counselling competence has been predominantly quantitative and a need for a more qualitative exploration is essential. These quantitative approaches have been a dominant trend for both international and South African studies. A review of South African literature highlights mainstream psychology's failure to be culturally relevant for the South African context. It became apparent that for psychology to be relevant in South Africa, practice needs to have a more political orientation and acknowledge the needs of the larger community. This calls for counsellors to

incorporate a social justice framework into their work. This literature review has shown that effective multicultural counselling competence should incorporate a social justice perspective. A social justice orientation to counselling calls for counsellors to address oppression, discrimination, and inequalities that exist in societies to enhance wellbeing for individuals and marginalized groups.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide the rationale for the research design that was selected for this study. The sample and sampling methods will be presented. The data collection process will be explained as will the methods used to analyse this data. Ethical considerations that emerged during the research process will be reported.

3.1 Type of design

The study adopts a qualitative research design and an interpretivist paradigm. A qualitative research design is a broad umbrella term for a research method that aims to describe and explain the meaning of peoples' experiences and social contexts without using statistical procedures (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, Davidson, 2002). Qualitative approaches give rich reports that aim at exploring and understanding the meaning people assign to a social or human problem (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The qualitative research design was used in the study to explore psychologists' views and experiences of multicultural and social justice issues in the counselling space. The qualitative design was favoured because it allowed the researcher to gather a more in-depth inquiry of psychologists' perceptions of their ability to work through multicultural and social justice related issues.

Researchers using a qualitative method ask broad research questions in order to explore and interpret a specific social context (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Qualitative data is generally presented in everyday language, using participants' own words to describe a phenomenon or psychological event (Ponterotto, 2005). Unlike quantitative methods that focus on strict quantification of data and on careful control of empirical variables, this qualitative approach provided the researcher with a more holistic view of psychologists' perceptions of their competence regarding multicultural and social justice issues.

The qualitative design allowed for the research to be approached with flexibility that made it possible for valuable information to emerge spontaneously during the research process. As suggested by Matveev (2002), qualitative research is more concerned with emerging themes and idiographic descriptions than with specific hypotheses and rigid frameworks. Qualitative research focuses on obtaining a naturalistic feel of the world which can't be accessed through numerical data and statistical analysis that is used for quantitative research (Matveev, 2002). The qualitative design was favoured as it was in keeping with the research aims of the study which was to explore psychologists' views on multicultural and social justice competence

through obtaining in-depth information as opposed to the quantitative methods that have been used in past studies.

3.1.1 Research Paradigm

The study adopted an interpretivist paradigm. The assumptions of the interpretivist approach are that social reality is seen by multiple people whom interpret events differently and therefore leaving multiple perspectives on one incident (Mack, 2010). The main principle of the interpretivist approach is that research must be observed through the direct experiences of individuals rather than through objective methods (Mack, 2010). This paradigm was favoured as the aim of the study was to describe and interpret psychologists' subjective perceptions of their multicultural and social justice competence. Interpretivists do not regard the world as "out there" but believe that reality is socially constructed by human beings (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Using this framework as a guide, the research started with an open-ended question from which meaning from all participants could be interpreted. The open-ended question allowed for varied subjective responses to emerge.

An interpretivist approach requires the researcher to gain detailed, reflective, first-person accounts of the experiences of the participants (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). This approach was suitable for this of study as the researcher was aiming to get the participants' reflective accounts of their experiences as mental health professionals. An interpretivist approach values the idea of gathering multiple viewpoints of individuals from different groups in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being study (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In this regard, the researcher recruited participants from varied cultural backgrounds in order to get different accounts of each participant's experience of working through race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic factors and other cross-cultural issues during counselling. The interpretivist approach enabled me to elicit participants' detailed and rich descriptions of their perceptions of multiculturalism and social justice.

3.2 Participants and sampling method

Fossey, Harvery, McDermott and Davidson (2002) stipulate that qualitative sampling is concerned with identifying the appropriate participants whom can best inform the focus of the study. In this regard, the participants provide rich descriptive information of the phenomenon being studied. The study therefore employed what is referred to as purposive sampling method. This kind of sampling method is used to identify particular types of respondents for in-depth

exploration to gain a deeper understanding about the research (Neuman, 2013). This sampling strategy requires the researcher to get specific "information key" participants that are able to provide greater insight into the research question (Devers & Frankel, 2000). More precisely, purposive sampling selects participants with a specific purpose in mind. The sample of this study is purposive because it is composed of only qualified psychologists whom are registered with the HPCSA and have been practicing for at least one year. Psychologists who have been practicing for at least one year were selected because their experience would be useful in helping them reflect on their experiences regarding the research topic

The participants were recruited through recommendation based on their interest in the topic area. In this regard, purposive sampling also used a snowball sampling strategy. Snowball sampling refers to a sample recruited through referrals made by people who share or know of others that hold characteristics of the research interest (Biernacki, Waldorf, 1981). This creates what is known as the "snowball effect". My supervisor recommended one psychologist of whom she knew would be suitable for the study. I then asked the participant to inform me of other psychologists that they knew would provide relevant insight into this research topic. This snowballing strategy continued until I gathered all participants.

The study consisted of a total of four psychologists, two females and two males. Two psychologists were practicing at a government hospital in KZN and the other two participants were practicing at a University situated in KZN as well. All four participants were representative of the four different racial identities in South Africa which consisted of: Black, Coloured, Indian and White. The reason behind the decision to recruit psychologists from all racial categories within South Africa was two-fold. Firstly, it was in keeping with South Africa's Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 which aims to ensure the "equitable representation of people from designated groups in all occupation categories and levels in the workforce" (Thomas, 2002, p.237). In this regard, it was useful for the study to represent psychologist employees from different racial groups. Secondly, the representation of the different racial categories reflect the racialized history of South Africa. As a result, the selection of participants representing different racial categories was favoured as this would influence their responses or perspectives regarding cross-cultural and social justice issues.

3.2.1 Sample description

The first participant that was interviewed is Karen (pseudonym). She is a 30 year old white female psychologist. She has been practicing as a qualified psychologist for three years.

Currently she is employed as a counsellor at a university in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) working with young students. She has been working at this site for three years. The second participant goes by the name of Melanie (pseudonym). Melanie is a 29 year old female psychologist whom identifies as coloured. She is also employed as a counsellor in a university where she has been working for one year and five months providing her services to students. She has been practicing as a qualified psychologist for two years. The third participant, Theo (pseudonym), is a 33 year old male psychologist. Theo identifies as Indian. Currently he is employed at a government Hospital in KZN and has been providing his services there for a period of seven years. Theo has been practicing as a qualified psychologist for seven years. The last participant participating in the study is Xolani (pseudonym). Xolani is a 27 year old male black psychologist. He has been practicing as a qualified psychologist for four years. Xolani is also currently employed at a government hospital in KNZ and had been working for three years at this hospital. Table 1 below illustrates the breakdown of the sample

Table 1. Sample demographics

Participant	Role	Sex	Race	Age	Experience
Karen (pseudonym)	Counselling Psychologist	Female	White	30	3 years
Melanie (pseudonym)	Counselling Psychologist	Female	Coloured	29	2 years
Theo (pseudonym)	Clinical Psychologist	Male	Indian	33	7 years
Xolani (pseudonym)	Clinical Psychologist	Male	Black	27	4 years

3.3 Data collection method and instruments

Individual interviews were used for data collection. Interviews imply that the participants provide the researcher with information through verbal interaction (Law et al., 1998). This kind of data collection also allows the researcher to get more than verbal responses from the participants because cues that are observed through their body language or non-verbal responses can provide more understanding about the research topic. This was considered as an important factor in the study because of the potential uncomfortable themes that might emerge during the discussion. The purpose of interviews is to explore experiences, beliefs, views and/or motivations of a specific topic (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, Chadwick, 2008).

The interview questions were initially piloted with two respondents in order to help myself and my supervisor ensure that our questions were clear and evoked the relevant information. Piloting is essential in any research as it allows the research team to see if the questions are understandable and can be answered (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, Chadwich, 2008). In addition, it gave me the opportunity to make relevant changes to the interview questions before I used them for the main interview. After analysing the transcribed pilot interview with my supervisor, we noticed that the participant found it challenging to open up on some topics of discussion as they evoked some anxieties regarding their identities. We then decided that it would be useful to interview each participant twice in order to establish some level of trust/rapport so that their defenses may lessen as they answered the questions. The repeat interview also allowed the participants to reflect on what they had discussed and to add to it in the second, follow up interview. It is also worth noting that the decision to interview each participant twice was to allow me to go back and get information that I had missed in the first interview. This was a useful strategy for me as a novice interviewer because it allowed me the freedom to interview the participants without worrying too much about the possibility of missing important information within a single interview.

The type of interview style that was employed to collect the data was a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are characterised by the researcher having key questions that help direct the areas to be explored, however, the nature of the questions allow the researcher and participant to diverge with the purpose of giving more detailed responses (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, Chadwich 2008). This method was useful as it allowed for flexibility during the discussions which gave room for discovery and elaboration. Themes that emerged in earlier interviews were further explored in the second follow up interviews in order to obtain in depth information from the respondents. At the beginning of the second interview the participants were asked if they had any thoughts on the previous interview that they would like to share.

The interviews were scheduled on eight different days. Three psychologists had their interviews conducted at their workplace where they do consultations with their clients. Only one participant decided that the interviews be conducted just outside their consultation room as the premises of his workplace were closed during our scheduled appointment. The venues in which the interviews were conducted were selected based on the participants' convenience.

3.4 Data analysis

The data gathered for the study was analysed using thematic analysis. In broad terms, thematic analysis is a method of analysing rich data through a search for themes that emerge as being important for the phenomenon being studied (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The emerging themes therefore become the categories of analysis. The study used Braun and Clarke's (2006) version of interpretive thematic data analysis. The authors define a theme as being a pattern of responses within the data set and it captures the something that is regarded is important to the research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) provide guidelines that presents the six phases for conducting interpretive thematic analysis which was used in this study. The six phase guidelines are: familiarising yourself with the data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, definition and naming of themes and the last is producing the report.

The first phase which is becoming familiar with the data, was a constant procedure throughout the research study. This included listening to the audio recordings repeatedly to get a feel of the data obtained. In addition, the audio recording of each interview was transcribed word for word. Listening to the audio and reading the transcription was an important part of this step as it helped me get immersed into the depth and breadth of the data content. As suggested by Braun and Clarke, 2006) transcribing verbal content is essential as it helps the researcher develop a far more thorough understanding of the data. Furthermore, the authors argue that the process of transcribing, while it may seem time-consuming, it is an excellent way for the researcher to get familiar with their data.

The second phase, initial coding, the researcher returned to the data and coded responses of the participants. This process involves identifying a feature of the data that appears interesting to the researcher, however, the researcher does not use this as a form if interpretive analysis yet as the coded data only forms the most basic raw data/information which will be later assessed in greater detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coding was done manually. The researcher identified aspects in the data that formed the basis of repeated patterns across the data set. Repeated patterns were notified by highlighting the texts and writing notes.

When the coding was complete, the third phase of searching and actively creating themes followed. This phase involved sorting out the codes into potential themes. More specifically, in this phase the researcher analyses the codes in more in greater detail in order to combine the different codes to form an overarching theme.

The fourth phase, reviewing themes, entails the process of refining the tentative themes. This phase involves decreasing the number of initially created themes as it becomes evident that some of the candidate themes are not really themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This may be due to several reasons, for example, if there is not enough data to support the theme created, other themes may combine to make a single them. Essential to creating valid themes in this study involved the consideration of the theoretical approach used for the research. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), what accounts as an accurate representation of a theme depends on the theoretical and analytic approach of the study.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the fifth phase involves defining and naming themes. At this point, the themes that would be presented for analysis were further refined and defined. This phase involves capturing the essence of each theme and identifying the overall meaning of themes. In this phase, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of each theme. Essential in this step was ensuring that each theme tells an important story about the data collected. Furthermore, the themes that are presented in this step provide meaningful information regarding the study's research questions and aims.

