

High academic achievement among black South African students:

Enabling and constraining processes

Mpheng Priscilla Thamae (215079663)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Social Sciences (Counselling Psychology) in the School of Applied Human Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

2018

Supervisor: Dr Nicholas Munro

DECLARATION

I, Mpheng Priscilla Thamae, declare that:

- (i) research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work;
- (ii) this thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university;
- (iii) this thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons; and
- (iv) this thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) their words have been re-written, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced;
- (v) this thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the references section.
- (vi) the final version of the dissertation has been loaded on Turnitin, and the front page of the resulting originality report is included as Appendix 11.

Signed: 

Mpheng Priscilla Thamae

Signed: 

Supervisor: Nicholas Munro

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Mr Christopher Okumu, for his emotional, and financial support throughout my education, *Apwoyomatek baba.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is an African proverb which says “it takes a village raise a child”. I say it takes a village to finish a thesis. I acknowledge the following people as my ‘village’

- To my Lord and personal saviour, Jesus Christ! You kept me! Surely the good work you begun in me (through this thesis) you have brought to completion.
- I also would like to acknowledge my mother, mme Thato NomasotjaPashe, for her love and support. *Kea lebohamokwenawampityasekake, e dimapa mora khosi!*
- I acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Nicholas Munro for his guidance, immeasurable patience, and incredible support throughout this journey.
- My Gratitude goes out to the participants from the three campuses of University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville, Howard and Pietermaritzburg campus). I consider it kindness that they gave up their time to be part of this study.
- Last (but not least) thank you to friends and family who supported me in this journey: opening your homes, your offices, proof reading and your continuous encouragement. Your prayers kept me.

ABSTRACT

One priority for South African higher education has been on increasing the numbers of students who are able to access higher education. Moreover, it has been important to increase access for students from historically disadvantaged race groups (Higher Education South Africa, 2015). As a consequence of this focus, higher education access has indeed increased in post-apartheid South Africa; however, the academic achievement of students who manage to access higher education still needs improvement. Findings from studies locally and internationally, indicate that academic achievement is constrained and/or enabled by the complex interplay of internal and external processes (Council on Higher Education, 2013).

For the purposes of this study, academic achievement was understood to include the attainment of final marks for modules that students pass, while high academic achievement was consequently understood as marks attained in the 70 – 100 % range. The purpose of this study was to identify and explore the processes which enable and constrain high academic achievement for black South African students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study used a qualitative methodology to achieve this purpose. Three focus group discussions and an interview were conducted with high achieving black South African students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. A semi-structured focus-group discussion and interview schedule were used to guide the data collection process, while thematic analysis was employed for data analysis purposes. Findings suggest that high achieving black South African students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal found multiple enabling and constraining processes as important in their high academic achievement trajectories. Specifically, being motivated to break the family poverty cycle, time management skills, studying a preferred course/degree, emotional and financial support from family, association with likeminded peers, positive attitude from lecturers, and having access to resources (such as the internet, library services, textbooks and laptops) were isolated as key enabling processes in the participants' high academic achievement. In contrast, losing focus and motivation in one's academics, lacking time management skills, some lecturers' negative attitudes, complex university structures and procedures with slow and bureaucratic services, and English language as the primary medium of instruction were reported as barriers to the participants' high academic achievement. These findings suggest that high academic achievement at university for black students is affected by both internal and external enabling

and constraining processes. University interventions aimed at improving academic achievement levels need to consider both internal and external processes in their execution.

KEYWORDS

High academic achievement, Academic achievement, South-African higher education
constraining processes, enabling processes

ABBREVIATIONS

UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
CHE	Council on Higher Education
SRL	Self-Regulated Learning
FGD-PMB	Focus-Group Discussion-Pietermaritzburg
FGD-HC	Focus-Group Discussion-Howard College
FGD-WV	Focus-Group Discussion-Westville
GKIHS	Golden Key International Honour Society
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Keywords.....	iv
Abstract.....	iv
Abbreviation.....	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Purpose of the study	3
1.3 Objectives of the study	3
1.4 Research questions	4
1.5 Significance of the study	4
1.6 Scope and restrictions of the study.....	5
1.7 Operational definitions of key terms	5
1.8 Structure of the dissertation.....	5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Background	7
2.3 Internal processes constraining and enabling high academic achievement	8
2.3.1Self-discipline	8
2.3.3 Self Esteem	9
2.3.3 English proficiency	10

2.3.4 Time Management	12
2.4 External processes constraining and enabling high academic achievement	12
2.4.1 Parent and Peer Support.....	12
2.4.2 Lack of finances	13
2.4.3 Lecture Attendance	15
2.5 Theoretical Framework	16
2.6 Conclusion.....	21
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	22
3.1 Introduction	22
3.2 The objectives of this study were:.....	22
3.3 Research Questions	22
3.4 Research paradigm	22
3.5 Research Approach	23
3.6 Target population	25
3.7 Sampling.....	26
3.8 Data collection procedures	26
3.9 Data collection techniques	28
3.9.1 Focus-group discussion.....	28
3.9.2 Interviews.....	30
3.10 Data analysis	30
3.11 Measures taken to ensure trustworthiness	32
3.11.1 Credibility	32
3.11.2 Dependability.....	33
3.11.3 Transferability.....	34
3.12 Ethical considerations	34

3.13	Author’s note.....	35
3.14	Conclusion.....	36
	CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	37
4.1	Introduction	37
4.2	Description of participants	37
4.3	Representation of the findings.....	38
4.4	Defining academic achievement	39
4.5	Presentation of findings.....	40
4.5.1	Enabling processes	40
4.5.2	Constraining processes	49
4.6	Conclusion.....	57
	CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	58
5.1	Introduction	58
5.2	Internal: Enabling processes.....	59
5.2.1	Motivation to break the poverty cycle in the family.....	59
5.2.2	Time management.....	60
5.2.3	A passion and purpose for the programme being studied.....	61
5.3	External: Enabling processes	61
5.3.1	Emotional and financial support from family.....	61
5.3.2	Like-minded peers	64
5.3.3	Lecturers positive attitude and behaviour	64
5.3.4	Resources	65
5.4	Internal constraining processes	66
5.4.1	Losing focus and motivation.....	66
5.4.2	Lack of time management.....	66

5.5	External constraining processes	67
5.5.1	University structure and procedures	67
5.5.2	Lecturers' negative attitude and behaviour.....	69
5.5.3	English language barrier	70
5.6	Summary	71
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....		72
6.1	Introduction	72
6.2	The objective of the study	72
6.2.1	Findings regarding objective one: Explaining high academic achievement.....	73
6.2.2	Findings regarding objectives one and two: Enabling and constraining processes .	73
6.3	Limitations	74
6.4	Recommendations	75
6.5	Conclusion.....	77
REFERENCES		79
APPENDICES		90

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

South Africa has been focused on enhancing the numbers of students who have access to higher education, especially for students from historically disadvantaged race-groups (Higher Education South Africa [HESA], 2014). As a consequence of this focus, higher education access has indeed increased post-apartheid; however, academic achievement of students who manage to access higher education still needs improvement. Post apartheid, academic achievement and access to higher education continue to be racially-skewed in South Africa, with white student graduation rate being on average 50% higher than that of black Africans, Coloureds and Indian students (Motala, 2018). In South Africa increasing access and graduation rates for historically disadvantaged groups is closely linked to attempts made at addressing the social and economic factors that influence academic achievement for these groups of students in higher education (Council of Higher Education [CHE], 2013). For the purpose of this study Black is used for students who are in the Indian, coloured and black (African) population, being aware that within this racial groups there are also different and complex dynamics regarding access to higher education and academic achievement.

Findings from studies locally and internationally, indicate that academic achievement is constrained and/or enabled by the complex interplay of internal and external processes (CHE, 2013). According to Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff, and Nasirudeen (2014) academic achievement is usually defined in terms of examination marks. In their study on factors contributing to academic performance of students Jayanthi et al., (2014) used the overall annual marks of students, which culminated in a Grade Point Average (GPA). Tests, course work and examination marks would all be used to compute a GPA score. For the purpose of this study high academic achievement was understood to be when a student receives an average of 70 – 100 percent. Internal processes are those which depend more on the individual and not necessarily the environment of the student. Self-discipline could be seen as an internal process while material resources such as computer laboratories and libraries could be seen more as “external” and/or environmental structures/services (CHE, 2013). The interplay of internal and external factors is displayed in their influence on each other, for example an internal process like self-discipline can be catalysed by an external process like

having disciplined friends. An internal process like self-esteem can be adversely influenced by an external issue like lack of financial and emotional support from family.

Identifying these constraints and enablers in academic achievement at higher education will assist in providing a basis for constructing interventions that can be put into place to improve both higher education institutions and higher education functioning at large.

A few studies (Matlala, 2005; Maraschin, 2008; Fakude, 2013) have been conducted to explore barriers to academic achievement with inclusion of perspectives from both lecturers and students.

Matlala (2005) conducted a study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, exploring the barriers to academic achievement of first year African students. In this study the following barriers were identified: financial problems, language difficulties, poor time management, problematic social relationships, personal and psychological problems, lack of accommodation and inability to communicate with lecturers.

In a study conducted at the Witwatersrand University, which was aimed at exploring issues pertaining to students' enrolment and academic achievement, results showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motives had the greatest influence on individuals' decisions to attend university, with those students intrinsically motivated performing better on average than those motivated by any other factor. In addition, socio-economic status played a role in academic achievement at university, possibly because it affected the quantity and quality of resources available to a student. Results from the study also revealed students with a higher socio-economic status tended to do better than those of lower socio-economic status. Lastly, results indicated that fluency in English also influenced student's overall academic achievement (Maraschin, 2008).

Fakude (2012) conducted a study at the University of Zululand where most of the students were black students with isiZulu as a predominant home language. In his study he investigated factors which contributed to poor academic achievement of undergraduate students and the findings indicated that most participants were affected by external factors as compared to internal factors. Some of the factors that were found to be adversely affecting academic achievement were: financial difficulties, enrolment, political affiliation, and

unavailability of lecturers to students. However, help-seeking was shown to have had a positive impact on students' academic achievement (Fakude, 2012).

At the Great Zimbabwe University, Mapuranga, Musingafi and Zebron's (2015) findings reveal that students perceive funding, student personal characteristics, support services and socio-economic environment as important determinants of their academic achievement. In Singapore factors such as gender, nationality of a student, co-curricular activities and prior interest in pursuing higher education were found to contribute to the academic achievement of higher education students (Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff, & Nasirudeen, 2014). In Turkey it was found that preparatory school attendance, high school attended, parent's level of education and class attendance affected student's academic achievement at University (Erdem, 2012).

The above studies highlight how the interplay of internal and external processes in academic achievement are important in the academic achievement trajectory. Both South African and international research findings emphasise financial problems as a dominant external barrier to academic achievement.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the processes which high achieving black South Africa students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal experience as constraining and enabling their high academic achievement. This research also sought to examine whether these constraining and enabling processes were internal or external to the participants. The interplay between internal and external processes was also of paramount importance since the theoretical framework under which this study was located is a social cognitive theory view of self-regulated learning. This theory (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2) underpins human functioning as the on-going interaction between behavioural, environmental (i.e., external), cognitive and other personal (i.e., internal) factors (Cazan, 2012).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were:

- To explore how high achieving black South African students explain their high academic achievement.
- To explore the processes that high achieving black South African students identify as enabling their high academic achievement.
- To explore the processes that high achieving black South African students identify as constraining their high academic achievement.

1.4 Research questions

- What explanations do high achieving black South African students provide for their high academic achievement?
- What processes do high achieving black South African students identify as enabling their high academic achievement?
- What processes do high achieving black South African students identify as constraining their high academic achievement?

1.5 Significance of the study

In South Africa, studies done on academic achievement have increased over the years, presenting different results, regarding academic achievement both from the lecturers' and students' perspectives. Studies exploring issues related to academic achievement were done in historically white universities with a majority of white South Africa students. The University of South Africa (UNISA) consisted only of part-time students, therefore findings from data collected at UNISA were limited to the distance learning context (www.unisa.ac.za). Fortunately, academic achievement continued to spark interest in researchers and more studies related to the topic continued to add to the existing body of knowledge on academic achievement. As identified earlier, Fakude (2012) conducted a study at the University of Zululand exploring factors which contributed to poor academic achievement. The study reported in this dissertation is significant in that it is part of a group of institutional studies that are focused on exploring the phenomenon of high academic achievement among black students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study forms part

of an institutional (and probably national) agenda to explore the ways in which black students can and do excel academically in higher education, and how high levels of academic attainment can be nurtured and enhanced.

1.6 Scope and restrictions of the study

As stated earlier in this chapter, this study was conducted at three campuses (out of the five existing campuses) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, namely: Pietermaritzburg, Westville and Howard College campus. Participants of the study were registered black students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Additionally, participation was limited only to high achieving students of the university, listed in the scholarship list and also members of the Golden Key International Honour Society. The findings of this study are therefore limited to the context in which it was conducted.

1.7 Operational definitions of key terms

- **Black:** Consistent with national and higher education trends, this study understood “black” to refer to people who identify as African, Coloured, and Indian.
- **Academic achievement:** The attainment of set learning outcomes per module.
- **Internal processes:** Issues which are intrinsic to a student as it relates to academic achievement (CHE, 2013). For example, self-discipline, motivation or focus.
- **External processes:** Issues which are extrinsic to a student as it relates to academic achievement (CHE, 2013). For example, reading material, library services or financial resources.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

- **Chapter 1** introduces the research topic, this chapter provided a brief background into the topic, displaying key findings from other related studies. It also highlighted the objectives and research questions of the study.
- **Chapter 2** is a review on literature where certain constraining and enabling processes of academic achievement in higher education are discussed in relation to findings from previous studies. Lastly, the social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning, as a theoretical framework under which the study is located is discussed.

- **Chapter 3** provides a detailed account of the methodology used in conducting this research. The research sample and research methods are discussed. The ethical issues and limitations encountered in this research have also been highlighted.
- **Chapter 4** presents the findings from this study in themes which either internally or externally constrain and/or enable academic achievement of the participants.
- **Chapter 5** discusses the findings of the study in relation to the literature and theoretical framework. Like chapter four, Chapter 5 is arranged in themes which are either internally or externally constraining and enabling academic achievement of participants.
- **Chapter 6** concludes the dissertation, identifies limitations and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore findings of studies which have researched the processes which enable or constrain (high) academic achievement in the university context. The chapter will start off by providing a brief background on the academic achievement of black South African university students. Subsequently findings on the internal and external processes which have been found to constrain and enable high academic achievement of students will be discussed and finally the theoretical framework within which the study is located will be discussed.

2.2 Background

There is growing evidence that academic failure and success in higher education is affected by interplay of various processes, those which could be explained as “internal” and “external” to students (CHE, 2013). Internal processes are those which depend more on the individual and not necessarily the environment of the student. Self-discipline could be seen as an internal process while material resources, such as computer laboratories and lack of finances could be seen more as “external” and/or environmental issues. In South African higher education, the interplay of internal and external factors affected racial groups differently because of the apartheid history and the residue of legacies that continue to impact the education system (CHE, 2013). African, Coloured and Indian (i.e., black) students came from communities which were socially and economically disadvantaged and were thus less likely to access or successfully complete training in higher education. Additionally, the inclusion of the Bantu Education act of 1953 and the Universities Extension act of 1959 during the apartheid era further discriminated against black students in terms of the quality of the education and its limited educational facilities (Tshotsho, 2013). In the South African context, it therefore seems impossible to increase access to higher education for people from socially and economically disadvantaged groups without addressing the social and economic factors, and the impermeable effects of poverty and associated racial inequalities (CHE, 2013).

Academic achievement is a concern in the South African higher education system, with a high drop-out rate of 35% among first year students and a 20% drop-out rate in second year. Furthermore only 15% of students complete their studies in the specified years of completion, with black South African students constituting most drop-outs in higher education (Strydom, Mentz, & Kuh, 2010). The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is concerned that the high drop-out rate and low completion rates are adversely affecting the country, costing South Africa R1.3 billion annually, thereby diverting resources which could be used to expand educational resources and redress racial inequalities inherited from the apartheid era (Letseka, 2009).

The findings above are evidence that more work still needs to be done regarding the academic achievement of black South African students. Academic experiences of black South African students need to be documented so as to track progress being made and to identify areas of improvement. With so many challenges particular to disadvantaged students (comprising mainly of black South African students) in the higher education system, it would seem important to explore processes which affect their high academic achievement. This documentation would help us to further promote and enhance those processes identified as enabling and to recognise areas of improvement from processes identified as constraining high academic achievement.

2.3 Internal processes constraining and enabling high academic achievement

2.3.1 Self-discipline

In the academic context, self-discipline is seen in a student's ability to continue with a task and overturn any distraction when approaching a set academic goal. Self-discipline does not happen automatically; it requires deliberate efforts and also comprises of a student's control over his/her behaviour, thoughts and emotions (Zhao & Kuo, 2015). Self-discipline is closely linked to self-control and delayed gratification. Students who tend to procrastinate studying by distracting themselves with other activities tend to have lower scores on self-discipline measures (Cepe, 2014). When students have self-discipline, it is assumed that they are at an advantage to perform better in their academics (Simba, Agak, & Kabuka, 2016). Some researchers believe that self-discipline is vital for high academic achievement (Simba et al., 2016). Gong, Rai, Beck, and Heffernan (2009) found that self-discipline influenced academic achievement. Another study in South Africa investigating factors influencing academic

success or failure for both first year and senior students at the University of Pretoria revealed that both the lecturers and the students emphasised the importance of self-discipline as a factor contributing to academic achievement (Fraser & Killen, 2003).

2.3.3 Self Esteem

Self-esteem can be identified as an internal process which facilitates high academic achievement. Self-esteem may be defined as the way in which people perceive and feel about themselves, as evidenced in their ongoing interaction with their environment and people they encounter (Kernis, 2003). Additionally, self-esteem is defined by Woolfolk (2005) as an affective act which encapsulates the value or worth we attach to our self-assessments. Higher self-esteem emanates from competence put forward in things that are perceived as valuable while low self-esteem is seen in how individuals negatively assess themselves when they focus only on their weaknesses (Vialle, Heaven, & Ciarrochi, 2005). Individuals with high self-esteem initially perceive themselves as competent to complete tasks set before them, they persevere even at difficult tasks, and therefore perform better academically (Seabi, 2011). In exploring adjustment to the university environment among disadvantaged students in South Africa, it was shown that students with high self-esteem were better adjusted as compared to those with low self-esteem; additionally, they maintained high academic achievement levels (Petersen, Louw, & Dumont, 2009). Another South African study consistent with the findings of the above was conducted at the University of Witwatersrand with first year engineering students. This study reported a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (Seabi, 2011). In an attempt to try and explain the results above, some researchers have reasoned that students with high self-esteem attained high academic achievement because they felt positive about themselves, thus making them more resilient in their academic challenges and were therefore likely to not give up easily when challenged. They were also likely to have high academic aspirations for themselves which they pursued intently, believing in their capability to accomplish the set academic goals (Seabi, 2011). Internationally a study in Pakistan which used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Academic Performance Rating Scale to measure self-esteem and academic achievement, reported a strong correlation between high self-esteem and academic achievement, showing also that high self-esteem leads to high academic achievement. Interestingly the study also revealed a significant difference between male and female students on self-esteem and academic performance scores. The scores indicated that female students had higher scores on

academic performance when compared to male students and male students had higher scores on self-esteem when compared to female students (Arshad, Zaidi, & Mahmood, 2015). This difference between male and female students could be related to cultural expectations on women to be more modest than males, in such cases female students are more likely to score lower on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in the interest of portraying the expected modest Pakistani female.