The last phase is producing the report of the themes. This phase involved providing appropriate evidence of the themes within the data with illustrations of data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Essential during this process is that the extracts are embedded within an analytic narrative which provides detailed information about the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) stipulate that in a thematic analysis, the write up must tell the complicated story of the data in a way that convinces the reader of the validity and merit of the analysis.

3.5 Rigor and trustworthiness

To ensure rigor and trustworthiness of the data collected for this research, the researcher aimed to satisfy the four criteria of trustworthiness for qualitative research. These include, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Shenton (2004) describes credibility as methods used in qualitative research to promote confidence that the researcher has accurately presented the phenomenon under scrutiny (in this study, multicultural and social justice competence). One of the ways to ensure that the respondents accurately presented the phenomenon being studied, was to initially pilot and revisit the interview guide in order to obtain feedback from different individuals about whether

they found the research questions clear and understandable. In addition, interviewing each participant twice helped to ensure that the researcher covered all aspects of the respondents' understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny. As stipulated by Shenton (2004), credibility can be ensured through continuous questioning and probes so that the researcher returns to matters previously raised by an informant. This strategy can help the researcher detect contradictions or any falsehood and therefore the researcher may decide to discard the suspect data (Shenton, 2004).

To provide transferability, the researcher should provide sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork site to enable the reader to apply the findings in similar contexts (Shenton, 2004). Transferability is difficult to ensure in a qualitative study as these kind of studies generally work with a small sample which makes it challenging to generalise the findings in a larger and broader context (Shenton, 2004: Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016). Though the study obtained rich information regarding the phenomenon being studied, there may be limitations as the study was only done with a small sample size. There is, however, past literature that shows similar findings related to this current study (i.e. Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, and McCullough, 2016: Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008) in other contexts which in some regard provides an element of transferability (Shenton, 2004)

Dependability involves the researcher ensuring stability of their findings. This could include for example, the researcher providing a detailed report of the research process so that it may be repeated by future researchers to gain the same results (Shenton, 2004). The current study provides detailed step by step procedure to how the data was obtained and analysed. The process of sampling methods was also reported in rich detail so to help the reader get a clear understanding of the study design.

Confirmability involves the researcher taking steps to ensure that findings emerged from data collection and not their own perceptions/bias (Shenton, 2004). Here, the researcher must ensure that the data obtained are the results of the experiences and ideas of the informants as opposed to the preferences or the researcher's bias (Shenton, 2004). Essential in attempting to remain objective and neutral is for the researcher to provide documentation from different sources for every interpretation to ensure that the data supports the researcher's analysis of the findings (Kriefting, 1991). I was constantly critically aware of the need to reflect on my own views throughout the research process and make sure they don't impact my interpretation of

the research findings. Throughout this study, it was essential for the researcher to match the interpretation of the data with the relevant theory and different sources from literature. It was also essential that I worked close with my supervisor when reflecting on the data obtained in order to minimise the potential of my own bias interpretation.

Reflexivity

My experience as a trainee psychologist drove me to do this research. Working with diverse clients and finding it challenging to address some of their critical concerns inspired me to explore the current teachings and relevance of psychology within the South African context. Thus, it was important for me to consistently reflect on my own contributions as a researcher during the study as I was researching a phenomenon that I am closely connected to. Reflexivity is defined by Holliday (2002, p. 146) as "the way in which researchers come to terms with and indeed capitalize on the complexities of their presence with the research setting…". I believe that being a trainee psychologist helped during the data collection/interview process. I was able to understand the participants' struggles better as I shared some of their experiences. I worked closely with my supervisor to understand some of the theoretical underpinnings that framed my research as I was not well accustomed to them due to my mainstream psychology training. Thus, earlier in the data collection, I often struggled to probe for the relevant information because of the fact that I was embedded in the mainstream approach to psychology myself.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The nature of a qualitative research makes the researcher interact more personally with the participants and therefore entering their 'private world'. It therefore becomes important for the researcher to consider ethical issues that may araise during the research process. Neuman (2013) stipulates that "being ethical requires that we balance the value of advancing knowledge against the value of noninterference in the lives of other people" (p.147). In broad terms, research ethics refers to the complex set of values and standards that help organize and regulate scientific activity (Madushani, 2016). As argued by Madushani (2016), social science investigates complex social problems and therefore, it is important that the field concerns itself with "moral integrity" to ensure that the research process as well as the data obtained is "trustworthy" and valid. For this current study, before the data was collected, ethical clearance was applied for and granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee. The researcher began each interview with a brief outline of the study followed by presenting an information sheet which indicated the objectives of the

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study and the nature of the participants' involvement. In the following section aspects of ethical consideration will be further discussed. These aspects include confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent and the last discussion will be on beneficence and no harm.

3.6.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

The principle of confidentiality generally describes the ethical protection for those who are being studied. Wiles, Crow, Health and Charles, (2008) describe the notion of confidentiality as the respect for autonomy for the participants through ensuring that their identifiable information will not be disclosed during the research process without their permission. More specifically, confidentiality means that the researchers never release the information collected in any way that permits linking specific individuals to it (Neuman, 2013). The concept of confidentiality is closely associated with anonymity. Wiles et al., (2008) suggests that anonymity is one way in which the notion of confidentiality is operationalised. Anonymity is the ethical protection that ensures the participants' identity is protected, nameless or remains unknown (Nueman, 2013). Before each interview was conducted, the participants were informed of the confidential considerations of the study. The information sheet that the participants were asked to read before the beginning of the interview reported that all information gathered from the study would remain confidential. Participants were also asked to provide a pseudonym to be used for the study. This was done to ensure the participants that their identity would be anonymous and that the information they provided for the study could not be traced back to them.

3.6.2 Informed and voluntary consent

Nueman (2013) notes that a fundamental ethical principle is to never force anyone into participating in the study. An informed consent was given to the participants before the interview proceeded. The informed consent outlined the research topic and explained what being expected from the participants' involvement in the study. As argued by Nueman (2013), obtaining permission from the individual is not enough as people need to be made aware about what they are being asked to participate in. Participants were informed that their participation in the research project was entirely voluntary. Furthermore, the participants were informed that they could cease their participation at any point during the interview without any negative consequences. The importance of voluntary consent was acknowledged and well received by the participants.

3.6.3 Beneficence and no harm

The principle of beneficence requires the researcher to ensure the well-being of participant and to maximise any possible benefits of research study (Greaney, et al., 2012). Closely linked with the concept of beneficence and is non-maleficence which refers to the responsibility to protect participants from harm (Greaney, et al., 2012). During the research process, no ethical dilemmas arose. All participants were given the freedom to choose a venue that was safe and comfortable for them to have the interview conducted. No monetary incentives were offered for their participation in the study, however, each participant was thanked for their contribution and were assured of the summary of the research findings. All the data collected through the interview process will be kept safe by my supervisor and stored for a period of five years purely for research purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter four will focus on the various themes that emerged from an analysis of the data gathered during the interviews. These themes will provide in-depth insight into the participants' diverse perspectives on the issue of multicultural and social justice work in their work and practicing psychologists. The first part of the analysis will present the themes emerging around multicultural competency and the second part of analysis will present themes related to social justice competency. The themes will present participants' experiences when facing cases that require multicultural and social justice competencies. Each theme will be discussed and quotations from the participants will be provided to support the various interpretations of the research findings. Where relevant, links will be made between the findings of this study and those reported in existing literature. As stipulated in chapter three, all participants were provided with pseudonyms to ensure that their anonymity and confidentiality is assured. Participants are, therefore, referred to using their chosen pseudonyms when they are directly quoted.

Participant pseudonyms: Karen, Melanie, Xolani and Theo

4.0 Multicultural Counselling

4.1 Challenges working in a context of cultural diversity

As established in chapter two, cultural factors represent the group associations that is held by its members and includes gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, language, social class, sociopolitical background and formal and informal affiliations (Collins & Arthur, 2010: Corey & Corey, 2011). Psychologists working within South Africa face complex multicultural issues which impact on their day to day practice. Ngcobo and Edwards (2008) argue that it is essential that psychologists working within the South African context have the competence to work across the multiple dimensions of cultural diversities within different population groups. Furthermore, the authors emphasise that the sociopolitical imbalances of the South African population caused by South Africa's apartheid legacy calls for the importance of multicultural counselling to address the imbalances of the population. Psychological practice developed to serve the mental health needs of the diverse populations of the country is, therefore, important (Johnston, 2015). The participants in this study stated that they found it difficult to work through multicultural dynamics with their clients that involved issues such as race, economic class and language.

4.1.1 Race

The theme of race was pervasive amongst the participants as they reflected on the dynamics that take place when there are cultural differences between the psychologist and the client. The participants believed that race impacted on the process of counselling. More specifically, the participants expressed that racial differences between themselves and their clients influenced how they interacted during counselling. It became apparent that the challenging aspect of racial differences was from the client's perspective more than the psychologist. The participants believed that different racial identities impacted their client's perceptions of whether the counselling journey with their psychologist would be successful or not. To emphasise this viewpoint, Xolani argues that "…part of the introductory phase of the intervention is just that. It's not explicit but it is the person checking 'is this the person that I can actually engage with'". Xolani argues that the introductory phase of intervention involves clients establishing whether they can develop a relationship with a psychologist whom is of a different racial.

> *"...and so a part of the introductory phase of the intervention is just that. It's not explicit but it is the person checking 'is this the person that I can actually engage with'".*

The following extracts illustrate participants' experiences of working through racial differences with clients.

> Melanie "*there is one particular student that came to mind - and I mean there are a lot of other complications with that client - but one of the things that she felt was that we could not relate because we were not in the same race*"

> Karen "*So maybe I can give you an example of a client. I had a client a couple of weeks ago who actually said, "I find it very hard to work with you, just to let you know, I am racist and I find it very hard to open up to a white person". So I suppose there are instances where race does play a role and maybe sometimes I may have clients sitting here maybe feeling a similar thing but aren't brave enough like that student wants to articulate it.*"

Melanie echoes Xolani's comment when she says her client felt that they could not relate because of their racial differences. Karen also touches on the relationship aspects which emerge as a result of racial differences within the counselling context. The responses of the participants are showing that they view counselling across racial differences as a struggle for the client

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rather than themselves. They also believe it impacts on their clients perceptions of whether they could develop a relationship with them.

There was a sense of acknowledgment from the participants that their racial identity carried with it expectations and assumptions about whom they are. According to the participants, based on their racial identity, clients have preconceived ideas about whether they could help them and this impacted the process of communication and therapeutic alliance. As expressed by Melanie

> *"I think every client that comes in will see it, and every client that comes in will immediately make a judgment or an assumption based on what they see, you know. If you had my colleague who's Black and I, standing next to each other they already have an idea in their mind of that's going to happen"*.

Xolani also noted the same perception claiming that he is certain the black patients speak to him differently than they would speak to someone else whom is of a different race. It was evident, according to the participants, that clients perceived their psychologist's racial identity as an indication of whether the psychologists could understand their concerns accurately.

Racial attitudes remains a recurrent source of conflict between race groups in South Africa, hence the challenging experiences that psychologists and clients experience when working across racial differences. Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown (2011, p.27) stipulates that "people feel troubled by race". The authors note that race trouble emerges when the history of racism affects the present through unsettling social order within the society. Due to South Africa's legacy of apartheid, race has longstanding sociopolitical implications within society, thus making explicit distinctions in social class amongst groups. As Durrheim, Trendoux, Tropp, Clack, and Eaton (2010) contend, the new history of South Africa is one of ongoing racial inequality and discimination. South Africa's history of apartheid left with it a widespread race-based poverty, exclusion and inequality in today's new South African population (Durrheim, 2010). It's not surprising that the participants reflected on the complexities that emerge in the counselling space as result of racial differences.

Race differences is an unavoidable topic given the current context of post-apartheid South Africa where race relations are still fragile. South Africa's long history of racial conflict, exploitation and oppression continues to unsettle the societies. However, mainstream psychology has continued to overlook the impact that cultural, historical and political contexts

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have on individuals (Hook, et al., 2004). As suggested by Glover, Dudgeon and Huynes "Psychology has underlying assumptions of 'truth' based on collecting facts about human nature, without regard for cultural, historical and political contexts… the image of humankind is a homogenised one, with the difference between peoples as individuals and groups regarded as peripheral" (2005, p. 342). Thus, though psychologists may be aware of issues like race due to the context in which they work in, the irony is that the discipline, because of its Eurocentric emphasis, largely overlooks the importance of race in their training because it is assumed to be peripheral. The issue of race is often not engaged with at a socio-political level or as something shaped by the consequences of the past political history (i.e. apartheid). Thus, psychologists in the current context may experience challenges regarding addressing issues embedded within race. Within the current study, the participants perceived the issue of racial differences as complex to manage, however, through good therapeutic alliance, some of the barriers that exist between themselves and the client may be overcome.

4.1.2 Language barrier

Some participants specified that language differences impacts how they work with clients. Language differences were described as providing practical challenges for conducting counselling because of the obvious limitation in communication. As acknowledged by Theo *"It's the language. Like when some patients can't speak English… so there's a practical difficulty"*. What's interesting here is how the participant says his client can't speak English, rather than that he is not able to speak an African language. This highlights how being able to speak English is seen as essential, rather than the importance of psychologists learning to speak the language of the majority of people in the context in which they work.

Melanie also acknowledges her experiences of difficulties working through language barriers. She discusses:

> *"English may not be their first language and for the most part, there are Black students in the KZN region right. So there have been a lot of, kind of, difficulties lately, especially with us counsellors who are not Black""*

As mentioned by Theo, Melanie also reiterates the viewpoint that there are some difficulties that she experiences when her clients are not able to speak English. Yet again highlighting the importance of clients knowing the English language. In the second part of her quote she acknowledges the challenge of counsellors not knowing languages. Interestingly she focuses

on race rather than language through her statement 'us counsellors who are not black'. This suggests that she may be viewing a particular language as belonging to people of a particular race group and thus overlooks the fact that people can learn languages. Her response reflects a reality in our country that most people who are not Black African do not learn to speak an African language

The participants also acknowledged the power of language and how essential it is in the process of healing. According to the participants, language is linked to culture and how clients interpret their worldview. According to the participants, knowing the client's home language gives the psychologists more depth in understanding the client's presenting case. As stipulated by Ngcobo and Edwards (2008), language constitutes individual's reality and constructs our understanding of the world and ourselves. The following extracts illustrates participants' views on the importance of language:

> Theo: *But in general, I feel language is absolutely pivotal because we in a job where language is central… It's so important that we know language because it is linked to culture. I feel like if people do understand other languages, they also getting a glimpse into other peoples' culture. Language and culture go together. So I think it's important that even if people speak English people still have some sense of the language because there are hidden meanings, idioms and metaphors that language holds*

> Melanie: *Language is part of your identity overall. So it's something we need to consider as important. We need to recognise there is a context within a language*

Though earlier Theo emphasised that some clients can't speak English, he does acknowledge here how important it is for therapists to learn about languages. Melanie also emphasises this. This raises the question of whether psychology training programmes highlight the importance of learning indigenous language.

The issue of language barriers for mental health practitioners in South Africa is something that is common and presents a major challenge for the delivery of optimal health care. Deumert (2010) stipulates that many mental health care practitioners in South Africa face language barrier problems with their clients. The author posits that challenges in this aspects are common due to the fact that many clinicians speak either one or two languages within a context where there are eleven official languages spoken by the South African population. This poses a significant challenge as language is a very important aspect of an individual's culture. Ngcobo

and Edwards (2008) notes that language is crucial in helping us understand our social life. Furthermore, language guides us in structuring and organising our world within its specific contexts. Thus, the authors argue that direct translation of language is difficult to achieve as language is fundamentally metaphorical rather than referential. However, due to the diversity of the South African contexts, there has been several debates regarding the use of interpreters for mental health services (i.e. Smith, Swartz, Kilian, and Chiliza, 2013: Kilian, Swartz, and Joska, 2010)

4.1.3 Social Class

The participants expressed that their socioeconomic status impacts the way that clients view them. The high imbalances of South Africa's socioeconomic status means that the majority of the population experience issues of inequality and material deprivation. Psychologists in South Africa come across clients from various socioeconomic backgrounds, especially psychologists working in the government sector. As suggested by Theo, "because I work in a public hospital, anyone can walk in, I never know". The participants expressed that socioeconomic differences between themselves and the clients they work with impacts on the dynamics of counselling. According to the participants, clients that came from poor socioeconomic background are likely to experience challenges building a therapeutic alliance with psychologists as they are perceived to be of a higher social class in society. Participants expressed that clients may find it difficult to believe that they could relate to their socioeconomic struggles. The following extracts illustrate the participant's experiences regarding the issue of class:

> Karen *"Eventually he(client) did feel more comfortable with me, he could see that I was not coming from a place of maybe being with higher socioeconomic person who has no idea what he has gone through in his life"*

As illustrated in the extract above, there is an expectation from the participant that her client may struggle working with her due to their difference in socioeconomic class. Another participant also echoed the same concern regarding the issue of class. The extract below illustrates the challenges that Theo comes across within the counselling context that are related to issues of class.

> Theo: *But I think class is a major issue because unlike other settings people that use public hospitals are general poor. So by virtue of being a psychologist you already from a different class. So there's always a class barrier when working in this environment.*

Whether that has impacted on peoples' ability to engage in psychological assessment or therapy, I am not too sure. It hasn't really come up as an issue, possibly because talking about class is often not socially acceptable. So that is possibly one of the reasons. But it is something that I am always aware of, that you and I are dressed like this, the patients I see are not. Certainly not going to come wearing a formal shirt and shoes, not that they are dressed badly but people are dressed according to their needs. But I think just by the virtue of the way we are dressed, we have already set up a class barrier. You know people are using public transport sometimes and we kind of intersect at the edges of the hospital. You know, they see you in your car when they have walked one kilometre from the taxi stop of the hospital. So I feel class is the bigger issue

It was not surprising to learn from the participants that they had issues relating to socioeconomic factors considering that they are working in the South African context. Furthermore, literature has indicated psychology's failure to acknowledge the socio-political factors that impact the lives of individuals (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007: Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). This is also reiterated by Sloan (2005) when he stipulates "I fear that psychology has systematically made itself irrelevant to debates in economics and politics because it has failed to include broad socioeconomic concepts in the education of psychology professionals". The findings from the study suggest that the participants do not feel that they adequately equipped to deal with socioeconomic issues they face. As illustrated through Karen's response "we can't really change the environment that the person in, the economy…that could be working with someone whom is in a poverty stricken state. It's difficult as a psychologist to be able to help with those external factors". The participants' struggles with these issues suggests that it is not adequately dealt with in training and thus impacts on their competence. The following section discusses further on client's self-perceived multicultural competence.

4.2 Multicultural competence

4.2.1 Varied levels of competency due to personal experience

When asked about their perceived multicultural competence, the participants highlighted the complexities of dealing with these issues as well as their limitations. From the participants' responses, it was evident that working in a context such as South Africa has exposed them to a diversity of multicultural cases. The participants expressed that it is challenging to be an expert of all cultural backgrounds. The participants mainly reported that there are some multicultural

contexts that they can manage but they also acknowledged that they felt incompetent in some areas. It became apparent that the participants shared the view that due to the multiple facets that form one's culture, it is not sensible for a professional to claim that they are fully competent in this area. As participant Melanie proclaimed "*I think anyone would be dumb to say they're so competent, that's like the bottom line of it*". The following extracts highlight participants' self-perceived multicultural competence:

> Melanie: *I think there are things that I understand better than others for sure. I think sexuality has been a lot easier for me to understand because of my own context and my own learning… So I think the reason is that, and maybe a little bit on language, (the reason they) are easier for me to understand is because those are my experiences, right…Yes, I've got the knowledge, yes, I've learnt it in my degree; yes, there are things that I can apply better because of my own experiences, but can I be competent in everything? No. I don't think so. I think it's unrealistic*

Melanie perceives her multicultural competence to be limited in some aspects. She expressed that her limitation is due to the level of exposure to different multicultural contexts. Hence, she feels that her personal experience of working with diverse clients gives her more understanding in some areas related to multiculturalism. She contends that, ultimately, one can't claim to be competent in all facets of multiculturalism. The next participant also reiterates this view.

> Xolani: *I think that as the more you become competent you realize that you are not competent. And particularly in the diversity, no one can be fully competent. In terms of information, not even knowledge but the information around the different cultures. So I think it's more of an approach issue rather than aspiring to know all of nuances of all the different cultures and within each set up where you find yourself, you constantly having to educate yourself. So now having been in Chatsworth for 3 years, I am more competent with the culture of the people I see now then I was 3 years ago because now I know more about Hindi culture, Islamic religion etcetera then I did back then. If I now go work in Limpopo which is… there are other black African people but we have a culture that's quite different from what my own would be. Then I would have to now restart the process of learning to become competent again. If I am seeing a patient who is living in Chatsworth but is actually from Zimbabwe and they are here for economic reasons, then again the issue of competence goes back to square one in terms of having to learn afresh… you can't have blanket competency basically*

Xolani also notes his experiences as integral in his process of learning about multiculturalism. He suggests that his competence in multiculturalism improves through being exposed to that particular culture. As emphasised through his quote, "So now having been in Chatsworth for 3 years, I am more competent with the culture of the people I see now then I was 3 years ago". Much like the previous participant, he reflects on the fact that his multicultural competence is limited. He also argues that one can't be fully competent in all areas of multiculturalism. The following participant also reflects on how her personal experiences has enhanced her multicultural competence.

> Karen: *So I grew up being really integrated into these rural communities, it has always been normal for me. I even had a Zulu nickname growing up that everybody would call me. So I really felt part of the community, I didn't really see that divide. So I really grew up knowing about the Zulu culture and those kind of things. So I would say good in that aspect. But then obviously that's not our only culture in South Africa, so I don't think anybody can say excellent because unless you've really immersed yourself into every culture… its difficult… So good but also other area that definitely I think I could improve in.*

Karen discussed that having grown up in rural communities made her know more about the Zulu culture. As argued by the other participants, she also supports the notion that one can't claim full competence in all areas of multiculturalism. She highlights the importance of being *immersed* into a particular culture for one to gain competence. This was a common reflection amongst the participants as they all agreed that their personal experiences of working with diversity has helped them to become more competent in addressing some multicultural issues. The feedback from the participants suggests that they have had to mostly rely on their own personal experiences to work in a multicultural context as opposed to acquiring skills predominantly from their training.

Theo expresses a different view when he argues that different cultural dynamics do not pose a challenge within the counselling space. The participant expressed that counsellors should be competent enough to work through all clients' differences. As participant Theo expressed:

> "*I think as a psychologist, it doesn't make it more difficult. In any event as a psychologist you work with difference. We approach all clients with an attitude of curiosity. So I don't think it adds difficulty… I think cultural issues are not really barriers, they are just things you discover about the person*".

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Theo highlights that if you have the necessarily skills you can do counselling and that as a result you will 'discover' things. It suggests that the participant believes that cultural competency is something you can learn on the job, rather than something that should be seriously addressed in training. Consequently the participant didn't believe that cultural identities between himself and his clients have a significant impact on the dynamics of a counselling relationship.