While there seems to be findings reporting a positive correlation between high self-esteem and academic achievement, some studies have found a negative correlation between the two constructs, showing that not all high academic achievers have high self-esteem, also that academic achievement cannot solely be accounted for by high self-esteem (Hope, Chavous, Jagers, & Sellers, 2013; Braumeister, Cambell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). This negative correlation could well be linked to the question of whether high self-esteem is a product of high academic achievement or if high self-esteem in students assists in high academic achievement.

2.3.3 English proficiency

English proficiency can be conceptualised as an internal process necessary for high academic achievement in contexts where English is the medium of instruction. It is usually as regarded as a student's ability to use the (English) language in a general sense, including usage in relevant academic settings (Sebolai, 2016). Although there are numerous factors which contribute to high academic achievement, proficiency in the English language (in contexts where is it used as medium of instruction) is regarded as one of the issues which constrain high academic achievement (Rooy & Rooy 2016). In South Africa, Stephen, Welman, and Jordaan (2004) and Rampela (2014) found that the English language proficiency was associated with academic achievement. Outside South Africa, a study from Tanzania reported a positive relationship between English proficiency and academic achievement, in academic settings where English language is used as a medium of instruction (Wilson & Komba, 2012).

Krugel and Fourie (2014) revealed that a teacher/educator's English proficiency directly affected the academic achievement of grade 12 learners in settings where English was a

medium of instruction. At least for high school level this means the more proficient a teacher is in English the more likely they will be able to better support their learners academically.

In the South African context, the issue of English proficiency affects mostly rural, under resourced schools, where most teachers are African, inexperienced and often under-qualified (Stephen, Welman, & Jordaan, 2004) (Krugel & Fourie, 2014). These are historically segregated schools, which had poor quality of education and limited educational resources in the apartheid era (Webb, Lafon, & Pare, 2014). As stated earlier, students from such environments may be at a severe disadvantage when it comes to academic achievement, when they get into higher learning institutions where English is a primary medium of instruction (Stephen, Welman, & Jordaan, 2004). Rampela (2014) found that lack of English language proficiency resulted in poor academic achievement.

English proficiency is a critical issue because most schools in South Africa use English as a medium of instruction and this poses a challenge for English second language speakers. The same challenge applies for institutions where Afrikaans is a medium of instruction for students have a different mother-tongue (Nyika, 2014). In Tanzania it was found that children who had English as a medium of instruction from primary school performed better than those who were taught on kiSwahili, post-primary school (Komba & Bosco, 2015). Rwanda is also another country grappling with the issue of English used as a medium of instruction to a student population which is not adequately conversant with the language of instruction, thereby adversely affecting their academic achievement (Marie, 2013).

Although identified as an internal process, English proficiency may also be an external process because of issues external to an individual like remnants of apartheid legacies and the rate at which the government is addressing them. For example, in South Africa the issue of English as the primary medium of instruction may adversely affect academic achievement of most African South African learners, who use English as a second language, being taught by teachers with limited English proficiency and attending school with limited funding and thus scarce educational resources to assist in promoting adequate English language proficiency (Webb, Lafon, & Pare, 2014).

2.3.4 Time Management

Finally, time management may be seen as an internal process, enabling high academic achievement for students. Time management is a set of practices which work together to help one get more value out of their time with the aim of improving one's quality of life (Aduke, 2015). When it comes to students, time management refers to the way students manage their time so as to perform better academically (Hamzah, Lucky,&Joarder, 2014). Time management has been argued to be one of the factors which contribute significantly to high academic achievement, most researchers seem to agree that it is in mastering time management that academic achievement is improved (Kaushar, 2013; Kitsantas, Winsle, &Huie, 2008; Miqdadi, Monami, &Elmousel, 2014). Although time management is identified as internally affecting academic achievement it can also be an external process because of how it could potentially be enhanced by possessing external resources like calendars, diaries, and alarm clocks. Additionally, time management as an external factor can be a critical issue for students travelling long distances to the university, as this can affect their study and class schedules. However, it has been categorised as an internal factor because of how it is predominantly individually executed.

2.4 External processes constraining and enabling high academic achievement

2.4.1 Parent and Peer Support

A study assessing academic achievement of first year students from the Central University of Technology found three variables which affected academic achievement, namely; purpose in the life of a student, Grade 12 results of students, and parental support (Makola & Van Den Berg, 2008). Regarding parental support another study postulated that a caregiver's values on education influenced motivation and school attendance of students, thereby affecting their academic achievement. This means that children who have caregivers and/or parents who instil in them the importance of education are likely to have better motivation to learn and to commit to school attendance and therefore potentially improving their academic performance (McCoy, Wolf,& Godfrey, 2013).

Although parents and/or caregivers seem to be playing a significant role in their children's academic achievement either directly or indirectly, the role of their peers is also worth mentioning. Students reported that seeking academic support from their peers helped improve their study strategies and thereby improving their academic achievement. They reported that

engaging in activities such as group discussions with their peers assisted in improving their academic achievement (Wang & Neihart, 2015). Additionally, having likeminded peers who supported high academic achievement, who complied with school rules and had high academic aspirations positively influenced students' efforts towards high academic achievement (Darensbourg & Blake, 2013). However, another study exploring the influence of parents, peer delinquency and school attitudes on academic achievement found an indirect influence between academic achievement and delinquent behaviour (Chang & Le, 2005). The study revealed that affiliation with delinquent peers affected academic achievement indirectly, in that, the associations with delinquent behaviours may prevent youth from seeking academic support or resources (Chang & Le, 2005). Additionally, delinquent students could discourage their peers from fulfilling their educational aspirations and this would therefore negatively affect their attitude towards school and subsequently their academic achievement (Chang & Le, 2005).

2.4.2 Lack of finances

Most black students in higher education institutions are from low-income households, and this is likely to cause a strain on their academic achievement (Manik, 2015). Students from the University of Zululand (with 99% black population) explained that financial challenges adversely affected their academic achievement in that some years they would not be certain of their return to university because of a lack of funds. Lack of finances as an external issue made them loose hope thereby adversely affecting motivation and focus on their academics. The fear of not returning to University to further their study and achieve their dreams discouraged them, making it less likely for them to work hard and push towards high academic achievement (Fakude, 2012). Additionally, in a study exploring academic achievement among black South African youth from KwaZulu-Natal, participants reported that lack of finances was a stressor which compromised their academic achievement. Participants reported that not having financial support meant compromising their safety, as they would have to stay long hours studying in the library, which sometimes meant walking home at night because they did not have transport fare. They reported incidents where they had to learn on empty stomachs because food was not always available in their homes (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). These findings are supported by international studies, where low-income in

a household was reported to adversely affecting academic achievement of students (Lacour & Tissington, 2011).

A lack of finances has regularly been linked the high drop-out rate in South African students. The high drop-out rate was continues to be from students who come from families with low socio-economic statuses (Manik, 2015). In exploring factors which contribute to poor academic achievement among undergraduates at the University of Zululand, Fakude (2012) found similar findings, where most of the participants (60%) reported a lack of financial support as adversely affecting their academic achievement. Students reported that this was an institution-wide problem that affected most of their peers.

In South Africa Another challenge regarding the lack of financial support for students are issues associated with ‘first-generation’ students. First generation students are students with parents and/or guardians who do not have a higher education level qualification (Siyengo, 2015). Not only is there lack of experiential knowledge and mentorship (because the parents have no experience of university and the challenges of higher education) but financial support is limited as the parents are either unemployed or working low-paying jobs (Siyengo, 2015; Jewett, 2008).

Not all studies find a positive and/or significant relationship between high academic achievement and the socio-economic status of the family. In her study on psycho-social factors and academic achievement among African women students at a predominantly white university in South Africa, Malefo (2000) reported no statistical significance between economic status of a family and academic achievement. Outside South Africa, in Kenya, Ogweno, Kathuri and Obara (2014) reported that students who were from the lowest income households had higher mean scores in one of the subjects at school, as compared to students coming from families with the highest monthly income. In the former study, other variables such as bursary assistance could account for the non-significant relationship between the economic status of family and academic achievement. Although sponsorship could be partial at times, students who are sponsored are less likely to be severely affected by the low economic status of their families, thus more likely to attain high academic achievement. In the latter study the community in which the study was conducted is reported as generally poor, with low-income in most families, therefore the variance in household income was probably low, therefore not significantly affecting those that are earning the lowest income.

Additionally, the findings reported academic achievement only in one subject, therefore it could be possible to find a positive and/or significant relationship between economic status of the family and academic achievement if all other subjects were included.

2.4.3 Lecture Attendance

In exploring the relationship between lecture attendance and academic achievement in an undergraduate psychology class at a South African university, Thatcher, Fridjhon, and Cockcroft (2007) revealed findings which demonstrated that students who attended class all the time showed a statistically advanced academic achievement over students who did not regularly attend class and those who do not attend class at all. A study in Malaysia reported similar findings, solidifying a positive correlation between class attendance and academic achievement (Ali, Mokhtar, & Salamat, 2009; Golding, 2011). Similarly, the Department of Accounting from the University of Pretoria reported that students with poor academic performance had a lower attendance percentage rate than those with high academic achievement. Interestingly those who obtained the highest mark in their accounting subject examination had an overall attendance rate of 100% (Coetzee, 2011).

Regarding lecturers' and students' perceptions of the relationship between class attendance and academic achievement, a South African study on factors influencing academic achievement for first year and senior students at the University of Pretoria reported differences in perceptions among students, in that first year students saw regular class attendance as leading to high academic achievement but senior students placed minimal importance on class attendance in correlation with academic achievement (Fraser & Killen, 2003). In their study Steenkamp, Baard, and Frick (2009) explored factors influencing success in first-year accounting at a South African university. In this study they found that a small number of the students linked poor academic achievement to low class attendance. In the above study one of the reasons cited for not attending class was the language barrier. Students who were not conversant with Afrikaans reported avoiding class because Afrikaans was used as a language of instruction and because they could not understand Afrikaans they resolved not attend their accounting class (Steenkamp, Baard, & Frick, 2009). This finding further solidifies the issue of language being a barrier in high academic achievement, discussed earlier in section 2.3.3, where other students are more privileged because of their proficiency in a language which is being used as a medium of instruction. In section 2.3.3 the

English language is discussed as a barrier to high academic achievement for students who are not proficient in it, in contexts where English is used as a medium of instruction.

Beyond the debate around the relationship of class attendance and high academic achievement some researchers have argued that bringing the student to class should be coupled with engaging them while in class. In studies where there was a negative correlation between academic achievement and class attendance, researchers have reasoned that their attendance did not guarantee engagement with learning material (Golding, 2011). Additionally, some researchers have hypothesised that the minimal impact of class attendance on academic achievement may be due to assessments focusing more on the reproduction of information from textbooks rather than critical thinking and exploration of ideas (which students can attain from engaging actively with the learning material in a class room setting) and as a result students may have decided on the redundancy of attending lectures (Fraser & Killen, 2003).

Although enabling and constraining processes have been categorised as external and/or internal to academic achievement some have shown that they can both be internal and external at the same time. The interplay of internal and external processes evidenced in the above sections, is the reason why the theoretical framework of this study is located with the social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning. In the following section this theoretical framework will be discussed, and its link to the interplay of internal and external processes will be made explicit.

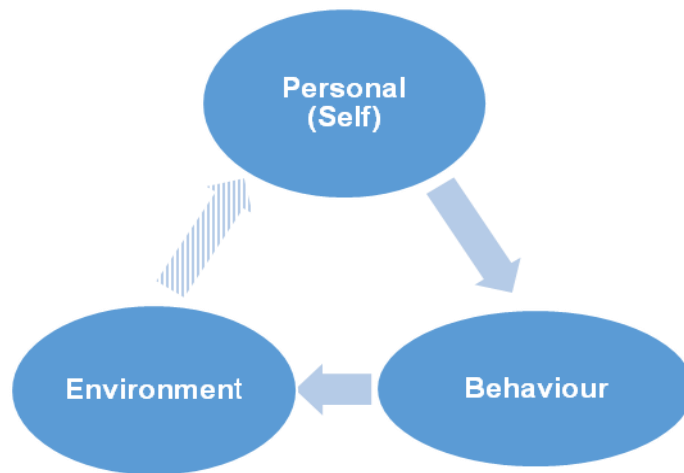
2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was conceptually located in social-cognitive theory, with a specific focus on the concept of self-regulated learning. It was hypothesised that social-cognitive theory and self-regulated learning could conceptually explain the processes which contribute to high academic achievement. Social-cognitive theory stemmed from Social learning theory. In Social learning theory Bandura emphasized the environment as the chief influence behind human behaviour. He later added the role of cognitive power, renaming the theory to Social-cognitive theory, showing that people still have some power over their behaviour as they can choose whether or not they are shaped by their experiences (McLeod, 2016). Social-cognitive theory views human functioning as the on-going interaction between behavioural,

environmental, cognitive and other personal factors (Jakešova & Kalenda, 2014). The lens through which high academic achievement could be viewed is one where external and internal (environmental) processes influence high academic achievement (Jakešova & Kalenda, 2014). According to Kitsantas, Winsler and Hue (2008)

From a social cognitive perspective, self-regulation involves: (a) setting specific goals; (b) utilising task strategies such as elaborating, organising, and rehearsing; (c) displaying high levels of self-efficacy and intrinsic interest; and (d) self-monitoring and self-reflecting on performance outcomes. Therefore, academic self-regulation involves students who are independent, self-initiated learners with the ability to use a variety of learning strategies (e.g., organising, transforming, note taking) to accomplish specific learning goals. (p. 45)

Figure 1 (below) displays the social-cognitive assumptions of self-regulated academic learning.



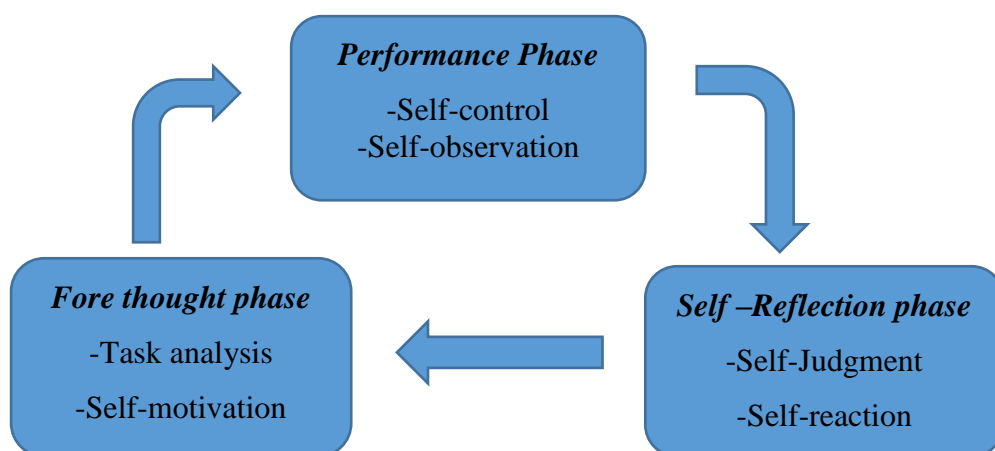
*Figure 1: A triadic analysis of self-regulated functioning
Adapted from Zimmerman 1989*

As depicted through Figure 1, social cognitive theorists postulate that self-regulated learning cannot be understood outside environmental and behavioural events. These events are assumed to be reciprocal in fashion (Jakešova&Kalenda, 2014). For example, success of completion of a task cannot only be accounted for by personal beliefs of efficacy but also by external stimuli (from the environment), such as encouragement or prior rewards from a teacher. The reciprocity does not mean the events are equal in strength at all times. In some

contexts, the personal-self could be influenced more by the environment than behavioural and personal events, while in some contexts where the environment is not highly structured and rigid, personal or behavioural events may be salient influences in self-regulative learning. Self-regulated learning manifests to the degree that a student uses personal processes to tacitly regulate behaviour and the immediate learning environment (Jakešova&Kalenda, 2014).

Self-regulation is not displayed only in mental ability or academic achievement, rather it is displayed in the student’s self-initiated efforts where they transform their mental abilities into their academic skills. Here learning is not a one-sided process where educators provide information, rather learning is viewed as an activity which students take upon themselves in a proactive way rather than in a reactive way. Self-regulated learners are aware of their strengths and limitations; they monitor their behaviour based on their personally set goals and task-related strategies. Additionally, they self-reflect to validate the increasing effectiveness of their self-regulation; in turn this enhances their self-satisfaction and motivation to continually improve their learning methods (Zimmerman, 2002).

Figure 2 below shows phases and sub-processes of self-regulation. In the forethought phase, task analysis and self-motivation beliefs are sub processes explaining beliefs and processes which occur *before* efforts to learn. The performance phase explains processes which occur *during* behavioural implementation while the self-reflection phase discusses processes which occur *after* each learning effort (Zumbrum, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011).



*Figure 2; Structure and function of self-regulatory processes
Adapted from Zumbrum, Tadlock, & Roberts (2011)*

The **fore-thought phase** of the self-regulatory processes includes task analysis and self-motivation. Task analysis is about goal setting and strategic planning in one's studies. For example, planning for a test ahead of time, setting goals and committing to ways which will assist in attaining them. Self-motivation comes from self-efficacy beliefs about the competence to perform a task. In the **performance phase** there is self-control and self-observation. In self-control the student develops the strategies and methods planned in the fore-thought phase. Self-observation is a way of monitoring the self to see both its strengths and areas of improvement. The **self-reflection phase** of the self-regulatory processes is also divided into two processes, namely; self-judgement and self-reaction. *Self-judgement* involves evaluation of performance based on a certain standard. Additionally, self-judgement may include *causal* attribution which refers to a belief about the cause of the success or failure in tasks. If a student attributes poor performance as an indicator of their innate inability to complete a task, then they are likely to be demotivated in their academic achievement. However, if a student attributes their poor performance to something that is within their control, for example, that more studying and planning would improve their academic achievement, then such students are motivated to make efforts towards improving results on the failed task. In the *Self-reaction* process, feelings of satisfaction and positive affect towards one's academic achievement sustain a student's academic performance. Research has proven that increase in self-satisfaction increases motivation, while its decrease is also a decrease in motivation (Zimmerman, 2002). Additionally, self-reaction also involves adaptive and defensive responses. In defensive reactions a student withdraws from opportunities to learn and perform to avoid chances of poor performance with the aim of protecting their academic self-concept. In contrast adaptive responses of self-reaction refer to ways in which a student adjusts his/her learning styles to improve academic achievement; this may include the discarding or inclusion of ineffective learning styles. This perspective of self-regulated learning reveals its cyclical nature because self-reflections from prior efforts influence subsequent forethought processes, for example self-dissatisfaction from past tasks may decrease levels of self-efficacy in future tasks (Zimmerman, 2002).