4.3 Counselling skills as tools to manage multicultural dynamics

Critical psychology argues that the teachings of mainstream psychology has actively depoliticised our understanding of ourselves through ignoring pressing political contexts of culture, poverty and economics (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Critical psychology challenges mainstream psychology's claim to be 'neutral', free from political and social influences (Hook, et al., 2004). The findings of this study revealed that some participants perceived their counselling skills as a sufficient tool for them to navigate through the multicultural dynamics that exist within the counselling setting. Psychologists' counselling skills such as empathy, being non-judgemental and neutrality were viewed by the participant as essential tools for working through various diverse multicultural dynamics within counselling. The following extracts illustrates participants' reflection on how they address multicultural issues using counselling skills as their tool.

> Karen *"You need to be really empathetic and neutral and non-judgmental. Those three things, if you just use those, I think you can work with really anybody. Because you are going in completely neutral, no judgement, listening to everything that they have to say before you even formulate a thought about it.*
>
> Theo*: I suppose it speaks to issues of empathy, which is something that psychologists are taught to have with patients. You know, people that access public health services, majority of my patients live in poverty. So class is a barrier to the extent that people might not be convinced that you can empathise with their situation. Vast majority of my patients are unemployed, vast majority of my patients live in social housing setting, vast majority of my patients live in large families living in a small homes. So I think those issues speak to issues around empathy, you know, can you possibly understand their situation*

Both Karen and Theo place emphasise on the importance of being empathetic and using counselling skills to work within a multicultural context. Theo emphasises that this is a tool that "psychologists are taught to have with patients". Focusing solely on counselling skills may perhaps be the only tool that they have available to them to manage multicultural issues. Though these skills are important to serve the intrapsychic difficulties faced by clients, they are limited when it comes to addressing other multicultural issues such as poverty, class and political oppression. Critical psychology challenges the teachings of mainstream psychology which have a strong emphasis on person-centred interventions as the main avenue for individual well-being. As argued by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002), critical psychology aims to move away from focusing solely on cognitive and emotional sources of suffering and well-being, to the exclusion of sociopolitical factors that impinges on how we feel and behave. Hook, et al., (2004) also posits that critical psychology challenges mainstream psychology's teachings that tends to ignore pressing sociopolitical factors in favour of prioritising purely psychological terms of understanding well-being. The following section discusses the teachings that the participants have been exposed to in their training program.

4.4 Training in Multicultural competence

The findings from this study indicated that a few participants found that their training did expose them to issues pertaining to multicultural dynamics within the counselling space. When asked about the importance of being taught multicultural counselling, Xolani reflected on his own experience stating, "I have had the fortune of being taught and having learned. I have attended lecturers and seminars both academic and non-academic and being part of modules that address the issues".

All the participants acknowledged that during their training, a multicultural perspective was included. Though trainee psychologists are exposed to multicultural training, the findings suggests that the teachings on multicultural counselling are mainly centred on self-reflection and a certain attitudinal approach. This was reflected on Melanie response when asked about whether her training prepared her for a multicultural context. She stipulated that,

> *"in my honours a lot of our component was a lot of introspection, of understanding our own kind of dynamics in the world - me as a Coloured female from a middle-class family, where does that place me in relation to a White male, where does that place me in relation to a Black female, where does that place me in relation to a Black lesbian female? My own sexual identity, where does that place me in relation to other people?*

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So, there were a lot of layers that we kind of unpacked and were forced to unpack in that course. The main thing that held that course together was a lot of your own introspection, and from that introspection how do we work in communities?

Melanie discusses the importance of being aware of her identity as a coloured female middle class person within the counselling context. She reflected on how her training has equipped her to acknowledge the cultural diversities of her identity as well as her clients. It became apparent that although the participants are given the opportunity to learn about multicultural dynamics within counselling, trainees do not engage with how they can use their actual skills to seriously address the issues of working in a multicultural context fueled with socio-political inequalities. The study by Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, and Mason (2009) also found similar results. Their study confirmed that although multicultural training for psychology emphasised knowledge and awareness of multicultural competence, infrequent attention is given to skills training and counselling interventions to address such issues. Literature on multicultural and social justice competency argues that counsellors should have more than awareness of diversity/multicultural issues but that alongside this, other skills are needed to foster social change. As stipulated by Kennedy and Arthur (2014) more is needed than awareness and acknowledgement as there needs to be active practice that follows through to address social justice issues.

4.4.1 Training to enhance multicultural competence

Literature suggests that there is a lack of information detailing the training philosophy of multicultural issues and objectives of multicultural courses that are being taught to psychology trainees (Tomlinson-Clarke, 2000). Existing literature (Ngcobo & Edward, 2008: Chitindingu 2012) also corroborates that multicultural counselling training has been given limited attention within the South African context. There was a similar narrative from the findings of the current study. A notable finding from this study was the participants' opinions on the need for more work to be done within psychology training to enhance multicultural competence. It became clear that the participants had some exposure to multicultural counselling training though they agreed that this can be improved. This suggests there is a need for the current multicultural training to be enhanced to better equip psychologists to work in the multicultural context. The following extract presents participants' ideas that they believe would be useful in improving the learning on multicultural counselling competence:

> Melanie: *...it's the system of the universities, right, because that's the bottom line: do we want to teach critical thinking to people or do we just want to teach them ABC and go do that, right? So, I think that's the kind of baseline of where we need to start, and I think from there things like CPD events. I have been at this for 3 years now and I haven't yet found a CPD event which caters to that kind of thinking, very little... So a lot of our CPD events are about mental health, a lot of our CPD events are about dealing with ethical issues and none of those often include this, that multiculturalism, none of it includes that. I think we need to create more opportunities for that*

Melanie reflects on the importance of educating trainee psychologists on critical thinking as opposed to making them rely on the current traditional methods of teaching. As has been shown in chapter two, critical thinking is one of the approaches that seriously challenges mainstream psychology knowledge and practice which tend to overlook pertinent issues of diversity and is predominantly apolitical. Her response suggests that critical thinking teaching is the kind of knowledge that is integral to fostering a new direction for the training and practice of psychologists. Melanie also reflects on the use of CPD events which are designed for continuous learning of psychologists. She contends that the CPD events should be more involved in teachings of multicultural competence.

In the extract below Karen discussed that multicultural training can improve through the addition of continuous learning that will address significant issues tied to race and culture. As illustrated in her quote:

> Karen: *I think its continuing with the training as it is, it's good but maybe adding some kind of cultural sensitivity training. So like pertinent issues relating to race and culture. Maybe we do need to add that into our training. You can never get to know a complete culture without being immersed into that culture. But maybe it would be useful to know some of those issues and I think the number one thing is to have that conversation. Cause sometimes different race groups can be a little bit unaware by how they are seen by other race groups. So I think just to have those kinds of conversations even if it could be an open conversation in your masters' year. Have a day where you just talk about those kind of charged and taboo kind of conversations.*

Xolani reflected a slightly different view. He emphasised the need for a psychologist to take individual responsibility to learn more on multicultural counselling practice. He emphasised learning that goes beyond formal learning. The participant stated:

"it requires level of curiosity that goes beyond formal instruction, as I am saying, even when you are no longer at a university level, you should continue learning for yourself. I mean, each year you will encounter cases you will not have encountered before. So if your level of learning is only dependent on what you are taught then you going to have shortcomings".

This viewpoint reflects Sue, Arredondo, and McDavies' (1992) that counsellors who aim to have multicultural comptetence skills should aim to seek out training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different people. Furthermore, the authors emphasise the need for counsellors to recognise their limits and actively seek out resources to improve their competence.

Social Justice

4.5 The importance of incorporating a social justice perspective

The participants strongly believed that the discipline of psychology should aim to do more than working individually with clients. Participants argued that mainstream psychology does not provide them the avenue to employ interventions that are aimed at dealing with the various social issues that are faced by the people in the society. When asked about psychologists' role in attending to social issues and oppression, Xolani reflected on his experience saying that "you'd find that you get to a point where you see that the answers for some of those issues are not psychological, they are societal issues. So you can't get the answers through individual psychological means and in fact, trying to do that may cause more problems". His response suggests the need for approaches that will attend to issues pertaining to the social ills of society. The findings of the study indicated that all participants are committed to a social justice approach, pointing out that interventions need to go beyond one-on-one counselling. The extract below indicates Theo's argument for a social justice approach as he contends that people go through social sufferings as well.

> Theo: *people don't suffer from standalone psychopathology, they suffer from social pathology. So it's like working psychodynamically with someone who's core issue is poverty. You know, Freud didn't write for the masses. So I think it's important that all psychologists work from a social justice framework.*

In the above extract, Theo makes reference to the fact that peoples' sufferings are not solely psychopathological but they are also stem from the social ills of society. In his quote "working

psychodynamically with someone who's core issue is poverty", he highlights the need for psychology to move beyond individual understandings of wellbeing but consider a social justice framework to address societal issues. His argument is also supported by priori research which contends that the field of psychology needs to take a contextual approach in addressing peoples' concerns through addressing societal issues (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, and McCullough, 2016: Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008).   A social justice approach to psychology is essential as clients come across various issues of social oppression. The section below presents various examples of oppression that clients experience as reported by the participants.

4.5.1 Poverty

All the participants reported having experienced difficulties working with clients challenged due to a poverty stricken background. Poverty, unemployment and exclusion is a predominant experience for most South Africans (Govender, 2016). Theo emphasised how a psychologist working in South Africa comes "face to face with the emotionality of poverty".   In following extracts, the participants reflect on their experiences working with clients experiencing poverty and their difficulty to address this issue.

> Karen: *...that could be working with someone whom is poverty stricken. It's difficult as a psychologist to be able to help with those external factors*

> Melanie: *for something like socioeconomics, it's the one thing that I feel very inadequate with, and I've felt this way from my internship years when I was placed in a site that was predominantly students from rural areas*

The common focus of the participants when faced with poverty was their lack of skills to address these issues. Xolani also reiterates this issue suggesting that his training doesn't equip professionals to be able to address poverty. This illustrated in his quote below:

> *"I don't think that being a psychologist equips you with the necessary skills and room to address poverty. In fact, you see poverty as an impediment in you doing your job"*

Xolani makes reference to how psychologists are not equipped to address poverty which suggests that this has not been engaged with and seen as essential in mainstream psychology training. Theo expressed that he believes the profession should be doing more to address social issues such as the issue of poverty as this is directly linked to poor mental health. The studies

by Johnston, (2015) and Kagee and Price (1995) also confirm the links between poverty and poor mental health.

4.5.2 Sexual violence

Sexual violence was reported to be one of the common cases that clients report in counselling. Theo expressed that the majority of his case files involve clients who experience social oppression and he is, therefore, often required to adopt a social justice approach to his work. When asked about some examples of cases of oppression that his clients experience, he responded:

> *The most common example are women being abused by their partners. But I can't say I have done anything above and beyond to ensure their safety which is the main issue*

Gender-based violence is a pervasive issue in South Africa. Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, & Schrieber's (2001) study stipulates that in South Africa, there is a high prevalence of physical abuse, rape, emotional and financial abuse towards women. This oppression against women leaves them vulnerable to various forms of social ills. Theo's response above illustrates that victims of gender-based violence also present in the counselling space, however, he notes that he is unable to follow through with effectively helping these clients. Theo's case example highlights the importance of psychologists having the skills to adopt a social justice approach to effectively address their clients' struggles. The collective view of the participants was that the discipline needs to do more to attend to issues of sexual violence and oppression against women.

4.5.3 LGBTI

Most participants pointed out that discrimination against LGBTI people needs to be addressed. As stipulated by Melanie "…our LGBTI community, I think there needs to be more education on that… we need to start thinking about how we can do more." This suggests that participants' experiences with clients whom face oppression because of their identity as LGBTI is prevalent and thus they feel there is a need for a social justice approach. Theo also reflected on his experience with working with LGBTI clients facing oppression:

> *I do have a handful of patients who are gay or lesbian and cannot come out to their families because Islam takes a very authoritarian viewpoint on being gay. So that's very tricky because religious people are indoctrinated in their beliefs and so those*

people are caught in-between a rock and hard place. On the one hand, they want to be
a good Muslim but they know under no circumstances that this will be accepted. And
families are also in a difficult position because even if they want to personally accept
this person, their religion is very clear on this

Theo reflects on the social oppression faced by his LGBTI clients as they are not accepted by their family and society because of their identity. Theo reports on the importance of engaging in social justice work to advocate for the LGBTI group.

With the high prevalence of social issues and social injustices in South Africa, the training of mental health practitioners needs to prepare professionals to be able to address these issues when they come face to face with them. The following section explores participants' views on their training.

4.6 Inadequate Training and Feeling Ill prepared

4.6.1 Lack of social justice perspective in training

It was evident from the participants' responses that they believed their training did not effectively emphasise the role of social justice action as a requirement for a professional psychologist. The participants felt that their training neglected a social justice perspective. As argued by Theo:

I think social justice has like… I can't even say been thrown out the window because it
was never in the house. So I think social justice is like non-existent. Also because of
who the people are that teach in the universities and social justice is not really part of
their own kind of career focus.

One participant reflected on the absence of advocacy training within psychology training program. Xolani:

What is advocacy training? The fact that I am asking you that is because I haven't been
trained in this. I am asking for clarity because I actually do some kind of advocacy
work. I work with an NGO that deals with autism and a large part of their work is
advocacy work, trying to get the children to school, get businesses and different parts
of society to understand what autism is. However, this is not included anywhere in my
training…

As has been shown by literature, advocacy is an essential element for psychologists employing a social justice framework. Ratts (2011) stipulates that a social justice approach to counselling uses advocacy and activism to challenge the inequitable social and political conditions that impede on individuals and communities. From Theo and Xolanis' responses, it is evident that training in such skills is not being taught to students. This was a common theme amongst all participants as they all pointed out to how their training had ignored the importance of social justice orientation.

> Theo: *"as a psychologist trained at a university, I would say no. Universities in South Africa are terrible at training psychologists because social justice is not attended to at all. At most, they have elective lectures or specific modules and lectures that might have a social justice orientation and it's usually people that teach African psychology or people like your supervisor. So in general, I don't think issues around social justice are adequately taught as well as the constant critique of psychology. So I don't think I was trained effectively to have social justice mind-set because university is very narrow in training to be a psychotherapists assuming that a psychologist is a psychotherapist."*

In the following extracts, the participants make reference to the current format of psychology which leans towards working individually with people and therefore overlooking the broader view of oppression that affects clients' lives.

> Melanie: *A lot of our training is geared towards us being in private practice, it's geared towards us providing one-on-one counselling, it's geared towards us providing counselling on the basis of mental illness. It's not geared towards us having a larger view of society, of people, of ourselves…*

> Xolani: *psychology in its current form sees the understanding of intra psychic conflicts as more important than starting from the outside in looking at the ecosystem, the microsystems …yah"*

Both participants highlight that the discipline of psychology relies on individualistic approaches to understand people, that problems are primarily driven by internal factors which ultimately ignores the role that social oppression has on peoples' lives. It is this kind of knowledge and practice of psychology that make professionals' interventions limited and leave the roots of many clients' problems unaddressed. As has been indicated in chapter two, feminist and multicultural psychology have continued to argue that individuals belong in an

environmental system and effective helping involves being aware of their environmental context (Crethar, Rivera & Nash, 2008) . Feminist and multicultural psychology believe that it's the role of the discipline of psychology to acknowledge social justice work and yet the participants collectively believe it is not being adequately addressed in their training. Consequently, psychologists find themselves inadequately prepared to address oppression. The section below discusses this further.

4.6.2 Inadequately prepared

When discussing the issue of social justice competencies, most participants made it clear that although they had the desire and interest to help clients facing social injustices, they felt that more often than not their attempts to intervene from a social justice perspective was constrained because of limited skills as a result of insufficient training. Existing literature argues that it has been a longstanding aim for the profession of psychology to provide services that promote social environmental changes, however, this has been hampered by theories, paradigms and practices of psychology that often focus on intrapsychic interventions (Crethar, River, & Nash, 2008: Ratts, 2009). The following extracts represent participant's experiences of being unprepared to address clients dealing with oppression. They answered in the following ways when asked if they felt prepared and competent to deal with these issues:

> Karen: *I guess that's a lot harder because there are all these external things and we can't really change the environment that the person is in.*

Karen's claim that "we can't", carries the idea that she has been taught that social justice work is not part of her responsibility as a psychologist and therefore she is not prepared to address related issues. This suggests that this has not been engaged with seriously in her training. Xolani's response below also indicates feelings of unpreparedness to address oppression and societal issues. When asked whether he feels prepared to address clients' oppressions he answered:

> Xolani: *The short answer is no and also, you'd find that you get to a point where you can see that the answer for some of those issues are not psychological, they are societal issues.*

Melanie revealed that there are certain social justice actions she is able to work with but she feels she sometimes struggles to address certain critical cases of social injustices faced by her

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clients. As illustrated by the following response when asked whether she feels prepared in addressing clients' oppression:

> *With some things, yes… I will tell you why. So, there are certain things that I will say "yes I am" because there are certain things that as much as society oppresses you, you can also make a choice on, right. So as much as my client may be female and she hasn't been allowed to reach a certain level, we can't break through that oppression, but we can build the kind of necessary character, and the kind of inner skills to get somewhere…For something like socioeconomics, it's the one thing I feel inadequate with… we're not allowed to go beyond a certain level… which makes me feel inadequate sometimes"*

Melanie argues that she feels particularly unprepared to address clients' socioeconomic challenges. In her discussion she argues that she is "not allowed to go beyond a certain level" which carries with it a connotation that this is a rule. Her response suggests that mainstream psychology has taught her that dealing with socio economics is not within her scope of practice and trying to deal with such is compromising her boundaries.

The responses of the participants indicate that there is an element of uncertainty when they reflect on their social justice competencies. The findings of the study reveal that because of their lack of training, participants feel unprepared to address the societal oppressions that impact their clients' lives. These findings are consistent with studies by Beer, Spanierman, Greene, and Todd (2012) and Collins et al., (2010) which also found that psychology students perceived themselves as inadequately prepared to address the contextual and structural conditions that shape and impact on the clients' well-being. The responses indicate that there is a need for social justice skills to be incorporated into psychology training (Ratts, 2009) so that practitioners have the skills to address needs that extend beyond intrapsychic issues.

Only one participant expressed a different view when reflecting on whether they perceive themselves to have social justice competencies. This is illustrated in the extract below:

> Theo: *Personally as an individual, my answer would be yes because of my particular orientation as a psychologist and my particular work that I do. But as a psychologist trained at a university, I would say no…As a psychologist myself, I am very involved in social justice issues. So personally, my career has taken that angle. So my career has a social justice label. But it is certainly not because of my training. It's because of my*

own career development and the path I have taken. And working in a public health sector, I think it's impossible to work in a public health sector and not develop a social justice orientation otherwise you doing a massive disservice to your patients.

Though Theo expressed a slightly different view regarding his personal social justice competence, essentially, he appears to have the same view as the other participants by acknowledging that his training as a psychologist did not leave him feeling prepared to address social justice issues. However, due to his own personal orientation as a psychologist he feels he has *become* skilled in addressing these issues for his clients. According to his response, it appears that a combination of working in a very particular context (public sector) along with his personal views has lead him to take on "a social justice label" in his career as a psychologist. When asked about how he developed a social justice orientation, he answered:

> Theo: *…being a member of an organisation like PsySSA has definitely benefited me as a psychologist, because of their explicit discourse around social relevance, human rights, and social justice… Also, books like "Critical Psychology" edited by Derek Hook gave me the theoretical language I needed to make sense of my desire to make a broader difference to society.*

It appears that Theo benefitted from being in a professional body (PsySSA) that motivated him to take up a social justice approach in his career. Interestingly though, Theo alludes that he has also had to access extra reading in order to indulge in a social justice perspective. The participants reveals that he has sought this reading material on his own which suggest that this has not been directly provided to him through his formal training. The participants' experience reflects how mainstream psychology training remains rooted in its Western origins and therefore bias towards a Western approach.

4.7 A bias towards Western psychology as the reason for insufficient training in social justice

The findings from the research indicated that participants perceived the dominance of mainstream psychology knowledge and practice as a fundamental cause for insufficient learning on social justice orientation. The participants argued that the teachings of mainstream psychology are a product of Western origin, with limited relevance to issues of social oppression and other concerns from different cultural contexts. As has been shown in chapter two, critical psychology challenges mainstream psychology's lack of acknowledgment for how social oppression affects the lives of individuals. Hook, et al., (2004) stipulates that critical

psychology challenges mainstream psychology's research and practice for having effectively isolated the individual from the social and political sphere (Hook, et al., 2004). In the extract below, Theo argues for the need to have psycho-politically orientated psychologists and reflects the influence of Western teachings of psychology hinders this kind of knowledge.

> *"Psychologists have to have explicit psycho-political orientation. I think the reason they don't is because they taught mainstream kind of Western psychotherapy as the main thing".*

The extract that follows illustrate the participants' views on how mainstream psychology sidelines societies or cultures that fall outside the Western framework and, therefore, has a bias towards Western culture. According to the participants, the current Western psychology knowledge poses challenges and limitations when it is applied within the South African context because it does not have theories that are relevant to addressing the social issues faced by people. This viewpoint is argued by Melanie in the extract below:

> Melanie: *But the core of our learning is based on a Western approach, right. You know, you're more likely if I say Sigmund Freud to know what Sigmund Freud said than if I say Paulo Freire. Many people would be like 'Paulo who, who is this, what?'. Because we just don't see those things, we don't see beyond Freud, and Winnicotts, and Klein, - that's what we learned, that's how we were trained, that's what we do. And that is very useful, it has worked for many, many years, with many billions of psychologists around the world, but it is very limiting to contexts where - any context actually - but particularly the southern hemisphere in general. So it's very limited to a country like SA where we had apartheid - and we cannot ignore that - where we have a lot of violence, where we have a lot of crime*

Melanie reflects on one of the most influential philosophers, Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire is well known for his philosophy and practice of critical pedagogy. His work emphasized the importance of teachings that encourages social change, democracy and equality (Shor, 1993). Melanie believes that the discipline of psychology should engage in ideas such as those posed by Paulo Freire so that psychology becomes more relevant for the current context.

In the following extracts Theo continues to argue about the relevance of Western psychological knowledge and practice in the South African context.

Theo: *There is this ongoing debate. You know, psychology is stuck in this relevance debate…There is no doubt that training is Western orientated assuming that everyone is going to open private practice in the suburbia in Hillcrest, Morning Side and Umhlanga. Everyone just assumes that's the ideal model of psychologists and then you got a whole bunch of people immigrating.*

Theo is suggesting that the training is relevant for certain communities/contexts, that is, middle class communities that are often populated by White people. In such contexts, mainstream psychology is adequate, however, it is not useful for the large parts of the South African context. Xolani further reiterates this in his quote.

Xolani: *Western psychology is designed with the following person in mind: person who is middle-class, who's white and who's predominately male. So if you look at the original diagnoses of people and the original studies that led to most of these disorders, the therapists were male or the clinicians or researchers as well as the people that they were doing the studies on… So yes, psychology is a product of culture and as a result it is bias. The more conventional you are in your psychology, the more bias it is.*

The collective view of the participants was their concern with the relevance and biasness of mainstream psychology. According to the participants, Western psychology does not acknowledge the issues of the broader society, an argument also supported by Leach and Akhurst (2003) as discussed in chapter two. The participants stress psychology's needs for a psycho-political orientation and the acknowledgment of the history of South Africa. Their responses highlights that the Western psychology teachings tends to not take into consideration important contextual factors such as the history of apartheid and so leaves psychologists ill prepared to deal with the issues that are connected to this history. As Kagee and Price (1995) suggests, psychology needs to acknowledge how individual's suffering are tied to the country's contextual historical, social, political and cultural roots in order to have a significant impact on well-being of people.