Examples of self-regulated learning strategies for students include; goal setting, planning, self-motivation, attention control, flexible use of strategies, self-monitoring, appropriate help-seeking and self-evaluation (Zumbrunn, Tadlock,& Roberts, 2011). To encourage self-

regulated learning in the classrooms teacher could use strategies such: direct instruction and modelling; guided and independent practice; social support and feedback and reflective practice. *Direct instruction and modelling* involves modelling and demonstration by teachers as a way of helping their learners achieve the expected outcomes. In *guided and independent practice*, the learner is gradually guided to move from dependency to independency. A teacher may initially observe and support a learner as they practice a learning strategy, then over time the learner is expected to independently practice learning. *Social support and feedback* from teacher and peers is also an imperative aspect as students learn to be more self-regulative. The social-cognitive theory associates well with this strategy as both the individual and environmental processes are considered in helping the student to be more self-regulated. Lastly *reflective practice* by teachers is needed as an evaluative and monitoring strategy to measure the effectiveness of a given learning strategy so as continue or discontinue with it, for high academic achievement of students (Zumbrunn, Tadlock,& Roberts, 2011).

Although strategies for promoting self-regulated learning in classrooms have been identified, there are some challenges which may act as barriers towards the goal of producing self-regulated students. For example, many teachers find that there is not enough time needed to train students on how to utilise some self-regulated learning strategies (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011). Additionally, learners may not be ready to change their general outlook on learning, as most of them are more concerned with passing (reproducing content in text books so as to get high marks) rather than engaging and understanding class room content. Teachers also report that another challenge in promoting self-regulated learning could stem from teachers' lack of training, experience and/or personal confidence. Lastly a greater challenge lies on school curricular, in most cases the curricular is rigid and does not allow teachers to incorporate self-regulated learning, meaning that schools are therefore not likely to produce self-regulated learners. Lacking self-regulated learning skills like self-control, self-observation etc. Students are then challenged by the demands of high education when they get into higher education institutions. This calls for significant changes at national level in order for the formal education system to start producing self-regulated students who are equipped with skills which assist them to continue learning, even as they progress into higher education (Mikroyannidis et al, 2014).

There are a few studies which have found a positive relationship between academic achievement and self-regulated learning strategies. A study exploring whether self-regulated learning strategies could improve academic achievement in online higher education learning environments found a positive correlation between academic achievement and self-regulated learning strategies of time management, metacognition, and critical thinking. This correlation was noticed in a context where there was a smaller size of students rather than the traditional classroom setting at higher education institutions (Goradia & Bugarcic, 2017). Similarly, another study using self-regulated learning instrument developed by Purdie et al. (1996) and validated by Ahmad (2007) for the Arab learning context, found a significant and positive relationship between academic achievement and self-regulated learning constructs of goal setting and planning, which were also found to be significant predictors of academic achievement (Alotaibi, Tohmaz, & Jabak, 2017). Additionally, another study exploring self-efficacy and self-regulated learning as predictors of student academic achievement found a positive relationship between self-regulated learning and academic achievement (Agustiani, Cahyad, & Musa, 2016).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter began by briefly looking at the general state of South Africa's higher education system and then presented findings from previous studies related to constraining and enabling processes in high academic achievement. Self-regulated learning from a social-cognitive perspective was also discussed as a lens through which the study attempted to articulate high academic achievement. The following chapter will discuss the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods that were used for the study. The following topics are discussed: objectives of the study, research paradigm, research approach, the target population, sampling, data collection procedures and techniques, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations. This study formed part of an overarching institutional study on high academic achievement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.2 The objectives of this study were:

- To explore how high achieving black South African students explain their high academic achievement.
- To explore the processes that high achieving black South African students identify as enabling their high academic achievement
- To explore the processes that high achieving black South African students identify as constraining their high academic achievement

3.3 Research Questions

- What explanations do high achieving black South African students provide for their high academic achievement?
- What processes do high achieving black South African students identify as enabling their high academic achievement?
- What processes do high achieving black South African students identify as constraining their high academic achievement?

3.4 Research paradigm

A paradigm in qualitative research can be explained as “an umbrella containing the researcher’s views and reality, how knowledge is acquired, the values that guide the research, the methods used to conduct the research, the language used to communicate the research process and findings” (Morrow, Sound, & Abrams, 2012, p.95). For this study, an

interpretive approach was used to understand the reasons which high achieving black South African students perceive as constraining and enabling their high academic achievement. Although self-regulated learning has been mainly studied from a positivist paradigm, an interpretive paradigm was used because the core interest of the study was the experiences and meanings provided by participants. The interpretive paradigm relies on people's subjective experiences, taking those experiences as real in their context with the researcher attempting to understand the experiences of participants by interacting and carefully listening to them (Terreblanche, Kelly, & Durrheim, 2006).

In the interpretive paradigm the researcher is encouraged to view the world through the lens of the participants, engaging in their experiences and perceptions so as to interpret their understanding. In essence, the crux of an interpretive methodology explores the way in which people make sense of their subjective realities and the meaning they attach to it (Tracy, 2013). I also anticipated different definitions of high academic achievement including ways in which the students felt they were either enabled or constrained in their high academic achievement. Zahidi's (2012) study suggests that there can be congruence within a study that is exploring self-regulated learning (which has most commonly been explored using quantitative positivist methods) that is located in an interpretivist paradigm. A study similar to that of Zahidi (2012) was employed, Zahidi (2012) used a qualitative design involving multiple case studies, to explore how six English language learners, who used self-regulated learning strategies to complete language learning tasks and also how these learners coped with challenges of learning and using English as a second language. It was assumed in my study that the high achieving students recruited as participants would have used at least some components of self-regulated learning to attain their levels of high academic achievement.

3.5 Research Approach

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because of its intention to obtain in-depth information regarding the experiences and meanings attached to high academic achievement of black South African students from University of KwaZulu-Natal. Cohesion between an interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods exists because qualitative methods are consistent with the demands of interpretivism, which entail the generation of rich detailed data. Generating and presenting this kind of data helps an interpretivist researcher to fully

understand and communicate the context of the phenomena. Additionally, qualitative methods suit an interpretivist paradigm because within this paradigm, reality is viewed as socially constructed, complex and ever evolving (Tracy, 2013). Similarly, in this study, reality was defined by participants, their experiences, what they said and how they felt towards certain issues. These thoughts and feelings represented the reality of the participants in the study.

Cazan (2012) postulates that qualitative methods are more suitable when self-regulated learning is understood as an experience; within a real context and a time in which it takes place, because learning is an ongoing process that happens in a particular setting.

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in many ways. Some of the key features which helps one distinguish between the two research approaches includes qualitative research being conducted in the natural setting of the participants, with more attention being given on the process rather than outcome. A participant's perspective is emphasised, the main aim is to attain in-depth detailed descriptions and understandings of participants, the aim is also to understand a phenomenon in its specific context rather than attempting to generalise to a larger or extended population. A qualitative researcher is seen as involved and engaging with data rather than objective and unaffected by the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2005).

Strengths and limitations of Qualitative Approach

Qualitative methods are helpful when the researcher is interested in the views of either a homogenous or diverse group, how they understand and experience a certain phenomenon. Here the strength lies in in-depth inquiry which can probe underlying values, beliefs and assumptions (Atieno, 2009). Because I was interested in the experiences and understandings of students from University of KwaZulu-Natal, exploring their detailed experiences and perceptions about high academic achievement added value to the study.

Another strength of qualitative research is that data collection strategies like interviews are often more open-ended than close-ended. This allows participants to raise other issues which might have not been initially included in the interview schedule (Kumar, 2011). Choy (2014) postulates that a qualitative researcher should not approach the data collection process with

preconceived finite ideas. Instead, the researcher should be interested in discovering information previously unknown to them.

It is imperative for a researcher to choose a research method which is suitable to his/her research questions. This means that a researcher should not just choose a research approach because they feel more competent in it because there are advantages and disadvantages for every approach. A researcher must carefully analyse the objectives of the study and employ a method (s) fitting for credible findings (Choy, 2014). Limitations of the approach chosen for this study also had to be taken into consideration. Qualitative methods involve a time consuming, labour intensive analysis process and a need for skilled interviewers and/or facilitators who can carry out data collection in a way that does not influence or alter the data (with biased personal biases and idiosyncrasies) from its original form (Choy, 2014). Another disadvantage of qualitative research is that the knowledge produced from data might not extend to other wider settings with the same degree of certainty which quantitative methodology would offer (Antieno, 2009). Although I was not a formally trained as a research interviewer at the time of data collection, I sought help from my supervisor and from my peers who had already embarked on the data collection process so as to ensure that I was doing my best as an interviewer/focus-group discussion facilitator. Moreover, I had been trained in basic interviewing and counselling skills prior to collecting the data, and suspect that this training assisted in enhancing my competence in data collection.

3.6 Target population

Black African high academic achievers of University of KwaZulu-Natal were sought with the intention of exploring the constraining and enabling processes regarding their high academic achievement.

The aim of the study was not on the number of participants but rather on getting appropriate participants who would provide in-depth information about their academic experiences. This study formed part of a larger institutional study on exceptional academic achievement at University of KwaZulu-Natal, and therefore the participants for this study were sought from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Chapter four, section 4.2 includes a more detailed description of the participants in the study.

3.7 Sampling

Purposive sampling, which is also known as judgemental sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique which relies on the researcher's knowledge and expertise on a particular group from which to select participants (Berg, 2001). In purposive sampling, the researcher approaches individuals who are likely to have the required information and the willingness to share the information (Kumar, 2011). This type of sampling was chosen because participants needed were expected to be high academic achievers from the black population of the University. The study would have benefited little from random sampling techniques since not all students at university are classified as high academic achievers. Classification of high achievers was done according to the University standards because participants were recruited from a scholarship list which included students whom the University had identified as high academic achievers. Students were invited via university email address and the email was only sent once as voluntary invitation so as to not invade student's privacy. Students who were members of the Golden Key International Honour Society (GKIHS) were also recruited. Membership to the GKIHS depends on a student's academic marks, and only those who are identified as high achievers are enlisted in this association. Though their experiences may not be generalisable to the rest of the student population, by virtue of their academic performance and race, they were able to provide data needed for this study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

3.8 Data collection procedures

As was explained in the section above, data was collected from three campuses of UKZN, namely: Howard college campus, Westville campus and Pietermaritzburg campus. Data collection only commenced after relevant gatekeepers and ethics committee approval was granted. Specifically, the overarching institutional study within which this study was embedded was granted permission to collect data from UKZN students by the UKZN registrar (i.e., the gatekeeper) (see Appendix 2), The overarching study also obtained full ethical clearance from the UKZN Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (protocol reference number: HSS/0060/015CA) (see Appendix 8). Ethical clearance was also obtained for my specific study (protocol reference number: HSS/0631/015M) (see Appendix 9). This study utilised a focus-group discussion method with the intention of getting in-depth information that would come from the experiences and understandings of participants as they

interacted in the discussion. “Focus-groups are a participatory form of qualitative research and can be viewed as group-based interviews which can reveal a range of opinions and perspectives on a topic” (Winlow, Simm, Marvell,& Schaaf, 2013, p.293). Appendix 1 includes a copy of the semi-structured focus-group discussion guide that was developed and used by the researcher.

The estimated size of each focus-group discussion was six to ten participants and each participant signed a confidentiality pledge (*see Appendix 7*).

High achieving students were also sought from the Golden Key International Honour Society (GKIHS) because of the low attendance of students from the scholarship list for the focus-group discussions. Additionally, ethical approval to use both interviews and focus-group discussion as data collection strategies was sought. Interviews were added because I anticipated that sometimes insufficient numbers would pitch for the focus group discussion. (See *Appendix 10* amendment of ethics approval: inclusion of interviews). In situations where a focus-group discussion would impossible, an interview with the individual available would be conducted. For example, one group of about five participants from GKIHS (who initially confirmed availability for a focus-group discussion) did not arrive for a focus-group discussion. Only one participant arrived, so I conducted a one-on-one interview since the participant reported that she was only going to be available on that day. I adapted the focus-group discussion schedule (*see Appendix 1*) for the purposes of a specific interview. Another example which yielded the same challenge came from another UKZN campus (Westville campus)> In this case the focus -group discussion was attended by only two participants out of the six that had initially confirmed attendance. These two participants arrived separately, about twenty minutes apart. As I was about to start a one-on-one interview with the participant that had arrived on the agreed time, the second student arrived, and so we continued with a focus-group discussion consisting of only two participants at this campus.

I facilitated the focus-group discussions alone. I used open-ended questions as a guide to direct both the focus-group discussions and interview. All focus-group discussions were conducted in English for a period of 45-90 minutes. Although some participants’ mother tongues were not English, it was assumed that their proficiency in English would be adequate given their history of high academic achievement at UKZN (an institution of English-medium instruction). Focus-group discussions and one interview were all scheduled for weekends to avoid disturbing participants from their academic commitments.

3.9 Data collection techniques

3.9.1 Focus-group discussion

As was stated in the above section this study utilised a focus-group discussion method with the intention of getting in-depth information that would come from the reported experiences and understandings of participants as they interacted in the discussion.

In the focus-group discussions an interview schedule was used to guide the discussions (see *Appendix 1*). Some researchers postulate that questions should start from general questions to more specific questions (Gill, Steward, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The interview schedule which was used in the focus-group discussions contained open-ended questions which started off as general and then gradually the questions became more specific. The order of questions covered issues that pertained to the research topic, however, because of the open-endedness of the questions, sometimes discussions entered into areas that did not specifically pertain to the study. In these instances, I would then moderate the discussion in such a way that the conversation would be gently directed back to the question and/or point on the interview schedule. This happened more in the Howard College campus focus-group discussion than in the Westville and Pietermaritzburg focus-group discussions, probably because there were more participants in the Howard College focus-group discussion than in any group.

Participants attended the focus-group discussions and interview on their campus of study during weekends so as to not disturb their academic commitments. Spacious venues on campus were booked before meeting with the students, these venues were communicated to participants. In this way the venues were not only suited for the meetings, but they were accessible (Connelly, 2015). Although Bless, Smith and Kagee (2006) postulate that an appropriate size for a focus-group should be between four to eight participants, I slightly over-recruited to manage the probability of a low turn. I reasoned that it would better to have to face managing a larger focus-group than the risk of having inadequate participants for focus-group discussions. Similarly, Steward and Shamdasani (1990) advocate for over-recruitment rather than under-recruitment, for the very reason I provided above.

Upon arrival, participants were welcomed and then provided with confidentiality pledges (see *Appendix 7*). Before starting with the focus-group discussion/interview I explained the aim of the study. To the knowledge and approval of the participants an audio-recorder was used to capture an audio-recording of the sessions. Although some researchers postulate that the presence of a recorder could limit full participation, these researchers also acknowledge

that recording sessions provided a full account of the session. Additionally, the use of the audio-recorder prevented preoccupation with note taking from the interviewer's side (Winlow, Simm, Marvell,& Schaaf, 2013). At the end of the sessions I thanked the participants, making them aware that the findings of the study would be emailed to them.

Advantages of Focus-group discussion

Focus-group discussions are appreciated for the large amount of data they can provide, from numerous people located in a single setting, lessening costs that would have otherwise been incurred if a large population of participants were interviewed separately. The researchers get to directly interact with respondents, providing chances to clarify, probe and do follow up questions with the participants (Steward &Shamdasani, 1990). As participants from the different fields of study shared their views and experiences, it allowed participants to fully engage; agreeing and sometimes disagreeing with one another. This synergistic effect in the group allowed for elaborate discussions and uncovering of topics that could have not been discovered in a one-on-one interview.

Limitations of focus-group discussion

In focus-group discussions the data generated could be influenced by dominant participants. In such cases the conversation could revolve only around opinions of the dominant participants, while quiet ones go unnoticed. The researcher therefore needs to moderate the discussion in ways which allow all participants to be engaged (Steward &Shamdasani, 1990). The focus-group discussions that took place on the Howard College campus comprised of mostly out-spoken participants, except one participant who required regular probing for her participation in the discussions. She was initially quiet and withdrawn, but she eventually warmed up to the discussion, starting to independently share her views.

Another limitation is the potential of researcher bias, where the researcher could influence data by providing leading cues to participants, knowingly or unknowingly. The researcher then must maintain objectivity by only facilitating and/or moderating the conversation, avoiding provision of personal opinions (Steward &Shamdasani, 1990).

3.9.2 Interviews

In this study one interview was conducted as an alternative plan on the Pietermaritzburg campus. Students who had accepted the focus-group discussion invitation did not arrive on the agreed date of the interview, with only one student arriving for the appointment. Instead of cancelling the focus-group discussion, I conducted a one-on-one interview with the available participant. The research proposal for this study had included interviews as an alternative technique for data collection because I had anticipated this challenge since the study was purely voluntary, allowing students to stop participation at any point of the study.

The purpose of in-depth interviewing is primarily to understand the experiences and understanding of the participants. Here the purpose is not to get answers or test a hypothesis but at the root of it all is an interest in others' experiences (Seidman, 2006). The interview was guided by an interview-schedule which contained open-ended questions and lasted for 30 – 40 minutes (see *Appendix 1*). As in the focus-group discussions, the participant was informed about the presence of an audio recorder. At the end of the interview I thanked the participant making her aware that the findings of the study would be emailed to her.

The main advantage of in-depth interviews is the rich data they provide. A one-on-one discussion can provide huge amounts of data, allowing for clarifications and probing. The main disadvantage of this technique is that it can often be time-consuming if one has to do numerous interviews (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Transcription for both interviews and focus-group discussions identified participants with pseudonyms and campus names. The pseudonyms were for maintaining the privacy of the students and campus names were shared so as organize the content and perhaps trace patterns specific to a campus.

3.10 Data analysis

All sessions were recorded, transcribed verbatim then thematically analysed. “Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) with data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79).

More elaborately

“[t]hematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon. The process involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of data. It is a form of pattern recognition with the data, where emerging themes become the categories” (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006 p.82).”

A theme is a set of data that reveals some form of patterned responses or meaning which are pertinent to the intent of the study. In essence, by immersing themselves in their data, researchers seek to find repeated patterns of meaning (themes) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study followed the six thematic phases of data analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Phase one: Familiarising with data.

I collected and transcribed the data verbatim. Although this process was time consuming, it facilitated a thorough understanding of the data. Going through the data to check whether it was properly transcribed allowed further immersion into the data thereby preparing me for the coding phase of analysis. Lapadat and Linsay (1999) postulate that close attention required in transcription could enable close reading and interpretative skills necessary for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase two: Generating initial coding.

Phase two marks the initial stage of generating initial coding, which is the production of the first set of codes identified from data. Codes are segments from raw data that the researcher identifies as important to the phenomena being studied. At this stage the researcher manually coded almost every piece of text contained in the data and did not discard any ‘un-patterned’ data to allow for refinement at a later stage.

Phase three: Searching for themes

After identifying codes, I organised content from the transcriptions by grouping the codes into broader themes. I used mind maps to organise and re-organise codes into overarching themes. Content which did not fit into identified themes was put in the “miscellaneous” theme for future use or discarding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase four: Reviewing of theme

After themes were identified they were then refined in one of two ways; some were combined, and others were divided to form separate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase five: Defining and naming themes

After the themes were reviewed the researcher elaborated more on the details of the analysis per theme, explaining the essence of what each theme contained. Since analysis is not limited to linear processes, I anticipated that I would still be refining themes even at the stage of finalising this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase six: Producing the report

The phase of producing a report involves the final write up of the report after full sets of themes have been finalised. To allow for transparency the researcher provided some extracts of the transcriptions.