One participant posed a different view regarding the issue of psychology as a biased discipline. Karen expressed:

"For me, I have different thinking to what I have heard people say and I said to you earlier, I see the discipline of psychology as being something that can transcend all of these different cultures, races and religions. If it comes down to those three basic things,

*if you can be neutral, empathetic and non-judgemental then it doesn't matter who sits
in front of you".*

Critical psychology poses a challenge to this kind of thinking. Critical psychology argues that
mainstream psychology depoliticises our identity by sidelining the wider cultural and political
contexts that people are embedded in (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). The participant's
response indicates that she believes that there are a set of micro counselling skills that can
sufficiently enable a psychologist to deal with the diverse issues that are faced by clients. While
these skills are important, such skills cannot address many of the issues that many South
African's population currently face due to an undermining of cultural diversity and the
widespread oppression of a large majority of people during apartheid. For example, many
Black South Africans face poverty that is a result of the legacy of the system of Apartheid.
Race relations are tenuous as a result of a history of segregation. While micro counselling skills
are important to foster change in the individual counselling sessions they are not sufficient to
address many of the issues that South Africans face. Her response reflects her training in an
individualistic approach to intervention, where the focus is on working with individuals. So
while these micro skills are important if psychologists are really to address the issues at hand
they need to engage in additional alternative, critical approaches.

4.8 Disjuncture between training and the reality of practice

Collins, Arthur, Brown and Kennedy (2010) posit that social justice learning for psychology
trainees should be designed to connect students with social issues, awareness of oppression and
social inequalities. The findings of the study indicated that though the participants' training
may have been exposed them to some aspects of critical approaches and social justice, this
learning was not translated into practical skills that they could use with their clients. Xolani
had some community psychology training, but notes the following:

> Xolani*: ...there is that theoretical background to it. There is community psychology
> which gives you an understanding of the shortcomings of western individual
> psychotherapy. But then you finish this minor module and you continue to go find a job
> which employee you as an individual psychologist in the western frame. So there are
> several other modules like African Psychology and Psychology of Diversity but you
> don't become an African psychologist, you just read up on what Africa Psychology is
> but the practise of it is difficult cause you then work in a hospital where people require*

you to have a diagnosis and that may be at odds with an African cosmological assessment of a situation.

In the following extract Melanie reflects on her training having provided her with social justice learning, however, she also expressed challenges when this learning had to be transferred to the working place.

Melanie: *"You know, we went through all this training that was different to many other universities, we learnt all this social justice stuff. And after we finish, we go to internship sites that don't have that. So we have the knowledge but in our practical year, in our practice, there was nothing that encouraged that. So for the most part, some of us let it go".*

In the above extracts both Melanie and Xolani pose a similar argument regarding the disjuncture between training in social justice approach and the reality of their practice. The participants argue that though they have been exposed to some social justice perspective in their training, the context they end up working in after their training does not support such an approach to psychology. Consequently, Melanie ends up reverting to the traditional mainstream approach and Xolani feels forced to work from a Western framework. In order for a social justice approach in psychology to become a powerful force in South Africa, there are significant changes and challenges that need to be addressed and training programmes need to listen to the experiences of practicing psychologists.

4.9 Challenges with social justice work

According to the participants' perceptions, incorporating social justice work within South Africa would pose pressing practical issues. The participants believed that the main concerns were related to economic factors.

4.9.1 No remuneration for doing social justice work

According to the participants, the challenge of doing social justice work is associated with issues of remuneration and psychology's scope of practice. More specifically, the participants reflected on how social justice is not see as a core aspect of a psychologists' job description and therefore, there's no remuneration for it when it is done over and above a psychologists 'normal' job, which results in professionals being reluctant to participate in such work. This is viewpoint is illustrated in Theo's extract: "No one is going to sacrifice hourly rates to get to do

community work out there". The extract reveals that social justice work is not considered by other professionals due to the lack of financial gains. Xolani reflected on how psychologists do social justice work as an activity outside their professional responsibility, suggesting there is no remuneration for it. Xolani states:

> "*In fact the people that I do know who do a bit of social justice, human rights kind of work. They use their being psychologists, yes, but it's not part and parcel of their job it's something that they do extra on the side.*"

The following extracts illustrates the participants' views on how the issue of remuneration impacts on social justice work within the profession of psychology.

> Theo: *The other issue is economics, so you can't ignore the fact that people do what they do based on how much money they can make. So there is no money in social justice, no one will be able to pay the rent if they become an activist. So I think that's another issue, we have to think very strategically about the role of capitalism in psychological training. You can never talk about social justice without talking about capitalism. Because social justice in itself is a nice thing to do but who is going to pay you.*

Theo is highlighting that one of the main issues preventing the implementation of a social justice approach is the broader economic system of capitalism. He argues that the motivation for many psychologists to practice is making money. This motivation is, in turn, driven by a wider system of capitalism. Theo seems to be suggesting that unless this system is challenged there will be little motivation for psychologists to do social justice work and the profession will have to rely on people having a personal interest or willingness to put in the extra work for social justice action. Xolani also confirms this in the following extract:

> Xolani: *If it's not a responsibility then only people who are passionate about it will do it. The thing is, you don't get paid for doing all these community awarenesses and so there's less motivation for it.*

The participant argues that social justice work needs to become everyone's responsibility and seen as the primary, rather than secondary role of psychologists. If this isn't the case, only those who are personally passionate about social justice will end up doing it. Theo and Xolani highlight that unless psychologists have a financial incentive they are unlikely to want to do social justice work.

4.10 Participants' involvement in social justice work

It became apparent that although the participants feel ill prepared for social justice work and expressed vital challenges that constrained this approach, they did voluntarily get themselves involved in social justice and advocacy work with their clients. These psychologists each show a personal commitment to addressing many of the social issues that persist within the South African context. This commitment is a likely outcome of the various issues they face in the contexts in which they work, rather than their actual training.

The following extracts reflect the social justice advocacy work done by the Xolani to address the social issues of society:

> Xolani: "*I actually do some kind of advocacy work. I work with an NGO that deals with autism and large part of their work is advocacy work, trying to get the children to school, get businesses and different parts of society to understand what autism is*"

The advocacy work done by Xolani reflects what Goodman et al. (2004) described as the principle of 'giving voice'. This principle involves psychologists making efforts to make their clients' needs, wishes, and visions heard by significant others who are in positions to facilitate change. A social justice approach to counselling also means the valuing of the principle of equity and access (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008). These are the actions shown by Xolani who social justice works to ensure equal opportunity and access to education for children living with autism.

Melanie and Theo have also done social justice work in their own capacities:

> Melanie: *After my internship I went to work in a place that does advocacy for LGBTI.*

> Theo: "*I have started a mental health advocacy group. In KZN I am involved actively in social justice issues in a non-profit organization. I have co-authored guidelines for psychologists working with LGBTI issues*"

The two extracts above by the participants Melanie and Theo describe advocacy work that they have done for the LGBTI group. As has been detailed in chapter two, social justice orientation aims to address the continued marginalization of those who live on the fringes of society. The participants' involvement in LGBTI issues signifies a social justice orientation aiming at addressing social discrimination and oppression. The participants reflected on raising awareness in the community about LGBTI issues and formulating strategies to address these

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concerns. This is the kind of work you would generally not expect from the traditional mainstream psychology practice.

Theo also reflected on advocacy work he has done through training community members to facilitate support groups. He explained

> "*So we have done about three trainings this year. Just to make sure that people have some sense of social connection and support. There is lots of reasons to do it, the main reason is that now people have some connection in close proximity to where they live. And also, it creates an extra step before you go all the way to the hospital because people come here for some very basic reasons, whereas if they had someone else they wouldn't have to come*".

This advocacy work involves empowering community members with skills to work through their concerns. Other approaches for social justice action were recommended by the participants, these will be discussed in the section below.

4.11 Approaches to address social issues

4.11.1 Community based interventions

Melanie argued for the need to focus on community based services to address social issues. Her quote illustrates this below.

> Melanie: *I think it's a very elitist viewpoint for us to think we can sit down in our consulting rooms, charging R850 an hour, and think we're fixing people's lives. It's a very bottom-up approach to mental healthcare and one we can't afford to do in South Africa - we don't have the capacity of people to be seeing the numbers of people that require mental health assistance. So, should we be out there? Yes. Should we be doing more community-based projects? Absolutely. And it's very different to social work; it's not saying I'm going to fix one person's problem, it's saying we have the skills and the tools to fix a societal problem - or influencing a societal problem*

Melanie highlights the need for psychology to expand its practice beyond the individual level to the community level as there is a large capacity of people that require mental health assistance but are not reached out to due to the current format of practice. Existing literature also corroborates that the profession of psychology has to take a more active role to address

the social issues that exists in communities (Vera & Speight, 2003: Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007).

When asked about working with communities to address social issues, Xolani discussed:

> *It would be a good idea…We should also be doing preventative or health promotion work. You will find that the clinical work at hospitals is so much that everything else seems like a distraction. Then there is no enthusiasm to do work outside the community, you are tied to your office seeing one patient after the other the whole day. So instead of going out doing workshops or group work around suicide, you will see individual patients who have attempted suicide. So there is a need for it and people in the universities need to make it part of the job in order for change to happen*

Both participants highlight the need for an approach to psychology that addresses the needs of a larger community. Xolani notes that there is a need for community-based work so that the discipline has a significant role in preventative work. Due to the current format of psychology practice, professionals have found themselves "tied" to their offices, working individually with people and thus distant from community-based interventions to alleviate oppression and social injustices. Existing literature also confirms the lack of impact that mainstream psychology has at the larger societal level (i.e. Leach and Akhurst, 2003) and as a result, pertinent issues of the larger community are often ignored. Kennedy and Arthur (2014) argue that psychologists should expand their scope of practices through interventions that are connected to addressing the needs of the larger society.

4.11. 2 Involvement in public policy making for social justice action

Vera and Speight (2003) posit that the psychology profession is frequently placed in a position of treating clients who represent the ramifications of society's oppressive policies and inequalities. Consequently, psychologists are faced with the challenge of alleviating the individual's aftermath of failed oppressive policies as opposed to taking a proactive and preventative approach to address the socio-political oppressions that exist in society. From examining participants' views about involvement in social justice action, it was apparent from two participants that an effective strategy to impact change from a broader societal level is to have psychologists involved in policy making decisions. The participants in this study expressed that psychologists' involvement in policy making decisions can help inform institutional systems on how to alter oppressive social and political conditions that

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disadvantages members in the community. With this viewpoint, it was clear that the participants felt that social justice action requires psychologists to be political in their thinking and their practical interventions. Politicising the practice of psychology would mean going beyond the current format of psychology which often overlooks, or underplays the importance of political factors as has been indicated by literature (see Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007; Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009: Hook, et al., 2004). The following extracts illustrates the participants views on the value of involvement in policy making decisions for professional psychologists:

> Melanie: *"Yes we should be doing more. If it's about social justice, it's about changing the system. Where we should be and we not, is we should working in spaces that make laws. Spaces that draw up policies, spaces that challenge policies.*

> Xolani: *"the skills that psychologists do have, your research skills, your ability to think critically and look at situations can be used to inform interventions. That means at a policy level or at the level of decision making or creating strategies…"*

According to the participants, the discipline of psychology can have a greater positive change on the larger community if it involved in policy making projects. The responses given by the participants above are consistent with views from existing literature regarding integrating a social justice orientation into psychology. Constantine et al. (2007) suggests that it is essential that the training of counsellors involve trainees in public policy in order to develop social justice competencies. This notion is also supported by Kennedy and Arthur (2014) who stipulate that counsellors would benefit from being involved in public policy projects as this will allow them to intervene in and create social change. According to Contantine et al (2007), such involvent from the discipline of psychology may provide counsellors with the skills to impact on govenmental procedures.

4.12 Improving training and practice

The participants were able to highlight what they needed training in to deal with the issues that so many of their clients deal with. These suggestions will be discussed here.

4.12.1 Interdisciplinary training

Interdisciplinary training was viewed as a significant strategy to helping trainee psychologists gain more knowledge on social justice work. As indicated in chapter two, there is a need for

the profession to take a contextual approach when working with clients, recognizing that individuals belong to a larger ecosystem and are shaped by their contextual experience (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). This contextual approach requires different levels of analysis and according to the participants from this study, interdisciplinary learning would be a critical element to facilitating a contextual understanding of clients. The participants' views on interdisciplinary teaching is illustrated in the following extracts:

> Theo: *So maybe what we need to do in line with intersectoral collaboration is interdisciplinary teaching. For example, at the honours or M1 level we have people from different discipline teachings…They should come in and conscientise psychologists around how to do social justice issues. I think if it's in the curriculum it will legitimise it as an activity that's within the realm of psychology otherwise it really depends on individual peoples' personalities and whether or not they as a person want to do it*

Melanie also expressed the idea of interdisciplinary learning. She describes how her university training directed students towards having a broader kind of learning in psychology whereby other disciplinary knowledge were added to their programme. She argued that this should happen in other universities as well so that all psychologists develop this social justice orientation. She explained regarding her university training:

> *"What you had then is people studying psychology together with sociology, together with politics, together with anthropology… from the start we should have classes which support our thinking in this regard"*.

4.12.2 Networking skills

Though the participants expressed the gaps and limitations in their training regarding engaging with issues of social justice and oppression, they were able to reflect on ideas that they believed would benefit the training of psychologists. The participants highlighted the significance of networking. In the extract below Theo discusses the value of psychologists using their skills to network with other organisations and different sectors to address social issues:

> Theo: *A psychologist is a networker and a connecter. We should be able to use our interpersonal relational skills, our communication skills to build bridges between organisations and different sectors. I feel we could play a role in facilitating a relationship between all these different sectors, I feel people should be taught how to*

do that. I don't think people actually know how to do that or they think it's not part of their job to do that, which I think is a complete failure of their training if they don't think it's their job.

The participants emphasised that psychologists are taught interpersonal relational skills, but are not taught how to use them to 'build bridges' between organisations in order to address peoples' needs. Theo seems to be suggesting that a significant impact could be made by psychologists through facilitating relationships between different organisations and sectors in order to address social justice issues. Priori literature corroborates with Theo's argument as Crethar, Rivera, and Nash (2008) contend that psychologists working from a social justice framework should strive to help clients through connecting them with people or relevant resources available in their communities in order to affectively address social justice issues. The participant made reference to how he has used network skills in his workplace to help his clients:

> *Virtually all clients I see I refer them somewhere along the line. Either to the department of social development, they assess people for grants, referring people to faith based organisations who often have feeding schemes, there are dozens of organisations doing social good*

4.12.3 Networking through involving communities

Goodman, et al. (2004) suggests that sharing power is a useful skill for psychologists who wish to work from a social justice orientation. According to the authors, sharing power is about psychologists acknowledging that they are not experts that will remove all social injustice, however, they should allow individuals and community members to have some ownership and self-efficacy to make change. The participants of the study also share this view as they expanded on the idea of networking by reporting that psychologists' community involvement would improve psychologists' effectiveness in attending to social justice. The following extracts indicate this view point:

> Theo: *... as far as possible, get communities to take responsibility of peoples' mental health. So for me that's a social justice act because before psychology came along where was peoples' mental health taken care of? It's by their families and by social structures. In some way I feel the best thing we can do is to get people outside our offices and back into communities*

> Xolani*: Its involvement within the community in ways that … typically outside the scope of your job… so it could be involvement with an NGO, it could be you setting up such an enterprise, it could be a lot of information sharing activities*

Both participants make reference to extending psychology practice through interventions that are beyond the traditional mainstream boundaries. This feedback from the participants suggests that they believe community involvement would have a significant impact in addressing issues faced by the community members. This approach has also been emphasised by existing literature (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi & Bryant, 2007: Goodman et al 2004).

4.12.4 Training institutions collaborating with other organisations to enhance practical skills

Existing literature contends that collaboratively working with other professionals, community members and levels of government can be an effective approach for psychologist looking to employ a social justice approach (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014: Constantine et al., 2007). Xolani argues for the same approach suggesting that psychology training programs should collaboratively work with other organisations in order to provide trainees with practical knowledge to address the issues of diversity that exist. As illustrated in his quote:

> Xolani: *I do believe we should be trained but there are different ways of doing this because it's not really something you would lecture a person on... you can give theoretical knowledge to it cause everything has a theory but I think it requires a practical component to it. We do have components of it like in community service or learning community psychology. If it's included in things like that and they perhaps require a bare minimum of 6 months where you doing advocacy training then it would get everyone to learn more about issues of diversity. Many organisations can be involved like South African Human Rights commission, South African Race Relation commission, those kinds of places...they do work that is based on what you talking*

4.13 Chapter summary

This chapter contained a discussion of the participants' experiences of working in a multicultural context such as South Africa. The main themes and subthemes were identified and discussed. The chapter that follows presents the conclusions that were drawn from the research findings as well as the recommendations based on the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will summarise the main findings of the study. Conclusions are drawn from the study and the implications will be discussed. Recommendations based on the research study will be offered and the limitations of the study will be discussed.

5.1 Study focus

With South Africa's blended population, full of cultural diversity and sharing a rich socio-political history , working towards providing well-being and equality through psychological interventions can be a challenging task. Due to the political history of Apartheid, that marginalised indigenous ethnic groups and priveleged the White population, the new democratic South Africa continues to experience ongoing racial tensions and economic inequality. In addition, gender based violence is prevalent and the LGBTQI community continues to experience stigam and discrimination. Psychologists working in South Africa, therefore, need to have the skills to work in such a multicultural context. Furthermore, they need to be equipped in addressing the various social justice issues that impede on their clients life. Little literature is available exploring psychologists' multicultural and social justice competence in the South African context and this study aimed to address this. The the aims of this study were as follows:

1) To explore self-perceived multicultural and social justice competence among psychologists.
2) To explore psychologists' views on the importance of multicultural competency and social justice
3) To gain awareness into the obstacles that psychologists face working within a multicultural context
4) To explore gaps in the current training regarding addressing multicultural and social justice competence
5) To explore suggestions for ways to improve the training of psychologists when it comes to multicultural and social justice competence.

The research questions of the study were as follows:

1) Do psychologists perceive themselves as having multicultural and social justice competencies?

2) What are psychologists' perceptions on the importance of multiculturalism and social justice competence?

3) What are the challenges faced by psychologists related to multicultural and social justice issues?

4) What are the current gaps in the training of psychologists regarding skills for addressing multicultural and social justice competence?

5) How can training of psychologists be improved from the perspective of practicing psychology?

Conclusions based on the research questions will be presented in the following section.

5.2 Conclusions based on the research questions

5.2.1 Multicultural and social justice competencies

With regards to the first question, the findings indicated that the level of multicultural competence of the participants varied due to their unique personal experiences. The collective view of the participants was that gaining competence from a multicultural perspective is a continous developmental process that relies on their experience of working with diverse clients. They all alluded that one has to emmerse themselves in a particular culture to really learn it. Thus, the general narrative of the participants was that due to the many various multicultural components, one can't claim complete competence in this area. In sum, participants revealed that they had to mostly rely on their own personal experience to develop the skills and insight to work in a multicultural context rather than acquiring skills directly from their formal training.

Regarding social justice competence, the research findings concluded that psychologists are often inadequately prepared to deal with societal issues that may arise within the counselling space. It appeared that the participants had the desire to assist clients facing social justice issues, however, they felt their attempts to intervene from a social justice perspective were constrained because of limited skills as a result of insufficient training. The majority of the participants contend that some of their client's issues are not solely caused by internal psychological conflicts, but are, rather, caused by societal/external factors, however, as psychologists they often feel that they are not skilled enough to address these factors. In line with the research findings, prior research indicates that mainstream psychology has failed to recognise the role that social oppression contributes to client's presenting problems (Crethar, River & Nash, 2008). Furthmore existing literature reveals that mainstream psychology has neglected services

that promote social environmental changes due to being hindered by theories, paradigms and practices of psychology that often focus on intrapsychic interventions (Ratts, 2009: Crethar et al., 2008).

5.2.2 The importance of encorporating a multicultural and social justice perspective

Research findings suggest that the participants believed there is a need for more work to be done within the discipline of psychology to enhance multicultural competence. For the majority of the participants, the need for a multicultural perspective in training is essential. Participants suggested that CPD events need to create more opportunities for this kind of learning. Participants reported complex issues related to race, language and class when working with clients from cross cultural backgrounds. This suggests that training needs to take a more serious approach in encoporating a multicultural perspective into counselling.

The participants also emphasised the importance of a social justice perspective. The vast majority of participants agreed that the discipline of psychology should aim to do more than it's traditional individual one-on-one counselling. The participants suggested that psychology would be more effective for the current context by addressing peoples' problems at a societal level and making a broader impact on the larger community. These findings are also consistent with existing literature, for example, Baluch, Pieterse and Bolden (2004) argue that the field of psychology can become a powerful force through committing to social change and incoporate social justice action. In corroboration with Ratts' (2009) study the majority participants revealed that a social justice perspective is an integral aspect for the field of psychology. Findings from the research suggest that the psychology profession needs to extend it'services to the broader society to be impactful as the current format often ignores the needs of the larger community(Leach and Akhurst, 2003). The research study also shows that the current format of mainstream psychology's teachings has left many psychologists feeling inadequately prepared to deal with clients experiencing oppression. Furthermore, the findings have indicated that there is a strong need for mainstream psychology to extend it's knowledge and practice towards promoting a social justice perspective.

5.2.3 Challenges

Regarding the third question on multicultural counselling challenges, the main themes that emerged were related to race, language and social class. The majority of the participants expressed that racial difference between themselves and their clients often cause a difficult

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working alliance. Existing literature suggests that race attitudes remains a source conflict between groups within South Africa (Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown, 2011). Due to South Africa's legacy of apartheid, race has longstanding sociopolitical implications that creates explicit distinctions amongst race groups. As Durrheim, Trendoux, Tropp, Clack, and Eaton (2010) contend, the new history of South Africa is one of ongoing racial inequality and discimination. Due to such conditions, it is important that psychologists working within the South African context are taught about the dynamics and implications of race. This, however, has been difficult to achieve due to the traditional format of psychology teaching which often overlooks historical and political contexts of individuals (Hook et al., 2004). Though the current training does deal with issues related to culture or ethnicity, however, very rarely is the idea of 'race' and its implication for the counselling relationship engaged with effectively.

 The participants expressed that language barriers is one of the most challenging cultural dynamics that they encounter during counselling. Language barriers limited communication experience between the psychologist and their client. According to the participants, language is essential in the process of healing as language is linked to culture and how clients interpret their worldview. As Ngcobo and Edwards (2008) argue, language constitutes individual's reality and constructs our understanding of the world and ourselves. Existing literature indicates that language barrier problems are common amongst mental health practioners in South Africa (Deumert, 2010), which is something that was also reported by the participants of the current study. An interesting finiding of the research was that participants viewed a particular language as beloning to a specific race group rather than something that can be learnt by any person. This suggests that issues regarding the importance of learning indeginous language has been overlooked in training.