3.11 Measures taken to ensure trustworthiness

In qualitative research the issue of trustworthiness is as important as in quantitative research, yet the means through which it is measured is different because of the distinct nature possessed by the two research approaches (Utne, 1996). Different terms have been adapted by qualitative researchers who reason that the terms traditionally used in measuring trustworthiness, namely; validity, reliability and objectivity are not suited in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). According to Guba (as cited in Shenton, 2004) some of the better suited terms include credibility, transferability and dependability. These terms have been accepted by many researchers in their pursuit of trustworthiness in a study (Shenton, 2004). In this section credibility, transferability and dependability will be discussed to display measures undertaken to measure trustworthiness.

3.11.1 Credibility

According to Merriam (as cited in Shenton, 2004) credibility deals with the congruence between the findings of the study and reality. Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Shenton, 2004) prioritise credibility as the most important factor in ensuring that the findings of a study are trustworthy. Shenton (2004) proposes that adequate familiarity of the culture of the environment where research will be conducted can assist the credibility of the findings. This may be done through consultation with appropriate documents and/or people of that

environment. This, he reasons can assist in establishing trust between the researcher and the participants, thereby creating a conducive environment for openness and full participation from the participants (Shenton, 2004). For this study familiarity of the culture of the environment was attained in my communication with the participants (about invitation and intent of the study) prior to the first focus-group discussion/interview. Additionally, consultation with my research supervisor, who had lectured at University of KwaZulu-Natal for some years (making him experienced and better suited to familiarise me with the University of KwaZulu-Natal environment) further assisted me with adequate familiarity.

Triangulation is also one of the ways in which credibility of the study can be ensured (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation may involve the use of different methods for data collection, both focus-groups and interviews were used to collect data in this study (Creswell, 2009). Another form of triangulation was the presence of a wide range of participants. Participants were from three different campuses, from different fields of study, some at undergraduate and some at postgraduate level. The different environments per campus, the different experiences inherent in the different field of studies and the difference in teaching and learning techniques required at undergraduate and postgraduate level provided multiple viewpoints and experiences therefore allowing the opinions and experiences to be corroborated against others, ultimately providing an extensive picture of attitudes, needs or behaviours of participants (Shenton, 2004). Another way to ensure credibility was the voluntary participation of the students; participants were made aware that they could discontinue their participation at any point of the study, ensuring that those who chose to contribute to the study did so genuinely, offering their experiences and opinions freely. Participants were also made aware that there was no right or wrong answer to alleviate them from the possibility of partial participation, in fear of being scrutinised or ridiculed (Shenton, 2004).

3.11.2 Dependability

To ensure the dependability of the study, processes in methodology should be reported in detail to allow future researchers to repeat the study even if it is not necessarily to attain the same results (because of the ever-evolving nature of life and experiences) (Shenton, 2004). So as to allow the reader a thorough understanding of the processes undertaken in the study, the sections on methodology should include the research design and its implementation, describing the planning and the executions phases. Also, the operational detail of data

collection, displaying all proceedings which took place while the researcher was on field should be included. Lastly an evaluation of the effectiveness of processes within the study should be done so as to ensure dependability of the findings of the study (Shenton, 2004). Throughout Chapter 3 I tried to provide thorough and elaborate information on the processes in methodology, so as to ensure that my findings were dependable.

3.11.3 Transferability

“Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents, it is the interpretive equivalent of generalizability” (Anney, 2014, p.277). Since in qualitative research findings are specific to a smaller part of a larger environment/population it is impossible to provide findings and conclusions that are transferable to other populations because of contextual factors which may not apply to other populations. So, to account for transferability a qualitative researcher should provide sufficient contextual information about the study, to allow the reader to determine the applicability to their own environment, a technique also referred to as “thick description” of the study (Shenton, 2004).

3.12 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are concerned with whether the study conforms to a set of principles which are set by a research governing body. These set of principles are specific to different professions. They emphasise procedures which are humane and sensitive for the research participants. A researcher is responsible for the ethical operation of his or her study. In the initial stages of the study the researcher must provide a proposal to be evaluated for approval according to the applicable ethical standards (Bless, Smith, &Kagee, 2006). In the initial stages of the study a proposal to the research ethics committee for approval was submitted. Institutional approval from University KwaZulu-Natal to access potential participants was also requested and granted (see *Appendix 3*). The following ethical codes were considered when dealing with the research participants.

Informed consent is concerned with the discretion of potential participants to participate or not participate in a study after being informed of the full details of the study. Here the researcher is obliged to ensure that participants are aware of the procedures and limitations of

the study and the contribution that is required of them. The participants need to be mature enough to make this decision of participation. They also should be aware of the freedom to withdraw from the study at any given time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Participants were provided with full information regarding the study, they were also given an invitation via email before the scheduling of focus-groups and/or interview (see *Appendix 4 and 5*). Additionally, at the beginning of every session I explained the aims and objectives of the study and the voluntarily aspect of their participation.

Maintaining anonymity ensures that information provided by participants will not be traced back to their identity (Kurmar, 2011). Data was recorded and kept confidential and private as per the agreement between the participants and the researcher. Additionally, transcriptions and the final report contained pseudonyms and all the sessions were conducted in venues that allowed a reasonable amount of privacy.

3.13 Author's note

Given the qualitative interpretivist approach adopted in this study an author's note is provided to assist the reader to know more about the researcher.

My name is Mpheng Thamae and I am currently studying counselling psychology. When a student gets high marks, between 75% - 100% and can articulate and apply the content covered in their course then high academic achievement is established in my perspective. I understand self-regulated learning to be rooted in self-discipline and self-confidence. However, I believe that self-confidence and discipline alone will not lead to high academic achievement if the environment under which it is pursued, is not conducive for learning. For example, I believe a student who is confident and disciplined is not guaranteed excellent results if the teachers (environment) are not equipped to teach him/her. Sometimes even if the teachers are equipped, an environmental constraint to high academic achievement could be lack of resources, like reading material, lack of internet access or psychological support services. Although in such environments some students still manage to attain high academic achievement, I reason that the results they attain may not be a true representation of their potential.

My personal experience regarding the topic of this study; enabling and constraining processes in high academic achievement is explained by individual and environmental processes.

Personally, I believe that lack of self-discipline, self-confidence and lack of resources constrained my academic achievement. I believe that my spirituality (assisting mostly in my self-confidence), the emotional and financial support from my parents enabled my academic achievement.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter gave an account of the research methodology of this study, explaining the lens through which the research was approached. Data collection procedures and techniques employed, discussing measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, and ethical procedures and considerations specific to this study were also provided.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 a detailed account of the methodology utilised for this study was provided. In Chapter 4, findings generated from the data collected from the three campuses of University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal will be presented. Findings will be clustered as those pertaining to enabling and constraining processes. These processes will be further categorised either as internal (individual) or external (environmental) to the high academic achievement of participants. All the names that will be used to report the findings are pseudonyms, as per the confidentiality agreement with the participants.

4.2 Description of participants

Campus	Data Collection strategy	Home languages	Colleges Represented	Gender
Pietermaritzburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus-group discussion <i>(x3 students)</i> • Interview <i>(x1 student)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • isiZulu • isiXhosa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities • Agriculture, Engineering & Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male <i>(x1 student)</i> • Females <i>(x3 students)</i>
Westville	Focus-group discussion <i>(x2 students)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • isiZulu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male <i>(x1 student)</i> • Female <i>(x1 student)</i>
Howard College	Focus-group discussion <i>(x6 students)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setswana • isiZulu • Xitsonga • English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities • Law & Management Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male <i>(x2 students)</i> • Female <i>(x4 students)</i>

One interview and three focus-groups were conducted across three campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the participants in the study consisted of twelve students, six of whom were studying on the Howard College campus in Durban, four on the

Pietermaritzburg campus and two were students from the Westville campus. Four of the participants were male and eight were female. At the time of data collection, four students were studying at postgraduate level while eight were studying at an undergraduate level.

Five of the participants were Zulu, speaking isiZulu as their home language, another two were Xhosa, one of whom spoke isiXhosa as a home language while the other spoke isiZulu. Three participants spoke English as a home language, two of these participants being Indian and the other was Coloured. Lastly, there was one Tsonga and one Tswana participant, and their home languages were Xitsonga and Tswana respectively.

At the time of data collection participants were registered for degrees in the following fields of study; six students were from the College of Humanities; one studying Drama and Performance, two studying Psychology, one studying Social Work, one studying a general degree in Social Sciences, and one studying a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Linguistics. From the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Sciences there were three students; two were in the School of Chemistry and Physics and one in the School of Life Sciences. From the College of Health Sciences there were two students; one studying Dental Therapy and another studying Medical Sciences. Lastly one student was from the College of Law and Management Sciences, studying Law.

4.3 Representation of the findings

As mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 4, the findings will be clustered as enabling or constraining processes, either as internal or external in relation to the high academic achievement of participants. Each theme will include extracts from the generated data, each extract will be referenced with a pseudonym of the participant, location, and data collection strategy utilised. The Howard College campus focus-group discussion (FGD) will be presented as HC-FGD, the Pietermaritzburg campus focus-group discussion as PMB-FGD, then the Westville campus focus-group discussion will be presented as WV-FGD and lastly the Pietermaritzburg interview will be presented as PMB-INT.

4.4 Defining academic achievement

Before presenting the findings on high academic achievement, it may be important to present how participants defined high academic achievement. When asked to provide a definition of high academic achievement according to their own understanding, participants explained academic achievement as an assessment mark of seventy percent and above.

It's not just scraping through a pass; I think it's being exceptional, outstanding and not just bringing fifty percent, not just being average. (Boipelo, HC-FGD)

I would say it's passing with first class, like 75% is exceptional or having an average of 75%. Above 80 (Phumz, PMB-INT)

For me it's like when you get really good marks, like above 75 or above 80 (Zakes, WV-FGD)

While most participants seemed to regard marks as the main measure of high academic achievement, some participants highlighted how high academic achievement could include involvement in extracurricular activities while still maintaining an average of 75% and above on their academic marks.

I would also say it has to do mainly the marks, which is usually what, when everyone who has never met you, they look at the system, they will say the highest academic achieving person is the one with the highest marks, but I also personally... it also has to do with a person who is achieving very high marks yet is also doing some things on the side... so it's not like academics is the only thing you are doing in life, and you are high there... like you are doing high but you still have other responsibilities on the side. (Sibongile, PMB-FGD)

Another student explained high academic achievement as the highest level one can achieve in their field of study, even without attaining marks average seventy percent.

uuhm my opinion is a bit different, I feel high academic achievement is more about the highest you could possibly go in your field of study, there is different kinds of smart, you have people who are book smart, they are capable of getting high marks and other people get to the highest they can in a field of research... with hard work...

yeah you can get there but you don't need to have the highest of marks, that's how I define it. (Samantha, PMB-FGD)

4.5 Presentation of findings

4.5.1 Enabling processes

4.5.1.1 Internal enabling processes

- *Motivation to break the poverty cycle in the family*

An internal enabling process reported by participants was the burden they felt to “break that cycle of poverty” (Boipelo, HC FGD) in their families by obtaining a higher education qualification. Many of the participants reasoned that a higher education qualification would enable them to access better jobs, which in turn would provide a better way of living. Witnessing members of their families live in poverty because of a lack of higher education qualifications made them more eager to achieve academically so that they would not have to live the same life of poverty.

It's about breaking that cycle of poverty if I can say that. In most African backgrounds, obviously you have some black people who are very privileged, but most of us we just want to break that cycle and I think we know some part of our families that are not doing well and we just want to achieve and be well (Boipelo, HC FGD).

Another student reported the burden that some students have by being the first to go to university in their respective families. She explained that the pressure for those students to achieve academically was stirred by the responsibility they carry, being the only hope for breaking out of poverty for their families.

And a lot of people are the first in their family to be at a university and they get here and they are the only hope that their family has, of growing economically and even in terms of health because how much money they have influences... uuhm, are they going to eat, are they going to be healthy, do they have a proper place to live and a lot of students come to University with that burden, they have a responsibility to do well, because if they don't... maybe the only hope that the family has of getting better will be gone (Zandile, HC-FGD]

Although motivation to break the cycle of poverty in the family is categorised under internal enabling processes, it is worth noting that the drive behind this internal process is from the participant's environment (external process). The dynamics in the environment of students who were from poverty-stricken homes influenced their internal processes thus affecting their behaviour and attitude towards high academic achievement. This interplay between external and internal processes is the basis on which this study views self-regulated learning through the lens of social-cognitive theory, which postulates the contribution of both internal and external processes in high academic achievement of students.

▪ *Time management*

Participants reported time management as a process which assists them in their high academic achievement. This enabling process of planning ahead, that is, allocating time for specific tasks, was reported as beneficial in assisting them to strike a balance between their academic life and social life. Participants reported that managing their time allowed them enough time to focus on their studies, thereby enabling them to attain high academic achievement.

Planning, at the beginning of a semester you receive course out outline from lectures throughout all your disciplines and so I would look at what is due when so that I can start creating a schedule to make sure that I know the dates, to make sure that they don't clash and I have too many submissions in one week. So, I could start spreading them out, so if it means having to submit something a week earlier so that I am not too pressed (Phumz,PMB-INT)

A student who was studying at post-graduate level at the time of data collection explained how she divided her time by scheduling certain days for academic activities and some days for extra-curricular activities.

uuhm I would say for me I am not very good in saying in one day, this time the morning will be academics and the afternoon leadership based stuff... so I allocate it per day, of today it's doing meetings or doing this and that, then it's just that but if it has to include academics, I can't mix it with everything else, so I will choose a day, to

say fine I can do all that I need to do this week but Thursday and Friday is solely for academics, so I haven't been reading any scientific papers but when I read that day, I just go and I do the write up, so I allocate it per day and not per saying that in a day this is time is for academics and this time... otherwise I can't. (Sibongile, PMB-FGD)

Another participant reported witnessing students who performed well academically because they were able to balance their social and academic lives, by planning their time. They did this by setting time aside for social and academic activities. Having the time and balance for both social and academic activities could positively contribute to the high academic achievement of participants.

...Even if like maybe...like I have seen students that are, people that enjoy partying on weekends and like doing everything but they know what they want and know what they need to do. If maybe they are going to party this weekend, the whole week they are going to be studying and doing this and that, they are focused and they know what they want... (Zakes, WV-FGD)

▪ *Passion for a programme being studied*

Another internal enabling process which emerged as a theme is preference for the course being studied. Participants explained that being passionate about what they are studying motivates them to pursue high academic achievement.

For me it's that I really like what I am studying. Like it's not even a chore, if I have to study it's just something that comes naturally, like studying the human body, like in medical science we study all the aspects of the human body, like how it functions, its anatomy, its micro biology and another thing which motivates me is that I want to go study medicine, like next year when I am done with this, like I have to get a good aggregate, like an overall mark, that will allow me to be accepted into that, so that pushes me further... (Zakes, WV-FGD).

I think just going back to what you said earlier also, the passion. I don't know, I think all of us here are doing what we like (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

One student reported that doing the work necessary to attain high academic achievement was not toilsome for him. Rather it came naturally for him to discipline himself, when it came to his school work because he was passionate about his course.

And I think my key is I enjoy what I do very much, I sleep and think about my modules [everyone laughs] ...So because I am very passionate with what I do discipline just comes naturally. (Leo, HC-FGD)

Sometimes one may like the overall course but still struggle with certain modules within the course. Even in this instance the will to persevere overrides the difficulty because the student enjoys what they are studying, and they are aware that the only way to obtain the preferred course is by persevering until the completion of that difficult module.

And what helps me achieve academically is that I enjoy what I do and as much as there is those modules that [oh my gosh] you just have to go through them, like this semester I do accounting and like I don't want to do it but I think just loving what you do and just realising that you don't have a choice, just get on with the program and you just enjoy what you are doing (Dudu, HC-FGD)

- *Future plans as driving academic achievement*

A participant studying medical sciences explained having plans to further his studies in the future motivated him to work hard to advance in his academics. At the time of data collection his goal was to end up in medical school and because of the high average needed as a requirement to get into medicine, he was motivated to maintain high academic achievement to further study medicine.

...and another thing which motivates me is that I want to go study medicine, like next year when I am done with this, I have to get a good aggregate, like an overall mark, that will allow me to be accepted into that, so that pushes me further... (Zakes, WV-FGD)

4.5.1.2 External enabling processes

- *Emotional and financial support from family*

When asked how their families contributed to their academic achievement, emotional and financial support from family was reported by participants as an enabling process in their academic achievement.

The support from my family keeps me going, they are not as pushy, but they want me to achieve. (Dudu, HC-FGD)

My family plays a huge role in that they are always supporting me, even when like... I didn't actually start in this degree, in matric where I started, when I came out of matric I had like 27 points and that doesn't warrant like any degree in like UKZN, so I had to start with a degree called, not actually a degree, it was something called non-degree purpose and I tried my best to excel in that and I did and it got me into a proper degree which is a BSc degree, so yah my family has been supporting me throughout all that and they weren't like 'aah you are failing and all that' you know, so they support me... (Zakes, WV-FGD)

▪ *Being raised by single mothers*

While discussing emotional and financial support from family participants mentioned being raised by single mothers as another reason that compels them to work hard and achieve academically. The sacrifices made by their single parents, supporting them academically, emotionally and financially motivated them to work even harder in their academics. This is another case where the interplay between internal and external processes contributing to the student's academic achievement is displayed, as per the social cognitive theory of self-regulated learning. The parents, who are external to the students, influence the motivation (internal process) of the students, and this in turn affects their academic performance

...I think what I have noticed is that most of us are brought up by single mothers, like I was raised by one and she is my pillar, my rock, my best friend, a sister and she has been there for me and there is no pressure honestly, she feels I put pressure on myself... (Boipelo, HC-FGD)

And I think it's that thing of being raised by single parents, you just want to make them proud. By virtue of them having sacrificed so much that in itself plays a role in how you achieve in school and how hard you work. (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

Yes, I think two things, one is the finance. Without my mom, I mean my studies would have been inconceivable, yah that's the number one thing and the second thing is their emotional support, the support to go forward, I mean doing my PhD was a long road, most parents are like you got to finish as soon as you can and go out there and work but they have been quite supportive and letting me carry on with my studies (Samantha, PMB-FGD)

...uuhm but one thing that keeps me going is the sacrifices that my mom makes for me to be here even though she doesn't pay all my school fees coz I am on scholarship as well, but... just... I know that she is sacrificing a lot and she is putting a lot and so at the end of the day even if I don't study much, I don't go home every day and the stuff that I have to do or study week but at the end of the day I know that I have to get the job done, so when it's time to push myself I do, but I don't do it all the time. That's how I am. (Zulu, HC-FGD)

- *Having likeminded peers*

Participants alluded to the issue of having peers who are also determined to achieve academically as an enabling process towards their academic performance. Additionally, getting involved in group discussions with peers who are performing better (than them) in certain courses enabled participants to achieve academically because in these discussions they would get more help in addition to the assistance they got from lectures.

...and also making sure that I surround myself with the right study buddies, people are also very determined and focused and so that keeps me focused as well and encourage... (Phumz, PMB interview)

Well for me my friends help me discuss, doing group discussions and going to ask the lecturer if there is something that I don't understand, asking people who know better than me and that helps me move forward. (Dudu, HC-FGD)

I study... I have friends who like studying and so luckily so I try and stick with them. (Zulu, HC-FGD)

Some participants expressed the emotional and moral support provided by their peers as instrumental to their academic achievement. They explain that having peers who encourage them to achieve in their academics has been helpful to them, especially in times when they were experiencing challenges in their academics.

There are many times when I felt I couldn't do it but and I just wanted to give up and those types of colleagues keep you going, they encourage you and tell you that you can do it, it means a lot when your colleague helps you emotionally like that. (Samantha, PMB-FGD)

Another student also mentioned emotional support from her research supervisor, encouraging her to work harder, assuring her of her potential to do better, especially during the times where she felt at her lowest academically. This point on support from a research supervisor will be elaborated on in the following theme when discussing lectures positive attitude.

I will add to say it's the supervisor, it's the colleagues and I am lucky because my best friend is also doing masters, so when you are there and you are crashing, she is like 'No Sbo' even if there is some opportunities like the [Name] bursary, she is one person who said 'I know you are like on a low low right now but this is just for you' so for me is those three people; it's the colleagues, the supervisor and my best friend. (Sibongile, PMB-FGD)

- *Lecturers' positive attitude*

When participants were asked about the role played by their lecturers they explained that most of their lecturers were approachable and helpful, assisting them when they were challenged in their academics.

Yah I think I have both positive and negative but more positive. I have some really good lecturers that explain things properly, constantly asking questions, challenging us and stuff like that but eish I have had one or two who weren't enthusiastic, they were just like there to do their job. (Zakes, WV-FGD)

Yoh! Like my lecturers are my friends, I could say that. Like I am that child where I have my lecturer on whatsapp. I like them... they just have a wealth of knowledge,

like that I absorb, so I just chill with them and I consult a lot, so they are like a pillar, like I go to them when things were not clear in the lecture and I feel like I am not understanding and so I go to them. Like their open-door policy, email and whatsApp... yah that's me. I am only saying this here, no one knows that I speak to my lecturers on whatsApp, because they would like "hmmmm really? (Boipelo, HC-FGD)

Another participant who was studying at post-graduate level at the time of data collection reflected on her first-year experiences, on how the lecturers identified her potential as early as first year, encouraging her to work even harder towards her academics. Even when could she not continue with her postgraduate studies, she informed her lecturers about her financial hurdles and that is how she got assistance to continue even up to a masters level.

For me as well I will say lecturers in general before I refer specifically to my supervisor. When I came here I was one of those...you know when it is a big class and you just and you just doing biology 101, 211 and everything, it was just a few of them who identified that [you know] I have potential and they would talk to me on the side to say [Like it's really looking good, if you press on into this you will actually make it far] maybe by just a test mark someone will call you and be like[you actually have potential] so that is why even when I did my third year and I did not have funding, I (had)developed that relationship with them that I sent them email telling them that I wanted to continue with my honours but I did not have money and one of them was like [Its fine if you work with me I am going to fund you, so they have been really, really really like been there. (Sibongile, PMB-FGD)

Additionally, attending lectures, making use of lecturers' consultation hours, and the extra notes offered by lectures were so helpful to one of the participant that she reasoned that studying would not be necessary to students who faithfully attended lectures.

Lectures play a vital role. I find that if you just attend lecturers and you don't study you could still pass. I don't recommend this but if you do attend your lectures and sit and you listen, you are consistent in your attendance, you could really pass. Also, the consultation hours do help, so the stuff that you are battling with and you consult on an assignment or

a test or feedback that you received that you are not sure of; like how to structure an essay, what did you miss... they can even give you extra notes. I find that those consultation hours are gold. They really really are golden, if you use them. (Phumz, PMB-INT)

- *Resources*

Participants were asked about resources which helped them to achieve academically, and resources which they would not be able to function without in terms of their academics. Textbooks, library, Wi-Fi and laptops were identified as significantly beneficial.

Another student expressed that his laptop was more important to him than any other resource in his academics. He explained that the use of textbooks became less important in his studies as he found his lecture notes sufficient for him to achieve academically.

uuhm, for me it's the laptop, that like a big thing. If I lost my laptop I wouldn't go very far. In terms of textbooks, I used textbooks in first year, I bought textbooks and I find that, like they send you these lecture notes and I found out that with textbook, it gives you way more than you are going to be tested on. It was okay, but I found that as I progressed in my studies there wasn't any more time to read extra stuff that you don't really need... (Zakes, WV-FGD)

Participants studying at masters level expressed the importance of the equipment they use for their research. They explained that the availability of this equipment made their research work manageable, helping them to achieve their academic outcomes. Additionally, the centrality of the university (i.e. located in an area where it is easy to access) made it accessible and this helped participants because they did not have to struggle to access the university facilities

No, like the equipment, lecturers, the university being in town. [Bee PMB-FGD]

Internet access, bursaries, student counselling services and spiritual structures on campus were also listed among the resources that enabled participants to achieve academically. The psychological support offered on campus assisted in adjusting participants to the

overwhelming demands of university life. The faith-based structures on campus provided a sense of belonging and spiritual guidance which helped them to better adjust to the university environment therefore enabling them to achieve academically.

I think having access to Wi-Fi that really helps on campus coz you can access journals and articles and just a whole world of information just sitting at your fingertips, so that really helps. The library is definitely useful. I find that student counselling is also very useful because if you are going through... because I have used student counselling in my second year when I was just feeling overwhelmed with life and having that support is just really crucial. I have received bursaries before, so having financial support, money as a resource takes a lot of stress away and yah I find that those are resources which are very valuable; and having a campus ministry, just that fact that the university allows churches on campus, that we can utilise the venues. So you don't have to have transport to get to church. I think that spiritual family and support on campus has also been very fruitful. (Phumz, PMB-INT)

4.5.2 Constraining processes

4.5.2.1 Internal constraining processes

- *Losing focus and motivation*

Losing motivation and focus was identified as one of the processes which deterred high academic achievement of participants; starting off as laziness and then a gradual loss of focus and the motivation to reach set academic goals.

To be honest sometimes one just gets lazy. So, it's not staying motivated, it's not staying focused, taking your eye off the ball. (Phumz, PMB-INT)

While addressing the issue of time management the issue of balancing ones social and academic activities was expressed as a mechanism through which time management could be attained. Participants reported dividing their schedules in ways which allowed them time for extracurricular and academic activities. Friends are again mentioned in the process of losing focus and motivation but this time as those causing some participants to lose focus and motivation on their academics.

Although under Section 4.3.1.2 participants had identified their peers as enabling their high academic achievement, some participants reported that peer pressure made them lose track of time, time which they could have spent on academic tasks. In retrospect they realised how they gradually lost focus and motivation towards their academics because of yielding to peer pressure.

For me external distractions like friends, sometimes girls, yah you know these things take up a lot of your time that you can use to further progress in life. Like friends, like maybe you are in your room, they come and knock and they come talking about there is this party here or there is these girls here. Sometimes you just get taken by that. And if you are not careful that might even end up being your lifestyle, you just end up losing all the focus. (Zakes, WV-FGD)

...and just to add on the friends part, like friends they are very distracting because I even saw like, these friends I am going down with them if I won't change right now.(Soso, WV-FGD)

- *Lack of time management and/or planning*

When asked about the processes which hampered their efforts towards high academic achievement, some participants reported inconsistency in their time management. This meant less time to study for tests or exams and inadequate planning when it came to their assignments, which then adversely affected their academic performance.

Sometimes... sometimes I am not good with time management, like I am totally not good, I am always late but like I think I don't give myself enough time, like to just start studying earlier but when I do study I do concentrate, it's just that my mind...I don't know if my mind can easily shifts to something but I can only get back to something and concentrate so I think that's the thing that can prevent me from. Because I love sleeping and I can never compromise my sleep. (Soso, WV-FGD)

One participant gave an example of a lack of time management. Specifically, she reported that she had lost time watching two movies in a day, and this was time she should have used to study for her upcoming tests.

For me I am going to give myself a zero because I have got no discipline. Like yesterday I watched two movies... two movies and I have tests coming up this week but the thing is with me I do realise that my lack of discipline is not necessarily something that I should be complacent about, this is not how I should be for the rest of my life..." (Sthabile, HC-FGD).

4.5.2.2 External constraining processes

- *Lecturers negative attitude and behaviour*

When asked to mention things which constrain their efforts towards academic achievement participants mentioned the issue of lecturers who are disorganised in the way they coordinate their modules. An example that was provided was of a lecturer not arriving on time for class, to the point where class was cancelled. Another participant explained another challenge of being assessed things that were not taught in class.

...and then you get some where you get there and the lecturer is not there. You sit there you wait for the lecturer and people leave and then maybe you get some people that don't leave, they just sit there and then 15 minutes just before the lecture is supposed to end you get a message from them saying the lecturer is here and then this nothing real that you can do in fifteen minutes. And then sometimes with practicals you would be expecting... like we go to the hospitals quite a lot and sometimes you find that the lecturers is supposed to take you through the practicals is not there and then you just sitting there with random people, stuff like that. And sometimes (this is like the worst) they mess up, like in the exam paper they put in stuff that you weren't supposed to study and then you don't know where they got it from and then people end up failing and stuff.(Zakes, WV-FGD)

A participant studying at post graduate level expressed the challenging relationship she had with her supervisor. She explained how she felt she could not perform to the best of her abilities in her research because of lack of support from her supervisor.

my main thing is my lack of support from my supervisor, it's my main thing, it's been hindering the things that I need to do and I have quite a difficult time, so that's the main thing for me. (Samantha, PMB-FGD)

Previously participants had identified passion for a course as an enabling process towards academic achievement. In contrast, some participants indicated that passion without support from lecturers was not helpful towards academic achievement. Students explained that having a good or bad lecturer could positively or negatively affect a student's passion for a course which in turn affected their academic performance.

...and some lecturers talk like they are asleep and some lectures speak like they know what they are talking about and you engage... I think passion could grow for a thing that you didn't know you could love and you start to do it if you have been taught by the right person. So think a lot of things can affect your passion for a thing. (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

Under Section 4.3.1.1, participants identified how passion for a programme being studied could assist in academic achievement. Passion is mentioned regarding lecturers, on how their passion for teaching could influence the passion and subsequently academic achievement of students. The 'transfer' of passion from lecturers to students, how an internal process such as passion, from an external source (the perceived passionate lecturers) can influence an internal process of another is another display of the interplay of external and internal processes involved in academic achievement, as per the social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning.

- *University structures and procedures*

Participants were asked about the structures and/or procedures which they felt constrained their efforts towards high academic achievement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and they pointed to the similar constraints across all three campuses where the study was conducted.

The often not functioning computer LANs and printers were expressed as a source of frustration for the participants because this affected the speed and quality of their academic tasks. One student mentioned how she has often had to outsource printing services which costs her a lot of money, and in some instances, has made her compromise the quality of her work. She gave an example where she had to print a poster assignment in black and white

because she could not afford outsourced coloured printing services and how this made her poster come out pixelated, thereby affecting her assessment marks.

it's when you got to LAN and you find that the computers are not working and you have an assignment that is due tomorrow and printers are not working, so you just like... you don't even know what to do, take a taxi from here and go to town, so that you can print... (Soso WV-FGD)

The issue of university equipment breaking was also identified as one of the constraining processes as this directly had an impact on their academic activities. For example, broken experiment machines which affected the pace and quality of the student's work. Participants expressed losing focus and motivation every time their work is postponed because of a lack and/or breakage of equipment. This is yet another example of the interplay of internal and external processes affecting academic achievement from the social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning. Here the participants explain how the lack and/or breaking of equipment (external process) affect the motivation and focus of students (internal process) towards their academic tasks.

I did say the university had resources or do have resources, but they keep on breaking and they take a long time to be fixed and so that keeps you demotivated, you need to wait a couple of minutes even if you need it now. (Bee, PMB-FGD)

Administration in general was also another issue that participants explained as strenuous and time consuming; a time which they could be using towards their academic activities.

Administration, just general administration. Like there was a time we couldn't deregister a module online and so we had to fill in physical forms and they would always be long lines. The financial office, even if you just want to ask a question, it always these long lines. Like they should have an email where we could send to answer these questions because for us to stand on lines when we are missing classes, we are wasting a lot of time, for things that could be done easily over the internet. I just feel like those are one of the things that people really complain about. (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

The quality of security on campus was also explained as constraining in terms of academic achievement. Participants explained how they felt unprotected on campus because even though the University has twenty-four-hour security surveillance, some students still got mugged on campus. They explained that this safety issue has limited their study times as they are afraid to go to the library during the night because that would be compromising their safety.

Mina I feel like security as well on campus because people get mugged. Like campus should be a place where we are safe and we are able to go to the library and study but there was this other one time, a student got mugged a laptop in the library. (Zandile, HC-FGD)

Participants also reported that a lack of financial resources may also constrain academic achievement because as the University is unable to sponsor every student who reported a financial hurdle. The limited number of bursaries and scholarships offered limited the number of students that could be assisted, and this often leads those students who are struggling financially to seek employment so as to fund their studies. A participant funding her own postgraduate degree explained how juggling work and studies could be tiresome, often leading to a demotivated student who does not give adequate time to his/her studies because of demands from employers and how this in turn resulted in poor academic performance.

It's not always having funding, I had funding in my undergrad and I didn't have funding this year and that is was draining because I had to find part time work and then that takes up the time to do your studies so that has been exhausting where my preferences has always been study and finish but when stuff like that happens you have to kind of balance because you are so exhausted from work and you get demotivated to come and look at your books because you are so exhausted and that is draining (Phumz, PMB-INT).

The over population of classrooms was also identified as a constraint towards academic achievement, making it hard for students to concentrate properly. Some participants expressed how they often chose not to attend lectures because they felt it was a waste of time

as the classes were noisy and overpopulated. Participants blamed centralisation of the time tables for overcrowded venues that could not accommodate registered students.

Like the Psychology class is so full. Like you sitting on the floor, on the stairs (Sthabile, HC-FGD).

I have no clue... but I also think that the time tabling issue, ever since we decided to centralise our timetabling it has been problematic because I think everything now happens at Howard and Howard doesn't know how our venues look like to decide on how many people it can accommodate so its impractical that someone down at Howard would allocate where classes should be for a certain module not knowing how many people it needs to accommodate (Phumz, PMB-INT)

Perceived corruption at the university student housing department was also identified as a constraining academic achievement. One participant lamented unfairness of students who lived far from university who were not granted accommodation on campus yet some who lived closer to the university are able to get accommodation on campus. Her suspicion was the probability of bribes offered to staff members of the department. She explained that living off campus could constrain academic achievement as students would be far from helpful resources like internet access.

Oh yah, student housing, there is a lot of perceived corruption that goes there, it's not fair...you find that people who stay close to campus have res and that's not allowed and then people who really stay far don't get res and they have to pay for an expensive commune and life just becomes difficult for them. Like student housing needs a whole revamp and there is bribery that happens within to buy a room and if you stay far from campus, it really does affect your studying, because now if you res, then you would have Wi-Fi, you are within close proximity to resources that you need, but if you are far although you want to stay late at night on campus to study you can't because you have to consider how to get home and not everyone can afford a car and I think you stay at res its mainly students that can't afford cars... (Phumz, PMB-INT)

- *English Language barrier*

During the focus-group discussion at Howard College campus a debate sparked among the participants on the issue of the "language barrier" as one of the constraining processes in

academic achievement. Some participants expressed how the English language (which is used as a medium of instruction at the University) was limiting some of their peers who came from backgrounds where English was not used as medium of instruction. They alluded to rural schools where they were not taught in English. Some students expressed the distress of witnessing their peers perform poorly because of limited English literacy. They believed the usage of both isiZulu and English as language mediums of instruction would remedy the situation, particularly because the university has two official languages, English and isiZulu.

Language barrier is a big problem. I am a person that doesn't speak one language... like I don't even think people realise you know, especially those who are privileged to know how to speak English, they take for granted that they are those who went to schools that didn't teach in English. And I hate it that I sit with my friends with lecturers that speak English that even I don't understand, like high English. Like I think they forget that we come from backgrounds where we don't talk that high English, like myself I don't speak that high English, even in my essays I think that is why I am doing well because anyone can understand What I am saying. And not many people know that there is two official languages in this University, isiZulu and English and English is being pushed like very much (Leo, HC-FGD).

I even have second year students who call me, they think I am smarter but I am not, I just go an extra mile. They call me to translate because they really don't understand and you can see that the person has been reading this thing over and over again. Sometimes they can tell you the sentence as it is on the book but they don't understand what it means and you see that it is basic English that they don't have. (Zulu, HC-FGD)

We'll make an effort to teach those who can't understand. I mean those people, the English speakers of the class, they fly in their English and some of the people they can't understand those words they use. So make an effort to try and use the Standard English. Academic English yes need be used but try and... if you use that thing and you see that the students can't understand then try and use the Standard English. You find that class is full of five hundred people and only ten white students can only grab what you are saying, because you are flying and you using these big words that we have to go to the dictionaries. I mean we don't carry dictionaries around, I mean we

are English speakers but it's not our language so you have to understand. (Zulu, HC-FGD)

Other participants argued that the university was not entirely to blame for the English language barrier which was adversely affecting academic achievement of some students. They raise the issue of inadequate efforts by primary and high schools in promoting English literacy for their students, and how this then affects students later in their academic lives because they were not adequately prepared for learning at university.

...I don't think we can put the full blame on the varsity for failing because we now need to look at the foundation level of high school, of primary of how they are failing because that is how you prepare children for higher Education, it's in primary and in High school and so when you get here and you are not prepared, it's not necessarily that you can blame the society because they are expecting... (Sthabile, HC-FGD).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the findings of this study, dividing them into constraining and enabling processes of high academic achievement. Constraining and enabling processes were sub-divided into internal and external processes. Motivation to break the poverty cycle in the family, time management, studying a preferred degree which one is passionate about were identified as internal-enabling processes, while external-enabling processes were found to be emotional and financial support from family, having like-minded peers at university, lecturer's positive attitude and resources of the university. Under constraining processes towards high academic achievement; Losing focus and motivation and lack of time management were mentioned as internal-constraining processes while lecturer's negative attitude, university procedures and English language barrier were found to be external-constraining processes. This chapter also provided the definitions of high academic achievement, provided by the participants. In the next chapter, the findings of chapter four will be discussed with consideration from the literature review and the theoretical framework of social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the data collected across the three campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal namely: Howard College, Westville and Pietermaritzburg campus. This chapter will provide an elaborate discussion of the themes that were identified

from the data collected. Similar to the findings chapter, these discussions will be displayed as internal and external processes, either as constraining or enabling academic achievement of participants of this study.

5.2 Internal: Enabling processes

5.2.1 Motivation to break the poverty cycle in the family

Participants in this study explained having a burden to work hard so that they could break the cycle of poverty in their families. They expressed a need to give back to their families by working hard in their studies so that they could complete their degrees in time, get employed and provide a better life for them. They desired a life free from poverty, poverty which they witnessed and experienced in their up-bringing. Although poverty in the families has repeatedly been reported as one of the constraining processes towards academic achievement (Lacour&Tissington, 2011), in this context participants reported how witnessing and experiencing the effects of poverty enabled them to achieve academically by motivating them to work hard in their studies. Here an external process like poverty influenced internal processes such as focus and motivation. Participants' external environment (effects of poverty) influenced their internal processes (focus and motivation) to succeed in their academic achievement. The participants' reported motivation to break the poverty cycle in their families affirms the explanatory value of the social-cognitive theory of self-regulated functioning, where there is a consideration of the contribution of both external and environmental processes (i.e., witnessing and experiencing poverty) in motivating a student to achieve academically (Cazan, 2012).

Participants reported that the burden to achieve academically was fuelled by the responsibility they felt, and to restore hope for a better future in their families. Moreover, some of the participants were the first-generation in their families to study up to university level.

They explained that for them and some of their peers, education was the only way out of the cycle of poverty in their families. Although the issue of unemployment for graduates is still a challenge in South Africa, attaining education reduces the likelihood of the ongoing cycle of poverty in families, as education provides a higher probability of employment for those previously unemployed and better employment for those in non-formal employment. In both

the latter and the former, families are assisted in getting improved amounts of household-income therefore improving their lives (UNESCO, 2014). This burden to achieve academically, in an attempt to break free from the entangling poverty together with the financial challenges associated of being first generation students (to study up to University level) were highlighted and confirmed by both local and international studies (Siyengo, 2015; Drotos, 2011; Jewett, 2008).

5.2.2 Time management

Earlier in the literature review chapter (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4), time management was explained as a set of practices which work together to assist in getting more value out of the time spent on a particular activity, with the aim of improving one's quality of life (Aduke, 2015). Regarding academic achievement, time management refers to the way in which students manage their time so as to regularly improve their academic achievement (Hamza, Lucky, &Joarder, 2014). In addition, time management is a key component of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002). Most of the participants in this study reported utilising time management skills to assist them in achieving their academic goals. Specifically, they reported planning their academic calendars at the beginning of the semester so as to allow them adequate time to study for their tests and assignments. Participants perceptions regarding a positive relationship between time management and academic achievement are similar to the findings from studies which found that students who managed their time well were likely to perform better than their peers who did not apply time management skills in their studies (Kaushar, 2013; Kitsantas, Winsler, &Huie, 2008; Miqdadi, Monami, &Elmousel, 2014; Aduke, 2015; Hazmah, Lucky, &Joarder, 2014).

The issue of time management manifesting as a balance between academic and social activities emerged in all three focus-group discussions. Participants reported the importance of allocating time for social and academic activities so as to achieve academically. One participant reported witnessing students who were devoted to their academic activities yet still having time for social activities. He reasoned that this manifestation of time management skills, where there is a balance between social and academic activities, could only be achieved by students who had a purpose for their lives, students who were aware of the efforts they had to give so as to achieve their academic goals.

...If maybe they are going to party this weekend, the whole week they are going to be studying and doing this and that, they are focused and they know what they want...

Elmousel et al. (2014) calls these type of students, excellent time managers. He explains that these students are able to schedule time to meet up with their friends for social purposes and still have time to complete their academic tasks on time. In the extract above the participant explains practically the balancing of social and academic life, where in a week the starting days were used for studying and the weekend for partying.

5.2.3 A passion and purpose for the programme being studied

Participants expressed how having passion with future plans for a degree better enabled students to high achieve academically. They explained that studying a preferred course, one which a student is passionate about, makes a student work harder at achieving their academic goals because they have a clear vision of the future they want for themselves.

For me it's that I really like what I am studying. Like it's not even a chore, if I have to study it's just something that comes naturally... (Zakes, WS-FGD)

...but I think if you do something you are passionate about, the chances of you doing well at it are much higher. (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

...And I think my key is I enjoy what I do very much, I sleep and think about my modules [everyone laughs]...So because I am very passionate with what I do discipline just comes naturally. (Leo, HC-FGD)

In the above statements (and through the theme of having a passion and purpose for their studies), the participants affirm the role of “intrinsic interest” (Kitsantas, Winsler, & Hue, 2008, p. 45) as a social cognitive self-regulatory component which can function to enhance academic achievement in students.

5.3 External: Enabling processes

5.3.1 Emotional and financial support from family

During the data collection, a common point of discussion among the participants was the emotional and financial support they received from their families. Although most of the

participants in this study were financially assisted by scholarships and bursaries for their studies, some were fully or partly sponsored by their parents. Even those who had scholarships and bursaries reflected on the concurrent support from parents. They remembered the financial sacrifices their parents had made, with the low-household income of the family, to make sure that some of their financial needs were met while studying.

Low-income in households was reported to adversely affect the academic achievement of students in review-studies on the effects of poverty on academic achievement (Lacour&Tissington, 2011; Lewin &Mawoyo, 2014). Although most of the participants in my study came from low-income households, which were mostly headed by single mothers, participants excelled academically, making it to top achievers' lists at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This is likely because financial support is one of the numerous factors which contribute to high academic achievement, which the participants reported having access to.

Another participant reported being discouraged with continuing to post-graduate level because her parents expected her to work immediately after her first degree in order to support her family. For her, both financial and emotional support came from her supervisor, who encouraged her to continue with her studies until masters level. She explained how she had approached her lecturers to assist her in sourcing funds for a post-graduate programme. It is after she had asked for help that she was able to get sponsorship for both her honours and her masters degree. One strategy frequently highlighted in the self-regulated learning literature is help-seeking. Self-regulated learners determine what type of support they need, who to get it from and how to get it (Karabenick& Berger, 2013). Therefore, although self-regulated learning is often conceived as an intrapersonal (internal) process, in effect it also involves interpersonal skills such as help-seeking.

Participants also mentioned emotional support from their parents as a motivator for hard work. They reflected on seasons of academic challenges in their lives where their parents carried them forward with motivation to work hard and reminders to keep focused on the end goal of success.

The support from my family keeps me going, they are not as pushy but they want me to achieve. So they are like if you don't want to be like us, if you want to be better than us, you will have to do better, you will have to move forward. [Dudu HC-FGD]

- *Being raised by single mothers*

Another issue that emerged while discussing the role of parents in academic achievement, was the issue of being raised by single mothers. Participants expressed feeling immensely supported by their mothers, who made financial sacrifices so that their needs were met. Participants also reflected on the provision of emotional support from their single mothers.

...I think what I have noticed is that most of us are brought up by single mothers, like I was raised by one and she is my pillar, my rock, my best friend, a sister and she has been there for me and there is no pressure honestly, she feels I put pressure on myself... (Boipelo, HC-FGD)

And I think it's that thing of being raised by single parents, you just want to make them proud. By virtue of them having sacrificed so much that in itself plays a role in how you achieve in school and how hard you work. (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

When it comes to single-mothers and/or single-parents and the impact they have on their children's academic achievement, more research attention has been given to adolescents rather than university students. Yaw (2016) reports no significant difference between academic achievement of learners from single-parent homes and couple-parents' homes while some researchers report that there is in fact a noticeable difference between the academic achievement of learners from single-parent homes and couple-parents' homes, with the latter being higher than that of the former (Ochonogor, 2014; Uchenna, 2013; Abudu&Fuseini, 2013). Parent supervision and academic resources needed for academic achievement are likely to be limited if they are provided by one parent as opposed to two, and this may adversely affect academic achievement of students, especially in primary and high school level where parent-supervision is highly needed (Uchenna, 2013).

Although parent-supervision may be not as relevant at university level, emotional and financial support from single or couple parents was found to enable academic achievement in this study (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.2). While emotional and financial support from both parents could be perceived as more beneficial when compared to support from a single parent, findings from this study reveal that high academic achievement can be found in single-parent homes since participants who reported being raised by single-mothers were listed among the top achievers of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As with many human experiences, sometimes things which constrain some individuals can be seen to enable others.

5.3.2 Like-minded peers

Peers seemed to play an influential role in the academic achievement of participants, as findings in this study reveal that they can either constrain or enable efforts made towards high academic achievement. Some participants reported having to distance themselves from some of their peers because they were distractive, causing them to lose focus in their studies (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.1.). Participants also reported the positive influence of peers, specifically with peers who had the same academic aspirations. Participants reported that having peers with similar academic aspirations made their own academic journeys bearable because they knew they could depend on their peers for encouragement and motivation when they were facing challenges which compelled them to give up on their academic goals. Similarly, participants explained that they also felt responsible for supporting their peers, making sure that they do not lose sight of the end-goal of excellence in their academic performance (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.2). This mutual support between participants and their peers (with high academic aspirations) is supported by findings which affirm that having likeminded peers who have the same academic aspirations positively influences students' academic performance as early as their adolescence stage (Darensbourg & Blake, 2013). Some participants reported deliberately befriending peers who studied harder and performed better than them, reporting that such peers kept them focused on their academic goals. It is this befriending that participants used to seek help in modules where they were struggling. They reported that activities such as group discussions were instrumental in their academic achievement, as they were able to seek academic support when they couldnot understand. Seeking help from peers has been established as an enabling process towards academic achievement in a study where participants were asked on the roles of parents, teachers and peers (Niehart & We Wang, 2015). Seeking help from one's environment (such as peers) is also firmly established as an adaptive self-regulated learning strategy (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011). Seeking support from likeminded peers in a student's surroundings can thereforebe considered as one way to nurture the environment of high academic achievement for self-regulated learners (Gonzalez-DeHass& Willems, 2016).

5.3.3 Lecturers positive attitude and behaviour

Participants also identified support from lecturers as enabling their academic achievement. Their approachable attitude, their easy accessibility associated with an ‘open-door policy’, and their overall helpfulness was found to be an enabler in high academic achievement of participants. All participants reported making use of lecturers’ consultation hours, seeking assistance and clarifications on issues that were not clear during a lecture.

In all three campuses where the focus-group discussions were conducted, participants reported receiving academic support and sometimes emotional support from their lecturers. A student who was studying at masters’ level at the time of data collection, reflected on her educational journey from first year; how her lecturers identified her academic potential from first year of university. She narrated a story of how she was assisted by her lecturers to secure sponsorship for both her honours and masters degrees.

Consistent with the above findings are results from a study conducted by Adediwura and Tayo (2007), which found that the positive attitude of educators facilitated effective teaching and thus enabled students’ academic achievement. Additionally, Maina (2013) reports similar findings, showing that a lecturer’s attitude towards students can affect their academic achievement. As stated in Section 5.3.2 of this chapter, seeking help (from lecturers and other academic support systems) is one of the strategies encouraged in self-regulated learning to assist learners in their academic achievement (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2016).

5.3.4 Resources

When asked about resources which enabled them to achieve academically, participants mentioned things like having internet access, textbooks, lecture notes, laptops, experiment equipment, financial aid services (e.g., bursaries and scholarships), counselling services for psychological and emotional wellbeing, and spiritual support offered by faith-based structures at the university.

Participants explained how access to the internet assisted their academic performance by allowing them access to extra reading material. Participants also mentioned the helpfulness of video tutorials on YouTube, which assist in explaining concepts they could not grasp in class.

The library was also identified as a helpful resource across the three campuses of focus in this study. The study environment and educational facilities provided online and offline, enabled participants to achieve academically.

5.4 Internal constraining processes

5.4.1 Losing focus and motivation

Participants reported a gradual loss of motivation and focus as the academic year progressed, and they reasoned that it was losing this motivation and focus which could constrain their academic achievement.

To be honest sometimes one just gets lazy. So it's not staying motivated, it's not staying focused, taking your eye off the ball. (Phumz, PMB-INT)

Some participants reported that associating with certain friends led them to lose focus of their academic goals and motivation to persevere. In this case the interplay of external and internal processes which was alluded to in the findings chapter and earlier in this chapter is displayed because what is happening externally in the environment (distractive friends) can affect internal processes (loss of motivation and focus) of the participants. The social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning emphasises the interplay of internal and external processes in learning environments, and the findings from this study demonstrate this emphasis practically.

5.4.2 Lack of time management

Although the participants identified having time management skills (see Section 5.2.2), some reported that it was difficult to sustain these throughout the academic year. They reported that some instances of their low academic performance in their academic journeys could be accounted for by lapses in their time management skills. When compared to participants in the other focus-group discussions, participants from the Howard College campus focus-group discussion seemed to spend more time on the issue of time management and its importance. Despite being high achieving students, none of the participants felt they had mastered managing their time. Although unconfirmed, it is possible that these high achieving students

held high expectations for themselves in terms of their mastery of time management skills. However, they reported improved skills in time management compared to when they first arrived at university. Participants reflected on how negligent they were with their study time because they initially did not expect university to be that different from high school, where most of them were high academic achievers without putting in much effort.

5.5 External constraining processes

5.5.1 University structure and procedures

When participants were asked about systems and procedures at the University of KwaZulu-Natal which constrained their academic achievement, issues such as delays in administrative procedures and ineffectiveness of security services on campus were discussed. Participants complained about the long queues they had to endure before getting administrative services, reasoning that time spent on those long queues to get administrative services could have been used for studying.

Regarding security on campus, participants reported witnessing students being mugged on campus and laptops being stolen in the library. Participants reported avoiding the library at night or in the early hours of the morning because of the uncertainty of their safety on campus. This in turn limited their study time at the library, thereby adversely affecting their academic achievement.

Mina I feel like security as well on campus because people get mugged. Like campus should be a place where we are safe and we are able to go to the library and study but there was this other one time, a student got mugged a laptop in the library (Dudu, HC-FDG)

Another issue which arose was regarding structures and procedures constraining academic achievement of students, these included inconsistent internet and printing services and the functionality of the computers. Participants complained how ill-managed the computer LANs are, with few functioning computers and broken printers. They reported incidents where the quality of their work was adversely affected because they had printed from low-functioning printers.

Participants from the University of KwaZulu-Natal College of Agriculture, Engineering and Sciences, under the School of Chemistry, Physics and Life Sciences explained how some of their experimental equipment took long periods of time to repair and how this made them loose focus and motivation on their work.

If I may... uuhm, I think sometimes resources as a whole in the university, even if it doesn't directly affect your research but people in finance and administration like she is saying, things are very delayed, and you have to run around to get things done and do things that are not your responsibility to do, it puts stress on you, you actually loose time from doing what you are supposed to be doing and I think that is lack of resources from the university. (Sibongile, PMB-FGD)

Over populated classes where students struggle to concentrate was also reported as a constraining issue, so much so, that some participants reported not attending certain lectures because the environment was not conducive for learning. This meant losing out on the content discussed in class which negatively affected their academic achievement. Participants explained that the centralisation of time tables across all the campuses of the university was causing chaos in terms of venue bookings for lectures. They explained that control and allocation of venues from one campus for all campuses was impractical because small venues were often allocated for large groups of students and that was why some lectures are overpopulated.

Another issue that was reported as constraining academic achievement when it came to university systems and procedures was perceived corruption at the housing department. The standard criteria in accommodation of first preference being given to students who live far from campus was not always adhered to as some students used bribery to get into the campus residences. This meant some students living far from campus did not get accepted into campus residence, they ended up living outside campus where they were far from resources such as internet access and library services in the evenings and as a consequence their academic work suffered.

Similar to the findings above, Frimpong, Agyeman, and Ofuso (2016) and Osaikhiuwu (2014) conducted studies which explored institutional factors affecting academic performance of students at higher education level. They found that unfavourable learning

environments, poorly equipped departmental and central libraries, poor access to internet facilities, overcrowded lecture rooms, and poor accommodation facilities were among other factors, which affected academic achievement of students. It is self-evident that university infrastructure and efficiency of administrative and support services are critical to ensure that all students in higher education achieve academically. However, it is possible that when compared to White students, black students are more dependent on university systems and services and are therefore more severely compromised by infrastructure shortfalls than students who can access the internet off-campus and/or live with family close to university campuses.

5.5.2 Lecturers' negative attitude and behaviour

Participants discussed their lecturers as constraining their academic achievement when they were disorganised in how they taught and organised their modules. They reported that some lecturers were helpful and approachable while some were disorganised in how they coordinated their modules with frequently cancelled lectures and lecturers' absenteeism.

One participant who was studying at masters level at the time of data collection, explained how unsupported she felt by her research supervisor who was not giving her adequate academic support.

My main thing is my lack of support from my supervisor, it's my main thing, it's been hindering the things that I need to do and I have quite a difficult time, so that's the main thing for me. (Samantha, PMB-FGD)

Another participant reported on an incident where she witnessed a negative attitude from the lecturer.

A lecturer said once last year, I think it was in psychology and people were like "we don't understand" and the lecture was like "if you don't understand that is not my problem because I am getting my cheque at the end of the day" so I just think that kind of attitude is just not conducive for the learning environment. (Sthabile, HC-FGD)

Studies have found results consistent with the findings above, showing that lecturers can negatively or positively affect academic achievement of students. Lecturers' attitudes toward students, their method of teaching and availability are among other factors that directly affected academic performance of students (Muzenda, 2013; Maina, 2013).

5.5.3 English language barrier

English as a medium of instruction at the University of KwaZulu-Natal was also described as constraining academic achievement by participants. They expressed witnessing their friends struggling to achieve academically because of the 'type' of English used to teach. They complained that some of their lecturers used advanced academic English which made it difficult for them to grasp content taught in class.

Language barrier is a big problem. I am a person that doesn't speak one language... like I don't even think people realise you know, especially those who are privileged to know how to speak English, they take for granted that they are those who went to schools which didn't teach in English. And I hate it that I sit with my friends with lecturers that speak English that even I don't understand, like high English. (Leo, HC-FGD)

Some students explained that their exposure to the English language came much later in their lives and how this made it particularly difficult to adapt in an environment where English was used as the only medium of instruction. Participants argued for the usage of both isiZulu and English languages as mediums of instruction as a remedy for the English language barrier. They complained that English limited some students from flourishing academically, particularly from poor under-resourced communities where English was not strictly used as a medium of instruction, while enabling those from privileged multi-racial schools where English was primarily used as a medium of instruction. Participants complained that this status-quo could only be solved if the university used fifty percent of Zulu and fifty percent of English. Similarly, Kamwendo, Hlongwa and Mkhize (2014) argue for the use of both isiZulu and English languages as mediums of instruction at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I mean I am not a English speaker and I never went to a white school, I only stay with Indian people for three years and they don't speak English, I mean their English is so poor, poor than mine. At home we don't speak English we speak like the perfect Zulu, the one you wouldn't understand. So when I got here and people are speaking English, I had to adapt. I have never had friends

who speak proper English I have never had... I have only had Indian friends and black friends. At school are being taught English but it is not the proper English that we get here and when we are here we have to write academically and you get people who don't want that side but only this side. When we mean 50% Zulu and fifty 50% English, it must be that way. (Zulu, HC-FGD)

The delayed encounter with English as medium of instruction in this study was highlighted in another study which found that a majority of South African learners experience school in their second language, often experiencing their first years of school in their mother tongue, which then posed a challenge to remediate later in their school years in academic environments where English language is used as a primary medium of instruction (Rampela, 2014; Parkinson & Crouch, 2011). Additionally, students from the University of Zululand expressed a difficult adjustment to communicating and learning in English when they first arrived at University (Fakude, 2012). Much like 'Zulu' from the Howard College focus-group discussion, two studies from KwaZulu-Natal argue for an inclusion of isiZulu as a second medium language so as to address the issue of English language barrier to academic achievement and access to higher education for all citizens of South Africa (Ndebele & Zulu, 2017; Kamwendo, Hlongwa, & Mkhize, 2014).

5.6 Summary

In this chapter findings were discussed with more elaboration, linking them to the literature review and theoretical framework of social-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning. Similar to Chapter 4, this chapter arranged themes as constraining and enabling processes, and explored them in terms of their dominance as internal and external. The following chapter will highlight the summary of the findings and then provide recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 findings were discussed as constraining and enabling processes, divided as internal or external. In Chapter 6, these findings will be summarised with regards to the objectives of the study. Then the limitations of the study and recommendations regarding enabling and constraining processes in high academic achievement of black students at University of KwaZulu-Natal will be discussed.

6.2 The objective of the study

This study aimed to explore how high achieving black South African students explained their academic achievement. It also aimed to explore the processes which high achieving black

South African students identified as enabling their academic achievement. Lastly, the study aimed to explore the processes which high achieving black South African students identified as constraining their academic achievement.

6.2.1 Findings regarding objective one: Explaining high academic achievement

The findings indicated that high achieving black students' explanation of high academic achievement tilted more towards assessment marks, with 75% being the minimum mark for a student to be considered as a high academic achiever. However, some students extended their definition to involvement in extracurricular activities while still maintaining an average of 75%. Another explanation given of high academic achievement was the ability to reach the highest level in a field of study, with or without the 75%.

6.2.2 Findings regarding objectives one and two: Enabling and constraining processes

The findings indicated that black South African students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal found the following as processes which enabled their academic achievement: Motivation to break the poverty cycle in the family, time management, studying a preferred course/degree, emotional and financial support from family, association with likeminded peers, positive attitude from lecturers and finally resources such as internet access, library services, textbooks and laptops.

Processes identified as constraining academic achievement by black South African students from the University of KwaZulu-Natal were the following: losing focus and motivation in one's academics; lack of time management; lecturer's negative attitude and behaviour; University structures and procedures with poor and slow services, and finally English language as the sole medium of instruction. Students reported that English language used as the only medium of instruction at the university was a challenge, especially for students from rural and under-resourced high schools who only experienced English as a medium of instruction upon their arrival at university. The participants explained that such students were constrained in their academic achievement because of their limited understanding of the English language.

Both enabling and constraining processes were conceptually divided as internal and external. Internal processes are those which depend more on the individual and not necessarily the environment of the student. Self-discipline could be seen as an internal process while things such as computer laboratories support from family or friends, and libraries could be seen more as “external” and/or environmental factors (CHE, 2013). Additionally, the interplay of internal and external processes was considered important in this study because of its grounding in social-cognitive theory (with a focus on the concept of self-regulated learning). Self-regulated learning is displayed in the students’ self-initiated efforts where they transform their mental abilities into their academic skills. Here learning is not a one-sided process where teachers and/or other agents of instruction provide information; rather, learning is viewed as an activity which students take upon themselves in a proactive way rather than in a reactive way (Zimmerman, 2002). Social-cognitive theory views self-regulated learning as the reciprocal interaction of behavioural, environmental, cognitive and other personal factors (Zimmerman, 1989).

Although enabling and constraining processes were divided as internal and external, their interplay was evident in the data generated in this study. Participants reported being motivated to achieve academically (internal) so as to break free from the poverty which entangled their families (external). They explained that witnessing and experiencing the effects of poverty made them more determined to work hard so as to attain an educational qualification, with the hope that education would afford them better chances of employment with enough income to escape the poverty cycle.

Another example that displayed the interplay of internal and external processes constraining academic achievement was the issues of delayed administration procedures, broken experiment equipment and unsupportive research supervisors (external) which affected participants’ motivation and focus. Participants reported that sometimes they felt really discouraged and helpless since some of the things which constrained their academic achievement were beyond their control.

6.3 Limitations

Three study limitations are relevant to highlight. Firstly, the focus-group discussions held on the Westville and Pietermaritzburg campuses only involved two and three participants respectively. An ideal number of focus-group participants tend to be between four and eight participants (Bless, Smith, & Kagee, 2006) and numbers lower than this range are likely to limit the depth and breadth of the discussion. It is therefore probable that, had more participants arrived for the Westville and Pietermaritzburg campus focus-group discussions, additional and different data may have been gathered. Secondly, only three out of the five campuses at the University of KwaZulu-Natal were studied because of time and cost constraints. Focus-group discussions on the Edgewood (education students only) and Medical School (medical students only) may have yielded different kinds of data, given the different kinds of students on these campuses. Thirdly, while attempts were made to lessen any biases, it was impossible to ensure that this was absolutely achieved. Therefore, the researcher's biases probably influenced the interpretation of the study findings. However, attempts have been made to make these biases explicit to the reader through the provision of an author note (see Chapter 3, section 3.13)

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, I propose the following recommendations to mitigate processes which students identified as constraining their academic achievement:

- Students should be encouraged to utilise support services such as the student counselling centre, where they can be assisted with time management skills and also be supported psychologically to assist them to remain motivated and focused on their academics (Matlala, 2005).
- Beyond the evaluation forms filled by students to assess lecturers, the university should consider implementing bi-annual meetings between student representatives and heads of departments, where students can better assist departments to identify areas of improvement.
- The issue of English language (as a medium of instruction) being identified as a barrier to academic achievement needs to be addressed at both primary and secondary schooling for better transition into higher education institutions (Maraschin, 2008).

Rampela (2014) found that most South African learners experienced their first years of school in their mother tongue, which then poses a challenge to remediate later in their school years when English is then used as the only language medium of instruction. Additionally, students from the University of Zululand expressed a difficult adjustment to communicating and learning in English when they first arrived at university (Fakude, 2012). Teachers at primary and high schooling levels need to teach children in English early in their schooling to better prepare them for the academic demands at university.

- Like most universities, the University of KwaZulu-Natal has a student population which is representative of the variety of South African cultures and races. Programmes could be put in place to facilitate students mixing across race and culture groups. These kinds of programmes are likely to compel students to communicate in a common language (i.e., English), and in this way students, who do not speak English as a home language, will be exposed to communicate English and subsequently gain confidence in expressing themselves in English (Matlala, 2005).
- Mapuranga et al. (2015) recommended the following regarding academic achievement of the students at the Great Zimbabwe University: A need for the University to improve their student services, ensuring that they are user-friendly instead of time-consuming so that students can have enough time to focus on their studies. Additionally, more funding from the government to promote access to higher education and high academic achievement would assist. Both these recommendations could assist the University of KwaZulu-Natal context, as poor student services and lack of funding were identified by participants as constraining their academic achievement.
- A recommendation which arose from the interview and focus-group discussions during data collection was the marketing of workshops which assisted students with additional skills in their academics, covering topics like time-management and studying strategies. Participants explained that most students were not aware of the support services at the university. They further explained that students were more aware of entertainment activities on campus because such events were excellently

marketed. Still on this issue participants complained about marketing of parties and music festivals on campus towards and/or during exam period. They recommended that the University put a policy which banned non-academic posters towards and during exam period to assist students who had not yet mastered the balance properly allocating time for social and academic activities.

- Another recommendation that the University of KwaZulu-Natal could investigate is the return of the centralised functioning of campuses, for example time-tabling that was controlled from one campus. The University's current structures operate according to a College (and not campus) model. Across the three campuses that were included in this study, participants argued that overpopulated lecture rooms, disorganised module scheduling and slow administration were caused by the centralisation of services. The University of KwaZulu-Natal could perhaps investigate its centralisation policy and amend it, considering the constraints mentioned above or alternatively invite students to a dialogue-meeting (recommended at the beginning of this section) where they could further interrogate this issue and identify areas of improvement.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter began by summarising findings in correlations with the set objectives of the study. Then finally limitations and recommendations regarding enabling and constraining processes in academic achievement of black students at University of KwaZulu-Natal were discussed

High academic achievement at university can only be attained with efforts from all stakeholders; the university, the students together with the government can work together to improve academic achievement in University. Findings from studies such as this one reveal that both internal and external processes contribute to academic achievement, this therefore means interventions regarding academic achievement should be developed in consideration with the contribution of both the student's environmental and individual circumstances. For

further research studies based on bigger sample (for example, inclusion of other Universities) could assist in increasing way to support and maintain high academic achievement for black (Africans) at high learning institutions.

REFERENCES

- Abudu, A.M., & Fuseini, M.N. (2013). Influence of single parenting on pupils' academic performance in basic schools in the wa municipality. *International Journal of Education Learning and Development*, 1(2), 85-94. Retrieved from: <http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Influence-of-Single-Parenting-on-Pupils%E2%80%99-Academic-Performance-in-Basic-Schools-in-the-Wa-Municipality.pdf>
- Adediwura, A., & Tayo, B. (2007). Perception of teachers' knowledge attitude and teaching skills as predictor of academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. *Educational Research and Review*, 2, 165-171.
- Aduke, F. A. (2015). Time management and students' academic performance in higher institutions, Nigeria – A case study of Ekiti state. *Macrothink institute*, 3 (2). Retrieved from <http://ire.macrothink.org>
- Agustiani, H., Cahyad, S., & Musa, M. (2016). Self-efficacy and self-regulated learning as predictors of students academic performance. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 9, 1-6. Retrieved from <http://bethamopen.com/contents/pdf/TOPSYJ/TOPSYJ-9-1.pdf>
- Ali, M., Ali, S., Mokhtar, N., & Salamat. (2009). The factors influencing students' performance at Universiti Teknologi MARA kedah, Malaysia. *Management Sciences and Engineering*, 3(4), 81-87. ISSN 1913-0341
- Alotaibi, K., Tohmaz, R., & Jabak, O. (2017). The Relationship Between Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement for a Sample of Community College Students at King Saud University. *Education Journal*, 6 (1), 28-37. Doi:10.11648/j.edu.20170601.14
- Anney, V.N. (2014). Ensuring the Quality of the Findings of Qualitative Research: Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 5(2): 272-281. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1419/f7b54e6b7f1215717a5056e0709f8946745b.pdf>
- Arshad, M., Zaidi, S.M.I.H., & Mahmood, K. (2015). Self-Esteem & Academic performance among University students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (1), 156-161. Retrieved from <http://www.iiste.org>
- Atieno, O. P. (2009). An analysis of the strengths and limitation of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 13. Retrieved from <http://oaji.net>

- Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University press.
- Baumeister, R.F., Campbell, J.D., Krueger, J.I., & Vohs, K.D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4 (1), 1-44. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com>
- Bembenutty, H., Cleary, T. J., & Kitsantas, A. (Eds.). (2013). Applications of self-regulated learning across diverse disciplines: A tribute to Barry J. Zimmerman (pp 263 – 261). Charlotte, NC, US: IAP Information Age Publishing. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281421112>
- Berg, B.L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for social sciences*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C., & Kagee. (2006). *Fundamentals of Social Research methods: An African perspective*. (4th ed.) Cape town, South Africa: Juta & company LTD.
- Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input*. Retrieved from <http://compositionaweb.pbworks.com>
- Brailsford, P. (2005). Exploring resiliency: Academic achievement among black youth in South Africa. *Psychological Society of South Africa*, 35(3), 574-591. Retrieved from <http://sap.sagepub.com>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Brink, H.I.L (1993). Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis*, 16(2).
- Cazan, A.M. (2012) *Assessing self-regulated learning: Qualitative vs quantitative research methods*. Proceedings from the international conference of scientific paper AFASES 2012 Brasov, 24-26 May 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.afahc.ro/ro/afases/2012/socio/2.2/CAZAN.pdf>
- Cepe, M. (2014). *The effects of Facebook use, self-discipline and parenting styles on academic achievement of high school and university students* (masters dissertation, University of Canterbury, Canterbury, New Zealand) http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/thesis_fulltext

- Chang, J., & Le, T. N. (2005). The influences of parents, peer delinquency, and school attitudes on academic achievement in Chinese, Cambodian, Laotian or Mien, and Vietnamese youth. *Crime and delinquency*, 51 (2), 238-264. Retrieved from <http://cad.sagepub.com>
- Choy, L. T. (2014). The strengths and weakness of research methodology: Comparison and Complimentary between qualitative and quantitative approaches. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(4), 99-104. Retrieved from <http://pdfs.semanticscholar.org>
- Coetzee, A.S.S. (2011). Class absenteeism: reasons for non-attendance and the effect on academic performance. *Accounting Research Journal*, 2 (1). 178-194. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10309611111163718>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in Education*. London: Roulledge/Falmer
- Connelly, L.M. (2015). Focus groups. *Medsurg Nursing*, 24(5), 367. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com>
- Council on Higher Education (2012) *VitalStats: Public Higher Education 2010*. Pretoria: CHE. Retrieved from http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/monitoring-and-evaluation/vitalstats-public-higher-education-2014
- Council on Higher education. (2013). A proposal for undergraduate curriculum reform in South Africa: The case for a flexible curriculum structure. Retrieved from http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/Full_Report.pdf
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Darensbourg, A.M., & Blake, J. J. (2013). Examining the Academic achievement of black adolescents: Importance of peer and parental influences. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 40 (2), 191-212. Retrieved from <http://jpb.sagehub.com> doi: 10.17583/ijep.2016.1661
- Drotos, S. (2011) "Secret Ingredients" in Postsecondary Educational Attainment: Challenges Faced by Students Attending High Poverty High Schools (doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, United states of America). Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=osu1299170270&disposition=inline DOI: 10.2989/16073614.2015.101269

- Fakude, X. S. (2012). Some factors which contribute to the poor academic achievement among undergraduate students at a higher education institution (Masters Dissertation, University of Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa). Retrieved from <http://uzspace.uzulu.ac.za>
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigour using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. Retrieved from <http://journal.sagepub.com>
- Fraser, W. J., & Killen, R. (2003). Factors influencing academic success or failure of first year and senior university students: do education students and lecturers perceive things differently? *South Africa Journal of Education*, 23(4), 254-260.
- Frimpong, E. A., Agyeman, G.A., & Ofosu, F.F. (2016). Institutional Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Polytechnic Students in Ghana. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 2 (1), 2349-6711. Retrieved from: https://www.ijhsss.com/files/Emanuel_914oty7l.pdf
- Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British dental journal*, 204 (6), 291-295 doi: 10.1038/bdj.2008.192
- Golding, J.M. (2011). The role of attendance in lecture classes: You can lead a horse to water... *Society for the Teaching of Psychology*, 38 (1), 40-42. Retrieved from <http://top.sagepub.com>
- Gong, Y., Rai, D., Beck, J.E., & Heffernan, N.T. (2009). Does Self-Discipline impact students' knowledge and Learning. *Educational data mining*, 61-70.
- Gonzales-DeHass, A. R., & Williem, P.P. (2016). Nurturing Self-Regulated Learners: Teacher, Peer, and Parental Support of Strategy Instruction. *The educational foru* 3(80):294-309. doi:10.1080/00131725.2016.1173751
- Goradia, T., & Bugarcic, A. (2017). Can self-regulated learning strategies improve academic achievement in online higher education learning environments? *Aimed journal*, 4, 36-37. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aimed.2017.04.004>
- Hamzah, A.R., Lucky, E.O., & Joarder, M.H.R. (2014). Time management, external motivation, and student's academic performance: evidence from a Malaysian public University. *Asian social science*, 10 (13), 55-62. doi:10.5539/ass.v10n13p55

- Higher Education South Africa (2014). *South African Higher Education in the 20th year of democracy: context, achievements and key challenges*. Retrieved from [http://pmg-assets.s3-website-eu-west-1-
amazonaws.com/140305hesa.pdf](http://pmg-assets.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/140305hesa.pdf)
- Higher Education South Africa. (2009). *Insight* [Newsletter]. Retrieved from <http://usaf.ac.za>
- Hope, E.C., Chavous, T.M., Jagers, R.J., & Sellers, R.M. (2013). Connecting self-esteem and achievement: Diversity in academic identification and dis-identification patterns among black college students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50 (5), 1122-1151. Retrieved from <http://aerj.aera.net>
- Jakesova, J., Gavora, P., Kalenda, J. (2016). Self-regulation of behavior: Students versus other adults. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 5(1), 56-79.
- Jayanthi, S.V., Balakrishnan, S., Ching., Latiff., & Nasirudeen. (2014). Factors Contributing to Academic Performance of Students in a Higher education Institution in Singapore. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 9 (2), 752-75. Retrieved from: <http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/2/9/8>
- Jewett, G.L. (2008). College persistence stories of low-income, first-generation students (Masters dissertation, Stellenbosch university, Stellenbosch, South Africa). Retrieved from http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/8896/jewett_thesis.pdf?sequence=1
- Kamwendo, G., Hlongwa, N., & Mkhize, N (2014) On medium of instruction and African scholarship: the case of Isizulu at the University of Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15(1), 75-89, DOI:10.1080/14664208.2013.858014
- Kaushar, M. (2013). Study of impact of time management on academic performance of college students. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 9 (6). 59-60. Retrieved from <http://iosrjournals.org>
- Kernis, M.H. (2003). Toward a conceptualization of optimal self-esteem. *Psychological inquiry*, 14 (1), 1-26
- Kitsantas, A., Winsler, A., & Huie, F. (2008). Self-regulation and ability predictors of academic success during college: A predictive validity study. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 20 (1). 42-68. Retrieved from <http://joa.sagepub.com>

- Kitsantas,A., Winsler,A., &Huie,F. (2008). Self-Regulation and Ability Predictors of Academic Success during College: A Predictive Validity Study. *Journal of advanced academics*, 20 (1). Retrieved from: <http://winslerlab.gmu.edu/pubs/Kitsantas.pdf>
- Krugel, R., & Fourie, E. (2014). Concerns for the language skills of South African learners and their teachers. *Int J Edu Sci*, 7 (1), 219-228.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research methodology: A step by step guide for beginners*. (3rd ed.). [e-book]. Retrieved from <http://sociology.kpi.ua>
- Lacour, M., &Tissington, L.D. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviewers*, 6 (7), 522-527. Retrieved from <http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR>
- Letseka, M. (2007). University drop-out and researching (lifelong) learning and working. Retrieved from<http://www.hsreprpress.ac.za>
- Lewin,T., &Mawoyo, M. (2014). *Student access and success: issues and interventions in South African Universities*. Cape Town, South Africa: Inyathelo. Retrieved from: h
- Maina,S. (2013). The Effect of Lecturer’s Attitude toward the Performance of Students in Purchasing Management in Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2 (7), 51-57. Retrieved from: <http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/ajis/article/viewFile/1673/1677>
- Makola, S., & Berg, H. (2008). The role of a sense of meaning in academic performance of first year students: A quantitative analysis. *Journal of the World Universities Forum*. 1(1), 51-58.
- Malefo, V. (2000). Psycho-social factors and academic performance among African women students at a predominantly white university in South Africa. *S.Afr.J.Psychol*, 30(4), 40 -45. Retrieved from <http://sap.sagepub.com>
- Mapuranga, B., Musingafi, M.C.C., &Zebron, S. (2015). Students Perceptions on Factors that affect their Academic Performance: The Case of Great Zimbabwe University. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 18(6), 1-4. Retrieved from: www.iiste.org
- Maraschin, S. (2008). Factors influencing enrolment and academic performance at a South African university (Masters Dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa). Retrieved from: <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za>

- Matlala, M.Y. (2005). Barriers to academic achievement of first year African students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Masters Dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, -Zulu-Natal, South Africa). Retrieved from: <http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za>
- McCoy, D.C., Wolf, S., & Godfrey, E.B. (2014). Student motivation for learning in Ghana: Relationships with caregivers' values toward education, attendance, and academic achievement. *School Psychology International*, 35 (3), 294-308. Retrieved from <http://spi.sagepub.com>
- Mikroyannidis, A., Connolly, T., Law, E.L.C., Schmitz, H.C., Vieritz, H., Nussbaumer, A., & Berthold, M. (2014). Self-regulated learning in formal education: perceptions, challenges and opportunities, *Int. J. technology Enhanced Learning*, 6(2), 145-162
- Miqdadi, F.Z., Abdulla F. A., Mohammad T., &Elmousel, N.M. (2014). The relationship between time management and the academic performance of students from the petroleum institute in Abu Dhabi, the UAE. *Proceedings of ASEE 2014 Zone I Conference, April 3-5, 2014*, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT, USA. Retrieved from: <http://www.asee.org/documents/zones/zone1/2014/Student/PDFs/177.pdf>
- Miqdadi, F.Z., Momami, A.F., Mohammad, T., &Elmouse, N.M. (2014). The relationship between time management and the academic performance of students from the petroleum institute in Abu Dhabi, the UAE. ASEE 2014 Zone I Conference University of Bridgeport, CT, USA.
- Morrow, S. L., Castaneda-Sound, C. L., & Abrams, E. M. (2012). Counselling psychology methods: Qualitative approaches. In Fouad, N. A. *APA handbook of counselling psychology: voll. Theories, research, and methods*. DOI: 10.1037/13754-004. Retrieved from <http://aliento.pepperdine.edu>
- Muzenda, A. (2013). Lecturers' Competences and Students' Academic Performance. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 3(1), 2319 – 7722. Retrieved from: [http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v3\(1\)/Version-2/B310206013.pdf](http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v3(1)/Version-2/B310206013.pdf)
- Ndebele, H., & Zulu, N.S. (2017) The management of isiZulu as a language of teaching and learning at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's College of Humanities. *Language and Education*, 31 (6), 509-525, DOI: 10.1080/09500782.2017.1326503
- Ochonogor, N.V. (2014). The impact of single parenthood on adolescent educational achievements: a socio-educational perspective (Masters Dissertation, University of South Africa). Retrieved from:

http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/18447/dissertation_ochonogor_vn.pdf?sequence=1

- Ongweno, P.O., Kathuri, N.J., & Obara, J. (2014). Influence of family characteristics on academic performance of students in secondary agriculture, in Rachuonyo North sub county, Kenya. *International journal of Education and Research*, 2(2), 1-10. ISSN 2201-6740.
- Osaikhiuwu, O.C. (2014). Institutional Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Public Administration Students in a Nigerian University. *Public Administration Research*, 3(2), 171-177. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/par.v3n2p171>
- Parkinson, J., & Crouch, A. (2011) Education, Language, and Identity Amongst Students at a South African University. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 10 (2), 83-98, DOI: 10.1080/15348458.2011.563644
- Petersen, I., Louw, J., & Dumont, K. (2009). Adjustment to university and academic performance among disadvantaged students *iPsychology*, 29 (1), 99-115. DOI: 10.1080/01443410802521066
- Ramapela, S.S. (2014). *The influence of language competency on learner academic achievement: A case study of grade 12 learners and educators in Capricorn district, Limpopo province, South Africa* (doctoral dissertation, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa). Retrieved from <http://encore.tut.ac.za>
- Rooy, B. & Rooy, S.C. (2015) The language issue and academic performance at a South African University, *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 33:1, 31-46,
- Rui, Z., & Kuo, Y.L. (2015). The role of self-discipline in predicting academic achievement for 10th graders. *International Journal of Intelligent Technologies and Applied Statistics*, 8 (1), 61-70. DOI: 10.6148/IJITAS.2015.0801.05
- Sadler, E., & Erasmus, B.J. (2005). The academic success and failure of black chartered accounting graduates in South Africa: A distance education perspective. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 13 (1), 29-50.
- Seabi, J. (2011). Relating learning strategies, self-esteem, intellectual functioning with academic achievement among first-year engineering students. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 41(2), 239-249. Retrieved from <http://sap.sagepub.com>
- Sebolai, K. (2016). Distinguishing between English proficiency and academic literacy in English. *Language Matters*, 47 (1), 45-60. doi:10.1080/10228195.2015.1124281

- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). [e-book]. Retrieved from <http://researchgate.net>
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *IOS press*, 63-75. Retrieved from <http://researchgate.net>
- Simba, N.O., Agak, J.O., & Kabuka, E.K. (2016). Impact of discipline on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Muhoroni sub-country, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7 (6), 164-173. Retrieved from <http://www.iiste.org>
- Siyengo, N. (2015). The educational and psychosocial experiences of first generation students in higher education (Masters dissertation, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa). Retrieved from http://scholar.sun.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10019.1/98119/siyengo_educational_2015.pdf?sequence=1
- Steenkamp, L.P., Baard, R.S., & Frick, B.L. (2009). Factors influencing success in first year accounting at a South African University: A comparison between lecturers' assumptions and students' assumptions. *South African Journal of Accounting Research*, 23(1), 113-140, Doi: 10.1080/10291954.2009.11435142
- Stephen, D.F., Welman, J.C., & Jordaan, W.J. (2004). English language proficiency an indicator of academic performance at a higher education institution. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2 (3), 42-53.
- Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N. (1998). Focus group research: Exploration and discovery. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of applied social research methods* (pp. 505-526). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Strydom, J.F., Mentz, M., & Kuh, G.D. (2010). Enhancing success in higher education by measuring student engagement in South Africa. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu>
- Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., & Kelly, K. (2006). First steps in qualitative data analysis. In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim, & D. Painter (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed., pp. 320-344). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press
- Thanh, N. C., & Thanh, T. T. L. (2015). The interconnections between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods in education. *American journal of Educational Science*, 1 (2), 24-27. Retrieved from <http://www.aiscience.org/journal/ajes>

- Thatcher, A., Fridjhon, P., & Cockcroft, K. (2007). The relationship between lecture attendance and academic performance in an undergraduate psychology class. *South Africa Journal of Psychology*, 37 (3), 656-660. ISSN 0081-2464
- Tracy, S.J. (2013) Qualitative research methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact. Retrieved from: http://okt.kmf.uz.ua/atc/oktat-atc/Basics_of_research_methodology/Tracy_2013_qualitative_research_methods_collecting_evidence_crafting_analysis_communication.pdf
- Tshotsho, B.P. (2013). Mother tongue debate and language policy in South Africa. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13 (3), 39-45. Retrieved from http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_13_July_2013/5pdf
- Uchenna, A.O. (2013). Single-Parenting, Psychological Well-Being and Academic Performance of Adolescents in Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*. 4(1),112-117. Retrieved from: <http://jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.com/articles/Single%20Parenting.pdf>
- UNESCO (2014). *Sustainable development begins with education: How education can contribute to the proposed post-2015 goals*. Karel Prinsloo/ARETE. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230508e.pdf>
- Vaille, W.J., Heaven, P.C.L., & Ciarrochi, J.V. (2005). The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in high ability students: Evidence from the Wollongong Youth study. *Australasian Journal of Gifted Education*, 14 (2), 39-45.
- Webb, V., Lafon, M., & Pare, P. (2010). Bantu languages in education in South Africa: an overview. Ongekhoakekho! – the absentee owner. *Learning languages journal*, 38 (3), 273-292. DOI: 10.1080/09571730903208389
- Wen Wang, C. W., & Neihart, M. (2015). How do supports from parents, teachers, and peers influence academic achievement of twice-exceptional students. *Gifted Child Today*, 38(3), 148-159. doi:10.1177/1076217515583742
- Wen Wang, C., & Neihart, M. (2015). How do supports from parents, teachers, and peers influence academic achievement of twice-exceptional students? *Gifted child today*. 38, 148-159. DOI:10.1177/1076217515583742

- Wilson, J., & Komba, S.C. (2012). The link between English language proficiency and academic performance: A pedagogical perspective in Tanzania secondary school. *World Journal of English Language*, 2 (4), 1-9. doi:10.5430/wiel.v2n4p1
- Winlow, H., Simm, D., Marvel, A., Schaaf, R. (2013). Using focus group research to support teaching and learning. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 37 (2), 292-303. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2012.696595>
- Yaw, L.H. (2014). The effect of single parenting on student academic performance in secondary schools in Bruei. *The Social Sciences*, 11 (3), 698-703. Retrieved from: <http://docsdrive.com/pdfs/medwelljournals/sscience/2016/698-703.pdf>
- Zahidi, A. B. M. (2012). Self-regulation in English language learning: Case studies of six Malaysian undergraduates (doctoral dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz>
- Zahidi, A. B. M. (2012). Self-regulation in English language learning: Case studies of six Malaysian undergraduates (doctoral dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz>
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2002) Becoming a Self-Regulated Learner: An Overview, *Theory Into Practice*, 41:2, 64-70, DOI: 10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2
- Zimmerman, B.J. (1989). A social cognitive view of self-regulated academic learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 8 (3). 329-339.
- Zimmerman, B.J. (2010). Becoming a self-regulated learner: an overview, *Theory into practice*, 41 (2), 64-70. Doi: 10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2
- Zumbrunn, S., Tadlock, J., & Roberts, E.D. (2011). *Encouraging self-regulated learning in the class room: A review of the literature*. Metropolitan educational research consortium, Virginia Commonwealth University. Retrieved from <http://self-regulation.ca>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Focus Group Discussion guide/Questions

Time	Activities and facilitator prompts/questions
15min	<p>Part 1: Introductions and consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants arrive • Introductions • Overview of study • Information sheet • Informed consent
30min	<p>Part 2: Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a piece of paper write two things you do before a test or exam • On the second piece of paper draw three objects that can't do school without
45min	<p>Part 3: Open discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is exceptional academic achievement at university? • What helps you to excel academically? • What role does your family play in your academic achievement? • What role do your lecturers play in your academic achievement? • What role do resources play in your academic achievement? • Which groups of students seem to excel more than others? Why might this be so? • What prevents you from excelling academically? • In which degrees/modules is it harder to excel academically in? • Which systems at UKZN frustrate your attempts to excel academically? • What could UKZN do to help you excel academically?

Appendix 2: Gate-keeper's approval



6 January 2015

Dr Nicholas Munro
School of Applied Human Sciences
College of Humanities
Pietermaritzburg Campus
UKZN
Email: munron@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Dr Munro

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"The student academic exceptionalty project: Equity and exceptional academic achievement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal".

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample as follows:

- with a request for responses on the website. The questionnaire must be placed on the notice system <http://notices.ukzn.ac.za>. A copy of this letter (Gatekeeper's approval) together with the ethical clearance must be simultaneously sent to govenderlog@ukzn.ac.za or ramkissoob@ukzn.ac.za. You are not authorized to distribute the questionnaire to staff and students using Microsoft Outlook address book.
- access to UKZN data.

Please note that the data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

MR BAATILE POO
REGISTRAR (ACTING)

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7624/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Appendix 3: Access to UKZN Scholarship list

RE: Request for approval: Access to UKZN Scholarships report/list

12 January 2015
03:20 PM

Subject	RE: Request for approval: Access to UKZN Scholarships report/list
From	Renuka Vithal
To	Nicholas Munro
Sent	05 January 2015 11:04 AM

Dear Dr Munro

Your request is supported.

May I also kindly request that you provide the Scholarships Committee with a report on your findings when the study is completed.

Regards

Prof Renuka Vithal (*dr.scient.*)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
Professor in Mathematics Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Mazisi Kunene Road
Howard College Campus
2nd Floor Francis Stock Building.
Tel: 031 260 2988 Fax: 031 260 3360
Email: vithal@ukzn.ac.za
www.ukzn.ac.za
PA: Ms Corlia Olivia Ogle
Tel: 031 260 8231 Fax: 031 260 3360
Email: ogle@ukzn.ac.za

From: Nicholas Munro
Sent: 02 January 2015 03:12 PM
To: Renuka Vithal
Subject: Request for approval: Access to UKZN Scholarships report/list

Dear Prof Vithal,

I write to you in your capacity as Chair of the University Scholarships Committee.

As you are aware, I am leading an institutional research project on exceptional academic achievement among UKZN students. One of the ways in which I can access the names of undergraduate UKZN students who are excelling academically is through the Scholarships Committee's Scholarship report/list. This report/list is generated by the Scholarships Office in Student Funding in preparation for the Scholarships Committee meetings which you chair.

I would like to request your approval for me to access the 2014 or 2015 Scholarships report/list so that I can objectively and purposively identify high achieving UKZN students. It is my intention to email the UKZN students on the list via their student email addresses, and invite them to participate in the institutional research project on exceptional academic achievement. The students will only be emailed ONCE, and if a student does not respond to the email, no further attempts will be made to contact her/him. Each student will receive an email inviting them to participate in the study by completing an online questionnaire, attending a focus group discussion, and/or participating in an interview with one of the researchers from the research team.

Please advise if you would approve and support the use of the Scholarships report/list in the abovementioned way.

Nicholas Munro, PhD

Appendix 4: Email invitation to prospective focus group discussion participants

Dear student,

Invitation to participate in a focus group discussion on the topic of exceptional academic achievement by UKZN students

We are conducting an institutional research study on undergraduate students who excel academically at UKZN. As an undergraduate student who has excelled so far at UKZN, you are being emailed and invited to participate in a focus group discussion on the topic of exceptional academic achievement at UKZN (see attachment to this email for more information on the focus group discussion and the study).

If you are interested in participating in a focus group discussion on the campus you are studying, please reply to this email and we will get back to you with further details about the date, time, and venue of the focus group discussion.

Sincerely

MphengThamae

Discipline of Psychology, School of Applied Human Sciences

Student: Masters counselling psychology

Cell: 060 819 5433

mpthamae88@gmail.com

Appendix 5: Participant information sheet

Dear student,

Participant information sheet: Research study on exceptional academic achievement by UKZN students (focus group discussion)

The research study

We are conducting an institutional research study on undergraduate students who excel academically at UKZN. The aim of the project is to explore how undergraduate UKZN students excel academically. The results from the study could assist UKZN to understand what facilitates exceptional academic achievement at UKZN, and how this could be encouraged and supported. You have been invited to participate in a focus group discussion.

The focus group discussion

The focus group discussion will take about 90 minutes, and will be held in a venue on your campus. There will be about six other students in the focus group discussion. The facilitator of the focus group discussion will invite you to share your experiences on how you manage to excel academically at UKZN, and you should only share what you are comfortable to.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and risks/benefits

You will also be asked to sign a confidentiality pledge wherein you agree not to reveal to others the contents of what was discussed in the focus group discussion. You may elect to use your actual name or a pseudonym (i.e., a made-up name) during the focus group discussion and this research study. There are no foreseeable risks to your participating in the focus group discussion. With your consent, the focus group discussion will be audio-recorded so that the researcher can transcribe and analyses what the participants said.

Storage of information and accessing more information about the study

The audio-recordings and transcripts from the focus group discussions will be stored in a secure location for a period of five years, after which they will be destroyed. The data will be used for postgraduate student dissertations and journal publications. If you selected to remain anonymous in the focus group discussions, no identifying information about you will be

published. For more information please contact me on mpthamae88@gmail.com or 060 81905433

Voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw from the study

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point and for any reason.

A summary of the findings from the research study can be made available to you on request.

Thank you

MphengThamae

Discipline of Psychology, School of Applied Human Sciences

Student: Masters Counselling Psychology

Cell: 060 819 5433

mpthamae88@gmail.com

Appendix 6: Participant's informed consent

Dear student,

Participant information sheet: Research study on exceptional academic achievement by UKZN students (focus group discussion)

The research study

We are conducting an institutional research study on undergraduate students who excel academically at UKZN. The aim of the project is to explore how undergraduate UKZN students excel academically. The results from the study could assist UKZN to understand what facilitates exceptional academic achievement at UKZN, and how this could be encouraged and supported. You have been invited to participate in a focus group discussion.

The focus group discussion

The focus group discussion will take about 90 minutes, and will be held in a venue on your campus. There will be about six other students in the focus group discussion. The facilitator of the focus group discussion will invite you to share your experiences on how you manage to excel academically at UKZN, and you should only share what you are comfortable to.

Confidentiality, anonymity, and risks/benefits

You will also be asked to sign a confidentiality pledge wherein you agree not to reveal to others the contents of what was discussed in the focus group discussion. You may elect to use your actual name or a pseudonym (i.e., a made-up name) during the focus group discussion and this research study. There are no foreseeable risks to your participating in the focus group discussion. With your consent, the focus group discussion will be audio-recorded so that the researcher can transcribe and analyses what the participants said.

Storage of information and accessing more information about the study

The audio-recordings and transcripts from the focus group discussions will be stored in a secure location for a period of five years, after which they will be destroyed. The data will be used for postgraduate student dissertations and journal publications. If you selected to remain anonymous in the focus group discussions, no identifying information about you will be

published. For more information please contact me on mphamae88@gmail.com or 060 81905433

Voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw from the study

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point and for any reason.

A summary of the findings from the research study can be made available to you on request.

Thank you

MphengThamae

Discipline of Psychology, School of Applied Human Sciences

Student: Masters Counselling Psychology

Cell: 060 819 5433

mphamae88@gmail.com

DECLARATION

I _____(full name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of participant _____Date:_____

Appendix 7: Confidentiality pledge for focus group participants

As a participant of this focus group discussion, I understand that some people would not want what they disclosed here today to be shared with any person outside of this focus group discussion. Therefore, I agree to maintain confidentiality about what was discussed during this focus group discussion and who discussed it. By signing this pledge, I promise to keep the comments made by the other focus group participants confidential

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 8: Overarching study- ethics approval



12 February 2015

Dr Nicholas Munro 316183
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Dr Munro

Protocol reference number: HSS/0060/015CA
Project title: The student academic exceptional project: Equity and exceptional academic achievement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 3 February 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have 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

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

/pm

Cc Supervisor/Project Leader: Dr Siaka Lougue, Annapurna Hazra & Kealoleboga Maruping
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor D McCracken
Cc School Administrator: Mr Sbonelo Duma

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

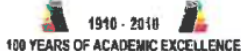
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximban@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

 1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Appendix 9: Ethics approval of this study



9 June 2015

Ms Mpheng Thamae 215079663
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Thamae

Protocol reference number: HSS/0631/015M (linked to HSS/0060/015CA)
Project title: High Academic achievement among black South Africans students: Enabling and constraining processess

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 1 June 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have 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

.....
Dr Shamila Naidoo
On behalf of Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Nicholas Munro
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor D Wassenaar
Cc School Administrator: Mr Sbonelo Duma

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximban@ukzn.ac.za / smrmanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohung@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 10: Amendment of ethics approval to include interviews



1 September 2015

Dr Nicholas Munro 316183
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Dr Munro

Protocol reference number: HSS/0060/015CA

New project title: The student academic exceptional project: Equity and exceptional academic achievement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Approval Notification – Amendment

This letter serves to notify you that your request for an amendment received on 19 August 2015 has now been approved as follows:

- Amendment to research protocol

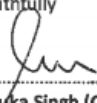
Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the 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 period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully


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

/pm

Cc Supervisor/Project Leader: Dr Siaka Lougue, Annapurna Hazra & Ms K Maruping
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nozipho Ndlovu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymam@ukzn.ac.za / mohunn@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Appendix 11: Front page of Turnitin originality report

ev.turnitin.com/app/carta/en_us/?lang=en_us&u=1007948778&ts=1&o=906528463 110%

ack studio | Final dissertation | /0 | 2 of 3

High academic achievement among black South African students:

Enabling and constraining processes

Mpheng Priscilla Thamae (215079663)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Social Sciences (Counselling Psychology) in the School of Applied Human Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

2018

Match Overview

11%

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac... <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
2	146.230.128.141 <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
3	Submitted to University... <small>Student Paper</small>	1%
4	scholar.sun.ac.za <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
5	uir.unisa.ac.za <small>Internet Source</small>	1%
6	researcharchive.vuw.ac... <small>Internet Source</small>	<1%
7	open.uct.ac.za <small>Internet Source</small>	<1%
8	psychology.gmu.edu <small>Internet Source</small>	<1%
9	196.21.83.35 <small>Internet Source</small>	<1%
10	mro.massey.ac.nz <small>Internet Source</small>	<1%
11	ccms.ukzn.ac.za <small>Internet Source</small>	<1%