Some participants also reflected on the difficulty of managing multicultural issues that were related to socioeconomic status. The participants expressed that clients who come from poor socioeconomic background are likely to experience difficulties building a therapeutic alliance with psychologists as they are of a higher social class in society. The findings suggested that social class significantly impacts how clients and psychologists relate to each other. However, literature indicates that psychology has made itself irrelevant to issues of broad socioeconimic concepts (Sloan,2005). The research findings suggests that there is a need for for training programmes to have to focus more on issues related to socioeconomic factors.

From a social justice perspective, the participants revealed surprising and informative responses. Apart from the challenges of not feeling aedquately prepared to address clients' oppression, the participants expressed that though social justice work is important and may improve psychological services provided for people, one of the factors that challenges this approach is the broader economic system of capitalism within the country.The participants argue that there is no remuneration for doing social justice work within psychology and that this is not seen as a core aspect of a psychologists' job description. Due to social justice work having no remuneration, the participants argue that this leads to psychologists not being motivated to do this line of work. This is because social justice work or community work is mostly considered something that is done over and above the psychologists 'normal' job, rather than something that is considered integral to their work as psychologists in the South African context. Psychologists are primarily trained to be psychotherapists working and intervening at the individual level. Participants indicated that psyhcology training programmes have to think very strategically about the role of capitalism when incorporating social justice work. One participant emphasised that one can never talk about social justice without talking about capitalism. According to the participants' perspective, only people who are passionate about doing social justice work end up doing it due to the issue of remuneration. Therefore, one of the main obstacles that constrain a social justice approach is the broad system of capitalism and this needs to be challenged in order for things to change.

5.2.4 Current gaps in psychology training

Regarding the fouth question, findings from the study revealed that participants believed there needs to be more training that addresses a multiculturalism. The participants' reflection indicated that their multicultural education mainly focused on self-reflection and a certain attitudinal approach. Analysis revealed that trainees do not engage with how they can use their actual skills to address the complexities of working in a multicultural context fueled with socio-political inequalities. These findings corroborate with the study by Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Colllins, and Mason (2009) who found that infrequent attention is given to skills training and counselling interventions to address multicultural issues

Regarding issues of social justice, the participants indicated that mainstream psychology lacks sufficient training in this area. Participants reported on feeling ill prepared to deal with social justice issues and reflected on the importance of a social justice perspective to be incoporated in psychology. The majority of the participants viewed this as a weakness in psychology

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training. One of the key elements that the participants attributed to this lack of a social justice approach to, was the biasness that the current mainstream psychology has towards the Western approach. The majority of the participants argue that mainstream psychology sidelines cultures that fall outside the Western framework thus making some of its approaches irrelvant to many other contexts.

Another argument by the participants was that though their training offered elective modules that consisted of a social justice perspective, these largely remain at a theoretical level and are thus not transeferrable into practical skills that could be of use in the outside world. This was also partly due to the fact that their working context did not encourage a social justice approach.

5.2.5 Improving training

The research study revealed that participants felt there needs for more emphasise to be placed on teachings related to multicultural perspectives. Existing literature (Ngcobo & Edward, 2008: Chitindingu 2012) also corroborates that multicultural counselling training has been given inadequate attention within the South African context. The participants from the study provided varied ideas that they believe would be useful in improving the learning of multicultural counselling competence. These ideas are presented below:

- Employing more multicultural perspectives that include pertinent issues of race, culture, social class and other aspects of multiculturalism.
- Educate psychologists on critical psychology as opposed to focusing primarily on current mainstram psychology teachings
- Use psychologists' CPD events to educate them on multicultural counselling competence

Participants were also able to highlight what their training needed to facilitate a social justice approach to psychology. The participants discussed the following varied ideas.

- Interdisciplinary training

Interdisciplinary training was regarded as a significant strategy to helping trainee psychologists develop social justice orientation. As has been indicated in chapter two, there is a need for the profession to take a contextual approach when working with clients, recognizing that individuals belong to a larger ecosystem and are shaped by their contextual experience (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). According to

the participants, an approach that facilitates a contextual understanding of clients involves employing interdiciplinary learning where people from different disciplines that will conscientise psychologists around issues related to social justice

- Networking skills

The participants also spoke about the importance of training psychologists in networking skills. Findings revealed that psychologists should be taught how to network with other organisations and different sectors to overcome the diverse oppressions that clients face. Priori literature is in agreement with the idea of networking as Crethar, Rivera, and Nash (2008) contend that psychologists working from a social justice perspective should strive to connect their clients with people or relevant resources available in their communities in order to affectively address social justice issues.

- Training institutions collaborating with other organisations to enhance practical skills

Existing literature contends that collaboratively working with other professionals, community members and levels of government can be an effective approach for psychologist looking to employ a social justice approach (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014: Constantine et al., 2007). The findings of the study also revealed the importance of incorporating this strategy to enhance a social justice framework for psychology training. The participants suggested that psychology training programs should work with other organisations to provide trainees with practical knowledge to address the issues of diversity that exist. Examples of these organisations included the South African Human Rights Commission and South African Race Relation Commission.

5.3 Limitations

Part of the limitation of the study was its location. The study was located in the KwaZulu-Natal region and thus the findings were confined to psychologists' experiences working in this specific area. An additional limitation of the study was challenging mainstream psychology. As a trainee psychologist, I have been trained in mainstream psychology. Therefore, conducting a study which goes against my teachings was not an easy experience. It took me quite some time to fully understand the ideas and theory of critical psychology, multicultural and feminist psychology. Thus, during my analysis process, I noticed that due to my minimal understandings of critical ideas, I may have missed the chance to seek and probe for more relevant information from my participants during the interviewing process.

5.4 Recommendations

It is hoped that the recommendations based on this study will be useful for informing future training of psychologists. Furthermore, it is hoped that future researchers of this topic area will find the recommendations useful for their own work.

5.4.1 Recommendation based on research findings

Based on the findings of the research, it is recommended that future psychologists are trained more practical skills to enable them to work in a multicultural context and address issues of clients related to social justice. Findings of the study indicated that the participants come across several complex cultural dynamics and often have to work with clients who experience oppression. However, findings suggest that participants need adequate training in order to be able to deal with issues of diversity.

The participants reflected on their multicultural training being mainly focused self-reflection and an attitudinal approach. This report suggests that actual skills training is needed. Therefore, it is recommended that future psychology programs provide trainees with practical skills that will enable them to address the politics embedded in race, socioeconomic issues and other facets of cultural diversity.

It is also recommended that training institutions recognise the importance of training psychologists to be more competent in indigenous languages. The issue of language barrier is very common amongst mental health practitioners in South Africa (Duemert, 2010) and this was also evident in the research findings. South Africa consists of eleven official languages, thus, it is crucial that mental health professionals acknowledge the importance of learning the dominant language of his/her area.

From a social justice perspective, it is recommended that training institutions make social justice approaches more dominant. Highlighted by the participants was the importance of critical learning and having more opportunities to learn about how to address issues of social justice. Based on the research findings, oppression experienced by clients can be affectively dealt with by collaborating with other organisations, relevant resources, people and communities. Thus training of psychologists can improve social justice competency through educating psychologists on networking skills and the importance of networking.

The participants also acknowledged the importance of collaborating with communities in order to address the social ills of society. As has been indicated through literature (see Goodman, et al. 2004), psychologists should make use of community members to help make change in societies. Thus, it is recommended that psychologists get more involved with collaborating with community members to be more effective in addressing social justice issues.

It is prudent that the teachings of a social justice approaches are preceded by ideas of critical psychology. The participants argued that for significant changes to occur, psychologists should be taught critical approaches which will challenge the current format of psychology. As established in chapter two, critical psychology presents a range of approaches that challenge mainstream psychology knowledge and practice (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009). The participants acknowledged that though universities do offer critical approaches, these are not compulsory as student can choose to not do them. A useful recommendation is to make social justice and critical approaches an essential and compulsory part of psychology training.

Lastly but certainly not least, it is recommended that psychologists be skilled to be more involved in policy making decisions. In order to address the social ills of society, the participants stipulated that psychologists should be involved in spaces where they can influence policy making. Involving psychologists in policy making decisions is a notion also supported by Kennedy and Arthur (2014) as well as the study by Contantine et al (2007). Such involvement can enable psychologists to use their research skills to influence government procedures and affect social change (Contantine et al., 2007).

5.4.2 Recommendations for future research

Based on the limitations mentioned earlier, future research on this research area should consider the following recommendation:

- Similar research should be replicated in other provinces to explore the diverse experiences of psychologists working in South Africa
- Four participants allowed the research to obtain in-depth data, however, a larger sample should be considered for future research as this would be more reflective of South Africa's diverse population of psychologists.
- Researcher should be well informed and grounded in ideas of critical psychology, multicultural and feminist psychology before engaging in the research study. Having a

great understanding of the theoretical background will guide the researcher's enquiry process during data gathering and help them during the analysis process

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APPENDIX A: Informed consent

Dear Participant

My name is Tsepiso Thusi and I am currently registered for a masters degree in counselling psychology at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, Howard College campus. As part of my degree I am required to complete a research project. The research project that I am working on aims to explore whether qualified and practicing psychologists in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa feel equipped to deal with multicultural issues that may surface during their sessions. For example, do psychologists feel adequately equipped to deal with issues related to identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation? In addition, I would like to explore whether psychologists feel equipped to bring about social justice for clients experiencing different levels of oppression. I am interested to know if psychologists have any suggestions on how they can be trained to better deal with these issues.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. I would like to interview you about your experiences in relation to the topic described above. Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate you are entitled to withdraw from the process at any stage without any explanation and with no negative consequences. All the information gathered will remain confidential and to ensure anonymity the researcher will ask you to choose a pseudonym so that your real identity is not revealed.

While there are not direct benefits to participating in this study, it is hoped that your participation will contribute towards improving the training of psychologists who will be better equipped to deal with diversity and social justice in their practice.
If you have any queries or concerns please feel free to contact me:

Tsepiso Thusi
tsepisothusi@gmail.com
0712299814

This research has received ethical clearance from a university research committee. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee:

ximbap@ukzn.ac.za031 260 4609

My research is being overseen by a supervisor (Kerry Frizelle) who is a lecturer in the Discipline of Psychology at the University of Kwazulu-Natal. You may contact her on:

Frizellek1@ukzn.ac.za
031 2603261

I _____ (please fill in your name) give my consent to participate in the above mentioned research study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I_____(please fill in your name) give my consent to having my interview recorded.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Your choice of a pseudonym (a name different to your real one that will be used in the write-up of the study report).

_____

Questions:

I will be discussing some of the complexities of working with individuals from diverse cultural background. We all belong to various cultural backgrounds which implies that we experience the world differently as individuals. Culture includes an individual's multiple identities such as race, gender, religions, ethnicity (language), class and sexual orientation. These identities impact on our work as psychologists.

1) Did any experiences where you have worked with people from different cultural backgrounds (as described above) come to mind as introduced this topic?

2) What are the common challenges that you encounter when working with a client that does not share the same cultural background as yourself? (Illustrate by way of an example).

3) Can you describe your perceptions of your own level of multicultural?

4) Do you think that you are adequately equipped to deal with clients that present with psychological difficulties as a result of society's oppression (e.g. economic) and discrimination (e.g. gender, sexual orientation)?

5) Do you think it is a psychologist's role to try to change oppressive social, political and cultural factors that impact on client's mental health?

6) Do you feel the training of trainee counsellors adequately prepares them to work with diverse cultures and to address oppression?

7) What are the kinds of interventions do you believe can enhance counsellor's ability to be culturally competent and address issues of social justice for their clients?

APPENDIX C: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

23 January 2018

Mr Tsepiso Thusi 213507060
School of Applied Human Sciences-Psychology
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Thusi

Protocol reference number: HSS/1673/017M
Project Title: A qualitative exploration of self-perceived multicultural and social justice competence amongst a sample of South African psychologists

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 11 September 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Kerry Frizelle
cc. Academic Leader Research: Professor Jean Steyn
cc. School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli