

An investigation on the coping strategies of rural women as they assume roles in households and communities: A case study of the Eastern Cape

**A MINI-DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE**

**OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION IN ADULT EDUCATION**

**BY
ALICIA NEZIWE MBEBE**

SUPERVISOR: DR ZAMOKWAKHO AUGUSTINE HLELA

2023

Abstract

The study investigated the coping strategies of rural women assuming roles in households and communities in the Eastern Cape. The study explored the nature of learning that takes place at Gabisile National Centre (GNC), a centre that is made up of a group of rural women who reside at Manzamnyama location in Mthatha. Motivation for the study was to understand the coping strategies learned by rural women learned in the context of GNC in finding solutions in their real lives, households, and communities. Different ways of learning adult learning which led to finding the coping strategies, which include the informal and non-formal ways of learning were scrutinized. Also, the research uncovered how rural women were participating with one another in the context of GNC.


This research was underpinned by Community of Practice of Lave and Wengers' theory asserting knowledge as promoted through disseminating knowledge within a group of people. The research used a qualitative approach. The case study design was used. Eight (8) participants were purposively sampled from the total population of twenty-eight (28), all rural women staying at Manzamnyama location, which is the walking distance to GNC. Data collection instruments were document analysis, observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. Data were analysed using ATLAS ti.

The findings revealed four ways of learning that took place at GNC, namely: worship, physical exercises, craftwork, and monthly meetings. The rural women were actively participating, interacting, engaging, and sharing experiences with one another in the process of creating knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their households and communities. The rural women also learned from one another using informal and non-formal ways of acquiring knowledge and skills. The research confirmed that learning of rural women at GNC has provided the coping strategies that transformed the rural women's lives, households and communities.

Declaration

I, Alicia Neziwe Mbebe, hereby confirm that:

- (i) The report from dissertation is my original work
- (ii) The dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information unless duly acknowledged as such.
- (iv) The dissertation does not contain other person's writing unless specifically acknowledged as being sources from other researchers. Where other sources have been quoted, then:
 - (a) Their words have been rewritten, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
 - (b) Where the exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside the quotation marks and referenced.
- (v) The dissertation does not contain text, graphics, or tables copied and pasted unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and as well as \in the reference sections.



Alicia Neziwe Mbebe

Dr Augustine Zamokwakhe Hlela

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the following:

- (a) Almighty God for providing me with strength throughout this journey.
- (b) My daughter, Gcobisa, and my son, Masibulele for their full support throughout my research journey.
- (c) My late parents for their words of encouragement.
- (d) All GNC members for their participation, sacrifices, and the valuable contribution they made to this research study.
- (e) All the academic lecturers at UKZN, who contributed towards achieving my research study.
- (f) My supervisor, Dr. Zamo Hlela, for bringing the best out of me through his continuous efforts.
- (g) For sharing his experiences, and encouragement and believing in me to achieve this research study.

List of abbreviations/ acronyms

GNC	Gabisile National Centre
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
DSD	Department of Social Development
CSU	Correctional Service Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
CoP	Community of Practice
KSDM	King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussions

Table of contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
List of abbreviations/ acronyms.....	vi
Table of contents	vii
Prologue.....	xiii
Chapter one.....	1
Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the study.....	1
1.3 Problem statement	4
1.4 Focus and the purpose of the study	4
1.5 The objectives of the study.....	5
1.6 Research questions:.....	5
1.7 Rationale for the study	5
1.8 Sigificance to the studyResearch site.....	7
1.9 Limitations of the study	9
1.10 Outline of the dissertation.....	10
Chapter one	10
Chapter two	10
Chapter three.....	10
Chapter four.....	10
Chapter five.....	11
Conclusion.....	11
Chapter two	12
Literature review.....	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Adult Education.....	12

2.2.1	Lifelong learning.....	13
2.2.2	Recurrent education	14
2.2.3	Community Education.....	15
2.2.4	Learning society	15
2.2.5	Popular education.....	16
2.2.6	Different types of adult education.....	18
2.2.6.1	Formal education	18
2.2.6.2	Informal education.....	18
2.2.6.3	Nonformal education	18
2.3	Adult learning.....	18
2.3.1	Introduction	18
2.3.1	Definition of learning	19
2.3.2	Types of Adult learning	19
2.3.2.1	Formal learning	19
2.3.2.2	Informal learning.....	19
2.3.2.3	Non-formal learning.....	20
2.4	Theories in adult learning	21
2.4.1	ANDRAGOGY AS A LEARNING THEORY	21
2.4.2	Behaviourist learning theory.....	22
2.4.3	Experiential learning	22
2.4.4	Constructivism as a learning theory.....	23
2.4.5	The humanistic learning theory OR learner-centred learning theory	24
2.4.6	Transformative learning theory	25
2.4.7	Critiques on the theories of adult learning.....	26
2.5	Definition of concepts.....	28
2.5.1	Empowerment	28
2.5.2	Gender	28
2.5.3	Coping strategies.....	28
2.5.4	Culture.....	28
2.5.5	Patriarchy.....	29
2.6	Similar studies	29
2.7	Theoretical framework	32
2.7.1	Meaning of CoP	32
2.7.2	Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) to understand the CoP in the context of the GNC.	34
2.7.3	Rationale of the use of CoP	34

2.7.4	Critique of the CoP	35
2.8	Conclusion.....	37
Chapter three.....		38
Research design and methodology.....		38
3.1. Introduction		38
3.2. Research design		38
3.3. Research qualitative methodology		38
3.3.1. Research paradigm		39
3.3.2. Constructivist paradigm		40
3.3.3. Case study		40
3.3.4. Population.....		41
3.3.5. Sampling procedure and sample size		41
3.3.5.1. Purposive sampling		42
3.3.5.2. Sample size.....		42
3.3.6. Location of the Research.....		43
3.7. Data generation		43
3.7.1. Document analysis		43
3.7.2. Individual semi-structured interviews		44
3.7.3. Focus group discussions.....		45
3.7.4. Observation.....		46
3.8.1. Entering primary documents		47
3.8.2. Defining quotations from primary documents		47
3.8.3. Reintegrating data by coding		48
3.8.4. Commenting and memoing		48
3.8.5. Categorising data into families and seeing the relevance		48
3.8.5.1. Reading data in a new way		49
3.8.5.2. Producing the report.....		49
3.9. Ethical issues		49
3.9.1. Trustworthiness issues.....		50
3.9.1.1. Credibility.....		51
3.9.1.2. Transferability		51
3.9.1.3. Confirmability.....		51
3.9.1.4. Dependability		52
3.9.1.5. Triangulation.....		52
3.9.1.6. Member checking		52
3.9.1.7. Debriefing sessions		52

3.10. Conclusion.....	54
Chapter four.....	55
Presentation and discussion of findings	55
4.1 Introduction	55
4.2 The case study- the GNC.....	55
4.2.1. The GNC participants	58
4.2.2 Description of each research participant.....	63
4.3 The four main activities at GNC	66
4.3.1. Worship as a learning activity.....	68
4.3.2 Physical exercise as a learning activity.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.3.2.1. Sporting exercise as a sub-learning activity.....	69
4.3.3. Craftwork as a learning activity	70
4.3.3.1. Trading as part of learning activity	71
4.3.4. The monthly meetings as a place of learning	72
4.3.4.1 Team building as part of the place of learning	73
4.4 Learned and coping strategies at GNC.....	74
4.4.1. Worship as a learning strategy	75
4.4.2. Physical exercise as a coping strategy.....	75
4.4.3. Craftwork as a learning strategy	76
4.4.4. Monthly meetings as a learning strategy.....	77
4.5 The ways of learning at GNC.....	78
4.5.1. Worship as a way of learning.....	78
4.5.3. Craftwork as a way of learning	80
4.6 Discussion.....	102
4.6.1 GNC as a CoP -Participation at GNC as the Community of Practice (CoP).....	102
4.6.1. 1 Mutual engagement.....	105
4.6.1.2 Joint enterprise	106
4.6.1.3 Shared Repertoire	107
4.7 Research questions in response to the study	108
4.7.1 Worship.....	109
4.7.2 Physical exercises.....	109
4.7.3 Craftwork	109
4.7.4 Monthly Meeting	110
4.8.1 What are learned strategies by rural women as they participate in the GNC educational activities?	110
4.8.1.1 Worship a coping strategy	110

4.8.1.1.2 Physical exercise a coping strategy.....	111
4.8.1.1.3 Craftwork a coping strategy.....	112
4.8.1.4 Monthly meetings.....	112
4.9. In what ways do rural women learn at the GNC.....	112
4.10 Conclusion.....	114
Chapter five.....	115
Summary, conclusions and recommendations.....	115
5.1 Introduction.....	115
5.2 Summary of key findings.....	115
5.2.1 To understand the educational activities learned at Gabisile national centre by rural women.....	116
5.2.1.1 Worship.....	116
5.2.1.2 Physical exercises.....	116
5.2.1.3 Craftwork.....	117
5.2.1.4 Monthly meetings.....	117
5.2.2 Learning ways that transform the lives of the rural women at GNC.....	118
5.2.2.1 Worship.....	118
5.2.2.2 Physical exercise.....	119
5.2.2.3 Craftwork.....	119
5.2.3.4. The monthly meetings.....	120
5.3. The strategies learned by the rural women in the context of GNC.....	121
5.6.1. Worship as a learning strategy.....	121
5.6.2. Physical exercise as a learning strategy.....	122
5.6.3. Craftwork as a learning strategy.....	122
5.6.4. Monthly meetings as a learning strategy.....	123
5.7. Conclusions.....	123
5.8. Recommendations.....	124
5.8.1. Recommendations for the study.....	125
5.8.2 Recommendations for further research.....	126
5.9. Limitations of the study.....	127
5.10. Strength of the study.....	128
5.11 Final conclusion.....	128
References.....	130
APPENDIX A: Gate keeper’s Informed consent form.....	141
APPENDIX B: Informed consent document.....	145
APPENDIX C: Informed consent document.....	146

APPENDIX D: Declaration by the participants.....	147
APPENDIX E: INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS SCHEDULED FOR THE RURAL WOMEN AT GABISILE NATIONAL CENTRE	149
Section A: Biographical information of the participant	149
Section B: Being a member of the Gabisile National Centre	149
Section C: Educational activities	149
Section D: Learning strategies at GNC	149
Section E: Knowledge and skills gained	150
APPENDIX F: Focus group Interview Schedule.....	153
Section A: Educational activities at GNC.....	153
Section B: learning activities	153
Section C: Knowledge and skills	153
APPENDIX G: Interviews schedule for the founder Ms. Gabisile	157
APPENDIX H: Observation schedule	159
APPENDIX I: Ethical certificate	161

PROLOGUE

I was a teacher at Manzamnyama location, my school was not far from Gabisile National Centre. I saw a group of rural women actively participating in the activities at Gabisile National Centre. I became interested to understand more on what was happening at GNC. Whenever, I had the opportunity I started visiting the centre since I wanted to watch closely the rural women playing soccer and netball. I also saw the craftwork; rural women would display and sometimes sell to us at school and to the community members.

I became close to Gabisile National Centre and I saw the group of rural women participating together in the same activities of the centre having the same concern. I communicated with one of the GNC members and I began to understand that the rural women were working together, supporting one another as a team. The rural women were meeting regularly engaging, participating with one another in the activities of the centre. What became more interesting to me was the commitment rural women showed to one another when engaging in their activities especially during the physical exercises. Therefore, I became interested to investigate the learning ways at GNC and how the rural women's learning impacted their lives. Hence this research study.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the study by giving the background and statement of the problem. Furthermore, the chapter also outlines the focus and the purpose of the research through the objectives and research questions. The research is also justified and its limitations acknowledged in this section of the dissertation. Before concluding the chapter, an outline of the work constituting dissertation are outlined.

1.2 Background of the study

During apartheid era, women were mostly affected by the social injustices caused by labour migrant systems, culture and patriarchy (Sachs, 2018). The rapid increase in economic activity from mining and associated secondary industries coupled with commercial agriculture led to increased demand for cheap labour from 1886 onwards (Stahl, 1979). One school of thought explains that two main factors, namely, the market forces of the increased economic activity in the mining and agricultural sectors controlled by the whites, and the underdeveloped tribal economies, forced men into labour migration (Aright in Delius, 2017). The concept of labour migration involves husbands or partners moving away from their homes to stay at their workplace due to long distances that make it impossible for the worker to commute regularly (Gelderblom & Kok, 1994). As a means to control the movement of black people, the apartheid government enacted the ‘closed city’ policy which made it impossible for the migrant workers to migrate with their families to the urban areas where they were employed (Smit, 2001). The men resided in bachelor hostels that had been built for migrant workers and had no provision for women (Segar, 1991). The system, therefore, led to a decline in marital and household life quality. Gelderblom and Kok (1994) state that the absence of men in most households forced the women to take over the responsibilities of their husbands thereby assuming new added roles. Conjugal infidelity propelled by the prolonged non-appearance of the husbands or partners from their wives led some men to end up getting involved in unofficial polygamy (Smith, 2001). The polygamy resulted to husbands assuming new economic commitments and

responsibilities. This in turn led to the decrease on the ability of the men to adequately support and provide for their households back home. This led to most of the women continuing to bear the brunt of economic responsibility and poverty. Furthermore, the existing housing shortages have allowed the status quo to persist thus forcing a number of blacks to remain participants in the migrant labour system (Smit, 2001).

Consequently, the rural women in Manzanynama in Mthatha rural of the King Sabata Municipality in the OR Tambo District Municipality of the Eastern Cape were also victims of the migrant labour system. Owing to this, the women had to assume added responsibilities which some were incapacitated to do. It was, therefore, important for these women to be skilled and empowered to allow them to cope in their newly assumed roles.

The realization of the lack of skills for women, subsequently, led to the administration of corporations or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) to intervene with the aim of empowering and skilling women to improve their lives by enhancing their abilities to be more self-reliant (Sachs, 2018). The process of empowerment involves increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006). The period after 1994, therefore, led to various interventions being initiated by both the government and the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) sectors. This led to the birth of Gabisile National Centre (not the real name) which is situated in the rural setting located at Manzanynama location (not the real name) which is about 13 kilometres from Mthatha town in the Oliver Tambo Region.

The GNC came into being to root out strain and stress suffered by rural women in looking after their households due to the assumption of the roles of their absentee husbands.

The women who are part of this project met on Tuesdays to Thursdays from 9 am to 2:30 pm. The majority of the women were household heads as they separated from their husbands when they migrated to urban areas for labour and their marriages failed to withstand the strain of the separation. The few who were married, had husbands who were not employed, thus leaving the responsibility to fend for the households to the women. These women, as a result, have a common need for economic, health and moral support. Therefore, they joined the GNC project to be taught and learn knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their challenge. The rural women were involved in different activities at GNC such as worship, physical exercises, craftwork and monthly meetings. They also had a health programme where they learn from each other about health-related issues.

Moreover, the facilitators of the programme were from within the rural women themselves. The rural women shared knowledge, skills, and coping strategies thereby empowering each other. Besides being skilled and economically empowered, the group also supported each other emotionally and morally. They developed a team spirit and constantly check and look out for each other.

The programme is underpinned by the principle of lifelong learning. The principle of lifelong learning is the cornerstone of a learning society which assumes that each person has to be prepared to keep learning throughout their life (Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura, Lopes, Petrovsky, Rahnema, & Ward, 1972). Lifelong education is thus expected to enable people to develop an awareness of themselves and their environment and at the same time encourage them to play their social roles and work in the community (Delors, 1996). The process of lifelong learning describes the phenomenon of Adult Education. Baatjes and Mathe (2004), the concept of adult education involves any process where a group of people converge outside a formal space for the purpose of learning. Adult education empowers women to participate and come up with solutions to real-life issues existing in their lives (Baatjes and Mathe (2004).

It is a fact that adults engage in lifelong learning as they pass through the different phases of their lives. The assumption of a new status may require new knowledge, skills, and experiences to enhance the ability to fit into the new role. Even though research has proved that adults can learn throughout their lifetime, Adult Education, however, acknowledges their distinction from the young learner (Lawler, 1991). Moreover, Lawler (1991) stipulates that adult learners differ from young learners in different ways as adults have many roles and responsibilities in their lives, unlike young learners. Moreover, adult learners are motivated by a pragmatic and practical desire to apply their knowledge and/or skills immediately (Lawler, 1991).

This unique nature of the adult learner, therefore, calls for more well-thought-out approaches which are different from the traditional learning approaches used with young learners. A facilitator of an adult learning programme, therefore, has to bear in mind that adults always want to connect their educational experiences with their life tasks by filling a gap in their lives to meet their immediate needs. It thus warrants the use of unique and tailor-made approaches to make the experience productive and worthwhile. It is therefore against this background that this study aimed to establish the coping strategies used at GNC to empower and skill the rural women to cope in their new roles.

1.3 Problem statement

The ‘closed city’ policy employed by the apartheid administration, which was geared towards controlling the movement of black people, made it impossible for the migrant workers to migrate with their families to the urban areas where they were employed (Smit & Sachs, 2018). The absence of men in most households, forced women to take over the responsibilities of their husbands, thereby assuming new added roles in households and communities (Gelderblom & Kok, 1994). Some households utilized the cultural values of collectivism to cope with the newly added roles.

However, it has been observed that this was not adequate as some of the rural women still had to bear some of the roles of the absentee husbands. This called for the need to develop knowledge, skills and coping strategies, hence, the initiation of projects like the GNC which aimed at empowering women with survival skills and made them more self-reliant. It is acknowledged that adult education plays a crucial role of providing large and diverse populations of adults with the basic skills and competencies that they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens (Borradaile, Martinez & Schochet, 2021).

Nevertheless, for an adult education project to succeed, wise choices in terms of instructional and support strategies have to be made from the variety that exists for the adult learner. Furthermore, Borradaile et al. (2021) assert that in making the selection of the learning strategies to be used, the focus should be made on strategies that have proved to lead to positive outcomes for the adult learner to increase the chances of adult education scheme in equipping the participants with the requisite skills to assist them to succeed. This implies that there are Adult Education programmes that fail to succeed in their goal as alluded to by (Ramachandran, 1999). From the foregoing discussion, the research alluded to explore the instructional and support strategies used at GNC and their effectiveness to capacitate the women to cope in their assumed roles.

1.4 Focus and the purpose of the study

The research study focused on rural women’s learning experiences at the GNC. The study explored the ways through which rural women learned and acquired knowledge and skills from the programme. It further established the coping strategies acquired at GNC and how women cope in their newly assumed roles. The purpose of the study was to explore how rural women learn in the context of the GNC. Moreover, the intention of the research was also fulfilled through the following aims:

1.5 Objectives of the study

Following were the objectives of the research:

- To establish the educational activities offered by GNC for rural women to cope with changing times.
- To explore and identify ways of learning for rural women in the context of GNC.
- To identify strategies learned by rural women in the context of GNC.

1.6 Research questions:

The key research questions that this study attempted to respond to are:

- What are the educational activities offered in GNC for rural women to cope with changing times?
- In what ways do rural women learn at the GNC?
- What are learned strategies by rural women as they participate in the GNC educational activities?

1.7 Rationale for the study

Education has been granted the most important role of opening opportunities to life and hope through empowerment and development of personal and social identities of people that are capable of being autonomous, and at the same time united in determining their own course of life (Ceballos, 2006). The researcher had an interest to undertake research on Xhosa rural women the same challenge of taking a leading role to support their households in a patriarchal society without being exposed to the training of leadership within their households. Also, the rural women saw a need to have organised education to meet their new demand they were faced with, empower one another and find a solution relevant to their challenge in households and communities.

Also, the researcher was interested to explore how rural women support each other in the context of similar challenges or common challenges in households. Hopfer (1997) asserts that the mere act of being involved in an adult education programme alone is one sure way of initiating the process of personal empowerment although there are different factors that

determine success. The researcher was motivated to undertake this study to understand the educational activities that empower rural women. Also the researcher was motivated to understand the research study to understand the meaning making processes that facilitate learning as rural women found the coping strategies relevant to their need in households and communities.

An evaluation of adult education programmes in India, however, showed that many voluntary organizations did very little and the success stories were rare despite them having received massive funding (Ramachandran, 1999). It is, therefore, against this background, that this study sought to establish the experiences of the women in the GNC project and ascertain the skills that they acquire to assist them to adapt to their new assumed roles in households and communities. This study thus enabled the researcher to judge whether the GNC project has succeeded in its goal of empowering women through informal learning. The study will, hopefully, contribute to curriculum issues within the informal and non-formal adult education debate for women within a rural context.

Several studies were conducted on the viability of GNC project, for example, the study by Hlela (2017) looked at the nature of learning in a rural context. The results from the study by Hlela (2017) showed that the villagers were learning through sharing their daily events which provided solutions to their needs. Also, the above mentioned study confirmed that the participation was voluntary, collective, and problem-based learning which provided the opportunity for adult learners to engage and empower one another. Moreover, a waterhole was also found as a place of learning and teaching, especially for women in Ebunzimeni rural community. Through their engagement, and participation women acquired knowledge and skills from one another that were relevant to their needs. Therefore, the research is still justified as it confirmed or refuted some of the findings made by the previous studies.

1.7.1 Learning through knowledge transfer

Every society thrives on the knowledge dispensation passed on from one generation to the other by those who have different experiences that would have sustained the communities. With that in mind, the researcher was interested in the rich survival experiences of the rural women in order to help future generations. For most of the women, since they used to have “normal” households with their husbands on whom they entirely depended on, life changed for the worse when their husbands emigrated to big cities in search of employment. Most of these men

stopped supporting their households back home so the women had to assume such roles despite that they had no experience or enough resources (GNC, Constitution, 2008).

Some men never came back, yet they were at the centre of household support which left women including the rural women stranded (Sachs, 2018). However, such women did not give up and had to rise to the occasion or organisation. In this study, the researcher wanted to have a deeper understanding of what took place to the women, including the rural women, to survive. And what bound them together despite their different backgrounds. The researcher also wanted to understand the form of support that these rural women had received and what they felt as lessons that can be passed on to future generations.

1.7.2 Learning through participation

According to Chetty and Vincent (2013) note that learning through participation is a developmental process that integrates thinking and doing. The researcher was interested to investigate learning through participation as it was done at GNC. The rural women used their experiences when participating with one another during their learning. Their participation and interaction with facilitators in the curriculum designed by themselves according to their needs gave them the opportunity to gain knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that allowed them to achieve their goals and actualize in whatever way possible to them. Through dialogue, the facilitator is no longer the one who teaches but the one who is taught in dialogue with the students (Freire, 1972).

The rural women were engaging and participating in activities which gave them hope for their needs in their lives, households, and communities. The women's participation developed ways open to change for continued learning to enhance personal growth and development (Meredith and Francis, 2017). The involvement and shared participation of rural old women with others at GNC have provided a platform of rebuilding their confidence, and their humanity to have hope regarding their needs. Also, the rural women were practical in their learning, and they hoped that whatever they learned would be relevant to their daily real lives which will change their lives, household, and communities.

1.8 Significance of the study

There was little literature on rural women's learning in an Non- Governmental Organisation using the informal way of learning, it is believed that the findings from this study will give more insight on women's learning and how adult learning can change or better their lives, households and communities. The researcher is of the view that other organisations will use the findings of this study to change their

lives and improve their learning. In addition, the facilitators and the old timers will improve their content based on the feedback from the study.

Furthermore, the findings from this study will assist the GNC women to improve their learning, activities as they find solutions that will bring the strategies that will suit their real world. Since the researched study was on rural women's learning in finding a solution to their need, therefore the study will bring an understanding on how rural women acquired the knowledge, skills and coping strategies relevant to their need which could be transferred to other women's lives. Lastly, very few studies that have been conducted on the coping strategies for women but this study has brought another dimension on women's learning.

1.9 Research site

The GNC is the research site located at Manzamnyama (not the real name) location which is about 13 kilometres from Mthatha town in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality (KSDM) of the Eastern Cape, in South Africa. The municipality is dominated by rural areas with few semi and urban areas. The municipality is made up of 72 wards with 14 traditional leaders and has 703 households with 517 000 people (King Sabata Dalindyebo, Integrated Development Plan (IDP), 2020). Thirty six out of seventy two wards are dominated by rural settlements (King Sabata Dalindyebo, IDP, 2018). According to King Sabata Dalindyebo (IDP, 2020), 52.8 % of households were headed by single women. The municipality was selected due to its challenges such as crime, unemployment, patriarchy, and a large number of women-headed households which motivated the researcher to work on them. GNC was identified since the rural women were participating together in finding solutions to the above mentioned challenges.

In this community, GNC is the only project run for rural women resident at Manzamnyama location. Manzamnyama location is battling with unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, and crime. GNC is a building at the bottom of the Manzamnyama location which is a community project that is standalone situated next to the secondary school. The building has a big hall with tables and chairs, two offices, a kitchen with a storeroom to keep their groceries, and the sports grounds. GNC has well fenced and a security room. The place where the study occurred is a traditional, disadvantaged rural location with the order of the family structure. It has a low socio-economic status and socio-cultural challenges. The centre was named after an old woman, Gabisile (not real name) who initiated the project as she had all the experiences as a rural woman.



Figure1.1: Gabisile National Centre

GNC comprises mostly of married women and very few of single women. The centre had facilitators that guide the curriculum designed by rural women as the educational activities. In addition, the facilitators take a leadership role during the learning of rural women. Rural women became members when they understand the principles of the organization and have to learn and change their lives. Rural women gather in this building, learn through activities and gain knowledge and skills that changed their lives. The GNC's informal education offered to rural women is intended to teach them knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that enhance their potential to maintain their households and communities (GNC, Constitution, 2008). The next part will be the limitation of the study.

1.10 Limitations of the study

The research study was conducted in one organization in the Eastern Cape focussing on one group of rural women at GNC; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other community education centres, whole districts, regions, and nations which the results can be benefitted by other organizations. GNC is based on feminism, only rural women were taught and participated in this organization, yet different women were affected and needed the coping strategies in their lives and households as well. More views from males would give the researcher more understanding of the researched study, rather than getting views of the victims (the rural women only). The non-existence of the males' views in the research study weakened the study. Women attending GNC were old, most members were above sixty and few members were less than sixty years. Young women were not part of the project, which makes it difficult to get their views. Most participants were fearful of Corvid 19 due to their age and were unable to attend at GNC. Lastly, since the researcher was a full-time employee, limited time for the study became critical as it was a struggle to balance the time for the work and to focus on the research study.

1.11 Outline of the dissertation

The chapter presented the structure of the research study with 5 chapters.

Chapter one

This section presented the introduction with the background information of the study. It provides the reader with more insight about the research. It also presented the focus, purpose, objectives rationale, research site, research questions and the limitations of the research.

Chapter two

This chapter provided major and minor themes, a detailed review of relevant literature, the related studies and the theoretical framework employed in research

Chapter three

This part presented the research design and methodology. Also presented the qualitative and case study method used in the research was detailed. Data collection methods were highlighted at length. The data analysis method and the trustworthiness describing ethical issues were thoroughly explained.

Chapter four

Chapter four offers explanation on the findings constructed on qualitative data generation using multiple methods.

Chapter five

This part presented the summary, conclusions and recommendations for future research. The next section was devoted to the conclusion of the research.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the introduction, background and the way rural women were learning in the context of GNC. The focus, purpose, research questions, rationale and the importance of the research were explained. The subsequent chapter presents key concepts, literature review and theoretical framework for the research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The previous section presented the introduction with the background information of the study. The focus, purpose, objectives rationale, research site, research questions and the limitations of the research were discussed. This chapter presents the main concepts, similar studies, and the theoretical framework for understanding women's learning. Literature review is defined by Aveyard (2010) as the interpretation that addresses a specific topic. The summary informs the reader what is known and unknown about a topic, and, thus locating chances to establish the reality of the research. The following section presents the relevant literature in line with the objectives of the study. In this section, adult learning is discussed including the types and the theories relevant to rural women's learning. It becomes important to understand learning how rural women learn.

2.2 Adult education

In as much as Dichaba and Dlamini (2013) highlight that the level of illiteracy in South Africa is alarmingly high especially among adult population, despite the South African Bill of Rights asserting that everyone has a right to Basic Education regardless of their age. I find Hlela (2017) as coming closer by noting that "there is a need to build more organically on community based knowledge and learning, so that community development interventions authentically integrate the practices of the community or learners in context" (p.1). Hence, this section highlights Adult Education, how it is defined, and how it has been understood over decades.

Baatjes and Mathe (2004), the concept of Adult Education involves any process where a group of people converges outside a formal space for learning. Baatjes and Mathe (2004) explain that adult education happens when a group of people come together and organizes a learning event outside of a formal learning space. It is the interaction among people, whose individual experiences lead to adult education (Jarvis, 2004). Baatjes and Mathe (2004) further argue that adult learners participate in organized activities that enable their understanding and learning. Merriam and Sharon (2007) contend that adult education allows the adult learner to engage in

systematic and sustained self-educative activities to gain knowledge, skills, and strategies for personal fulfilment as a lifelong learner. This is what was happening at GNC, where a group of rural women were learning, participating together as they empower one another with knowledge and skills relevant to their need in households and communities. Additionally, adult learners use their previous knowledge and experiences to face life situations and learn how to succeed in all challenges and understand the world in a better way (Baatjes and Mathe, 2004). Through Adult Education the rural women at GNC were learning, interacting, participating, sharing together their experiences as they find solution to their challenges in their households and communities

Adult Education provides learning opportunities for adults and develops abilities in a particular field which encourages change and transformation in their lives as noted by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (2019). Spencer and Lange (2014) and UNESCO (2019) maintains that all these efforts of gaining knowledge, skills, and strategies are an attempt to equip themselves for their responsibilities as citizens and as members of society and to find opportunities for self-expression. In addition, Baatjes and Baatjes (2018) show that some of the skills are required for survival and to improve the quality of their lives. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations UNESCO (2015) believes that adult education is an important means of improving society.

Also, UNESCO (2019) asserts that adult education is instrumental in enabling women to participate and find solutions to the needs of their real-world needs. Hence, a group of rural women interacted with one another gaining skills to make informed decisions relevant to their needs and the world around them. The knowledge, skills, and strategies gained by the rural women allowed them to improve their social, and cultural knowledge and order in households and communities. Their engagement and collective participation with one another in educational activities provided chance for them to create knowledge, skills, strategies that changed their lives, empowered them and transformed their lives, households, and communities.

Jarvis (1995) notes the different conceptions of adult education such as lifelong education, continuing, recurrent, community education, the learning in society.

2.2.1 Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a continuous process. Laal (2011) defines lifelong learning as a continuous building of knowledge and skills during one's life that occurs through experiences faced in a

lifetime. The principle of lifelong learning assumes that lifelong education is the cornerstone of a learning society and that each person has to be prepared to keep learning throughout their life (Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura, Lopes, Petrovsky, Rahnema, & Ward, 1972). This ongoing learning enables citizens to identify their capabilities, and interests and manage their life paths (Laal, 2011). In addition, life-long education is thus expected to empower people to change their environment and at the same time encourage them to play their social roles and work in the community (Delors, 1996). Piaget (1999) cited in Chan (2015), emphasizes lifelong knowledge as a lifelong process of discovering knowledge, assimilation, and accommodating others.

The adult learners were collaboratively working together, sharing knowledge and skills throughout their lifetime. Soni (2012) describes lifelong learning as a means of developing, updating all kinds of abilities, knowledge, and interests that promote development and knowledge. Each day at any time adult learners were constructing their knowledge, skills, and strategies in their community that promote a solution to their needs. Mezirow (1998) asserts that adult learners learn by combining existing knowledge with new knowledge and later applying the information to new situations. In addition, UNESCO (2015) notes that adult learners integrate their living and learning activities in all life contexts through learning modalities that together meet their needs. Correspondingly, Jarvis (2004) concurs with the above discussion by noting that people are a result of learning and continue of what they are. The rural women engaged and learned collaboratively in their daily activities throughout their life to create knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs for the households and communities. In addition, the knowledge and skills gained by rural women might enrich their understanding and provide more and better opportunities to improve the quality of their lives, households, and communities.

2.2.2 Recurrent education

Richardson and Houghton (1975) explain that recurrent training as the distribution of teaching over an person's entire life into a recurring way with other activities. This type of education involves unemployed people with leisure time to continue learning. Stein and Miller (1973) assert that this type of education provides changes as organizational principles provide effective interaction between structured situations and social activities during which incidental learning occurs. Stein and Miller (1973) assert that recurrent education shares the idea of

relearning as a necessary strategy for a rapidly changing society. Rural women were learning educational activities that empowered them with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to their daily challenges, which would transform their lives.

2.2.3 Community Education

Community education is the education of a certain group within a specific community. According to Bates and Baatjes (2018) community education is “education that grows out of people’s experiences and the social interests that are generated within communities, (p.15). Baatjes and Mathe (2004) also note that community education is about encouraging and engaging people in learning about what is needed throughout life.

Freire (1972) argues that education can never be neutral; it must side with the poor marginalized and be encouraged to participate with others to transform their lives within their community. Also, community education responds to the needs acknowledged by adult learners rather than those identified by other people. Hence, this research study has relevance to the struggles encountered by rural women in their lives, households, and communities.

Baatjes and Mathe (2004) see community education as a vehicle to address a wide range of specific issues affecting community members. Adult learners have to fully participate collectively with others in the design of their curriculum since they understand and know their needs best than outsiders. Moreover, Freire (1972) believes in education for liberation where adult learners participate and develop strategies that will transform their lives. During their learning, adult learners were learning together creating knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to addressing their needs. This will enable adult learners to make precise decisions that will solve rural women’s problems and bring them to their everyday lives.

2.2.4 Learning society

According to Husen (1986), a learning society is defined as the key to a nation’s economic development and holds that education extends beyond formal learning into informal learning centres to support the knowledge economy. A learning society is also considered to be the basis from which lifelong learning can take place, which regards the process of learning as an “activity”, not a place. Correspondingly, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2000) asserts that learning society enables individual learners to learn their entire lives. In addition, a learning society is a mix of different learning environments including formal, informal, and the non-formal education

The learning society is an intentional group of individuals engaged in learning from one another. According to OECD (2000), the learning society promotes active learner-centeredness which accommodates adult learners to provide content and learning activities according to their needs. This type of learning promotes a culture of learning by providing activities to support and motivate adult learners to learn in an organization (OECD, 2000). The learning society allows adult learners to engage with one another in activities that would later bring change to their needs.

2.2.5 Popular education

Popular education has been used in this research study. But, James, Walter, and Von Kotze (2020) note that this type of education is “a form of care work which is feminized often undervalued and unrecognized as highly skilled work” (p. 1). Martin (1999) cited in Walters (2005) argues that popular education “is rooted in the interests, aspirations, and struggles of ordinary people and committed to progressive political change” (p.4). Correspondingly, Walters (1991) highlights that popular education is rooted in the real interests, goals, and struggles of ordinary people defined by them, not by other people. Moyo and Francis (2015) argue that women’s struggles suffered in their daily lives were not recognized up until 1994. Walters (2005) argues that popular education is more concerned with addressing the lived realities and improving the quality of life particularly of women within households and communities. Rural women have been exposed to apartheid laws, culture, and patriarchy within the households and communities which led them to seek education that would liberate them.

Moyo and Francis (2015) reveal that various women empowerment initiatives and support structures to address the difficulties of women were introduced. Freire (1970) argues on the issue of engaging local people to fight for their freedom rather than giving them knowledge created by other people who have no interest in the realities of marginalized people. Hlela (2017) mentions that “if people are allowed to believe in themselves, they stand a chance of learning more about themselves, can develop their abilities to shape their own lives, destiny and people can ‘dream’ their own localized ‘dreams’ informed by their social-cultural-contextual factors, cultural heritage and, most importantly, by their desire to live life as human beings” (p. 3). The NGOs, through the community projects, came to address the real problems suffered by people in their local communities.

Furthermore, Walters (1991) notes that people collectively work together to challenge the forces that oppress them and transform their own lives. Luckett, Walters and Von Kotze (2017)

notes that people participate interdependently, equally caring for others and mobilizing action as they engage with one another in their daily activities. In addition, Freire (1993) emphasizes the reorientation of the curriculum based on the perspective of liberating education as a collective development that is more dialogical rather than curriculum based. This suggests that the curriculum must come from the experiences and needs of adult learners since they are at the centre of their learning.

Burt et al (2020) argue that popular education seeks to attract the collective knowledge and experiences of people's struggles to find theory and practice to challenge their real world. Freire (1993) reveals that dialogue, collective participation, and mutual relations promote adult learners to be the ability to understand their reality and imagine different possibilities relevant to their needs. Rural women participated at GNC collectively with one another in the daily activities using their own experiences to discover themselves and make meaning to their own needs. Burt et al (2020) note that popular educators should engage adult learners critically with ideas, and analyses of power that bring realities of unequal power, uncaring and unjust ways. The rural women were learning collectively sharing ideas regarding their real issues in life. The rural women were different, there were new-timers and old-timers. The new timers were observed, later on engaging in simple tasks with the old timers in the activities and were promoted from the periphery to the centre and become old-timers as well.

Freire (1972) argues that when adults communicate in dialogues, express ideas freely, they stand a chance to solve their problems. Hence, dialogue has been relevant to rural women learning since it allowed all of them to participate freely as they develop arguments relevant to their needs. The rural women were participating collectively, engaging and teaching one another through dialogue, reflecting on conversations in creating knowledge that transformed their lives.

Walters (1991) affirms that adult learners should allow action and reflection to bring the process of transformation that is committed to progressive and social change. Rural women's understanding may change as they experienced collective guidance from others. They create knowledge and skills based on their values in changing their lives, households, and communities. That led to the construction of knowledge and skills relevant to their needs and the transformation of their lives, households, and communities.

2.2.6 Different types of adult education

2.2.6.1 Formal education

Ahmed and Coombs (1974) argue that formal education is a structured and systematic form of education that is consciously and deliberately planned education that provides certification at the end. This type of education is delivered by teachers or facilitators. Freire (1972) regards formal education as the banking system where the teacher or facilitator is the depositor, and the students are the depositories. Formal education has structured content that comes from outside expertise and has a period of time frame. This type of education is classroom-based and provides certification.

2.2.6.2 Informal education

Ahmed and Coombs (1974) note that informal education takes place outside the school environment and happens incidentally. This type of education takes place incidentally, unplanned, unstructured, and influences the understanding and attitudes of the individuals. Informal education is learner-centred which allows adult learners to bring their content, and activities according to their interests and needs. The rural women were using the informal type of education in their learning and were learning their activities incidentally. Adult learners are working collaboratively using their experiences, dialogue, and conversations (Freire, 1972). Individuals learn from every experience and incidence. The rural women learnt from their own experiences and were able to construct knowledge and skills relevant to their lives. Informal education continues throughout the lives of individuals. When adult learners show interest and curiosity in their learning, they acquire knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs.

2.2.6.3 Nonformal education

Ahmed and Coombs (1974) explain that the non-formal education is the organized learning opportunities that take place outside the formal schooling system. This type of learning is consciously, deliberately, and systematically implemented (Ahmed and Coombs, 1974). It is planned to serve the needs of a particular group. It is flexible, problem and learner-oriented, and focuses on meeting a particular need. It focuses on providing solutions to the problems of the community. The rural women were practical in non-formal learning as they were learning from each other in seeking answers in real-life challenges.

2.3 Adult learning

2.3.1 Introduction

In this section, adult learning will be discussed including the types and the theories relevant to women's learning. It becomes important to understand learning and how rural women learn.

2.3.1 Definition of learning

Jarvis (2004) sees learning as “the process of interaction between people, individuals, and experience (p. 43). Jarvis (2004) argues that interaction leads to the transformation of experiences into attitudes, values, emotions, knowledge, and skills. The rural women's learning was very central to understanding the way rural women were taught and participated in activities that led to the solution of their daily needs' solutions in their real world. These women collaboratively participated in different activities sharing knowledge and skills that changed their lives, households, and communities. Adult learning has provided a platform for rural women to acquire knowledge, skills, and coping strategies in a learning environment, which led to the transformation of their lives, households, and communities.

2.3.2 Types of Adult learning

Adult learning has three types of learning that contribute to the learning of adult learners. According to Simkins (1997), cited in Fordham (1993), adult learning can happen in three different contexts namely, through organised, informal, and non-formal learning.

2.3.2.1 Formal or organised learning

Even though adult learning centres provide informal and non-formal learning accompanied by knowledge and skills, the formal aspect of adult learning can never be disputed. According to Coombs and Ahmed, (1974) formal type of learning is “structured, often takes place within the accredited institutions and guided by a formal curriculum which leads to formally recognized credits by the government” (p.8). Jarvis (2004) notes that adult learners learn a structured curriculum with a fixed learning objective, that is intentional for their living. The adult learners learn the content designed by themselves, and part of the learning at the centre is structured, especially when the adult learners are guided on how learning activities are done as individuals and as small groups. Other members of the centre guide the rural women on how to do the organizational activities in a form of lessons. Thereafter, rural women become practical in their activities and learn from one another informally.

2.3.2.2 Informal learning

Informal learning is ongoing learning that depends upon the hands of adult learners. Informal learning as learning that occurs in workplace, and communities through the interests and

actions of persons. It is usually intentional although learners are not aware that they are learning (Rogers,1997). Adult learners are learning throughout their lifetime while working and living.

Rogers (1997) highlights that informal learning happens from daily life activities through observation, social interaction, and problem-solving with others. Adult learners observe, ask questions, discuss, and critically reflect on one another during learning. In addition, Rogers (1997) asserts that the context allows the adult learners to learn by interpreting their life experiences which leads to lessons to observe alternative solutions to their needs. Adult learners are learning using their life experiences when interacting and participating with one another in organizational activities as a way to resolve a challenge in their surrounding world.

According to Rogers (2004), the NGOs and the community learning centres collaborated to provide learning activities to improve the quality of the marginalized lives of the group people. The challenges caused by the apartheid era, culture, and patriarchy resulted in a group of rural old women interacting and participating collaboratively in daily activities to redress the challenges of the past. The students' ideas, knowledge, and experiences are considered while providing new knowledge that empowers and better their lives (Dlamini, 2013).

Learning took place at GNC when the rural women were interacting collectively with others in a task that led to the problem solving of their needs. The rural women's engagements and interaction with one another provided the opportunity for them to gain new knowledge, skills and coping strategies, which brought the desired outcome to their needs and transformation of their lives, households, and communities. Informal learning has been used in this research study to understand the way a group of rural women learn the organizational activities that would change and transform their lives. Informal learning then paves a way for non-formal learning.

2.3.2.3 Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is a continuing form of learning. UNESCO (1997a) mentions that "the non-formal learning is not formally organized but continuing learning programs which can be short term learning without certification but with knowledge and skills to achieve a learning objective or to meet a particular need for a marginalized group of adults" (p.14). The rural women were using the non-formal learning, decided on what they wanted to be empowered on in order to achieve a goal relevant for their lives, household and communities. Correspondingly, UNESCO (2019) maintains that non-formal learning provides alternative opportunities to people of all ages who need knowledge and skills to overcome different obstacles.

Hlela (2017) mentions that “if people are allowed to believe in themselves, they stand a chance of learning more about themselves and are likely to develop their capabilities to shape their own lives and dream their localized dreams informed by socio-cultural factors” (p. 3). The marginalized group of rural women learned and interacted collaboratively with one another as they participated in activities that promote new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs.

Some studies conducted on aspects surrounding non-formal learning and women empowerment highlight the positive impact on women’s lives and households. For example, a study by Malema and Naidoo (2017) shows that “South African women engaged themselves in community projects working together towards the social empowerment” (p. 2). In addition, Malema and Naidoo (2017) assert that women participate collaboratively in activities that impact positively in the women’s lives. These include activities that restore their decency, and emotional experience, and help them to be part of the community. The continuous interaction and engagement of rural women with one another have provided knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs that brought change and transformation to their lives.

2.4 Theories in adult learning

Adult learning theories have been used in this research study to explain how adult learners, learn the organizational activities to create knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to their needs. The theories were discussed as they complement one another in adult learning and according to their relevance in this research study.

2.4.1 ANDRAGOGY AS A LEARNING THEORY

Knowles (1980) developed and introduced adult learning theory as a central theory of adult learning which explains how adult learners learn. Knowles (1970) explains andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 38). Adult learners learn differently from the way children learn. According to Knowles (1970), learning experiences are created with the understanding that adults bring content that suits their learning needs using their own experiences. This learning theory also focuses on giving adult learners an understanding of why they learn something, as they are hands-on in their learning.

Knowles (1980) highlights that adult learners use both the participatory and experiential learning methods and they learn to value their experiences during learning. Since andragogy believes in self-directed learning, adult learners develop critical and reflective thinking skills during their learning when engaging in organizational activities. Knowles (1980) highlights

that andragogy helps the learners base their present learning on their prior knowledge and experience to find a solution to the problem. Knowledge can also be created through the collaboration between adult learners and facilitators. This shows that adult learners use their previous knowledge to create new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs, households, and communities.

2.4.2 Behaviourist learning theory

Learning happens through observation. Learning theorists believe that behaviour takes place through observing others. The behaviourism learning theory is more concerned with observable behaviour (Baulo & Nabua, 2019). Correspondingly, Skinner (2011) highlights that knowledge is about gaining of new learning and talents that produce objectively observable changes in behaviour. Bandura (1997) asserts that people learn through observing behaviours, attitudes, outcomes, imitation, and modelling from others in a given environment. Learning occurs when adult learners interact, participate and perform activities that require them to observe and imitate others which allows them to learn from each other.

Skinner (2011) also emphasizes the role of environmental factors in influencing behaviour which is acquired through the association between the stimuli and the responses. Additionally, Skinner (2011) explains that the above-mentioned factors are the direct causes of behaviour that promote learning and change. The importance of the environment as adult learners observes and imitate others for the new behaviour can never be underestimated. Adult learners learn through engaging, interacting, and participating collectively in organizational activities which lead to behaviour change. The above illustration shows that adult learners learn certain behaviours from each other for them to change their lives, households, and communities.

According to behaviourists, adult learners learn best through observable outside factors and inherent factors have little influence on learning for the change of behaviour. The behavioural learning approach maintains that learning takes place if evidence of behaviour change believe is observable. The rural women did not only learn through observation but through observing other rural women's activities. This might provide a change in rural women's lives, households, and communities. The next learning theory will be experiential learning.

2.4.3 Experiential learning

Learning is an act of doing. Knowles (1970) highlights that adult learners learn best when they “do “what they find relevant to their everyday needs. Piaget (1999), cited in Chan (2015),

emphasizes that knowledge is built from experience by the students who are active creators of knowledge. This learning theory stipulates that learning is shaped by adult learners' experiences and that the best learning comes from making sense of what they already know (Hammond, Flook, and Cook-Harvey, 2019). In experiential learning, learners are active in all their learning activities and learn through actions (Kolb & Kolb, 2010b). In addition, Kolb (1984) states that experiential learning allows the learners to be active in the process of grappling with the problem in their world by constructing knowledge and testing solutions through immediate experience and interacting with others. Kolb's (1984) emphasizes the importance of concrete experience in the formation of abstract concepts and generalization which could lead to a change in the lives of adult learners. Also, Rogers (1998) reveals that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience which results in new knowledge and skills needed by adult learners.

Adult learners interact collectively through questions, and discussion, as learners create new knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to their needs as a way of finding a solution. Furthermore, Kolb (1984) discusses a model for experiential learning with four concrete experiences such as observation, reflections, formation of abstract concepts, generalization, and testing of the implications of new concepts to new situations for learning to successfully take place. Adults learned to engage critically with one another as they construct knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to their needs.

Chan (2015) emphasizes the importance of adult learners exercising their freedom and independence as they interact with one another in organizational activities using what they already know in making meaning. Moreover, the rural women interacted with one another in a social environment with the help of the facilitator. Adult learners share their experiences with one another, and this contributes to the creation of new knowledge, skills and coping strategies useful for their lives, households and communities. Thereafter, adult learners integrate the new information with the existing knowledge to make meaning relevant to their lives, households and communities. The created knowledge allows them to empower one another and later change their behaviours and transform their lives, households and communities.

2.4.4 Constructivism as a learning theory

Learning is a collaborative process. This learning theory explains that learning takes place when adult learners interact with one another as they construct knowledge in their domain of the world created on personal encounters. Mohammed & Kinyo (2020) explain that

constructivism “is a teaching style that prioritizes the student as an agent of knowledge and understanding” (p. 1). Bada & Olusegun (2015) note that the approach is learner-centred and encourages adult learners to be active participants in their learning. Additionally, Ngozwana (2019) notes that adult learners learn best when they share their experiences with others about a given task and by so doing the adult learners feel so motivated. Vygotsky (1997) also explains that adult learners are at the centre of learning with facilitators guiding them on specific learning targets, ensuring heterogeneous learner groupings. This learning theory emphasizes the significance of the learner’s voice throughout their learning, which allows them to take ownership over their learning. That can lead to finding solutions to their daily problems.

Learning is an interactive process. Vygotsky (1997) argues that learners are active as they individually construct new meanings on what they already know in their context. Adult learners have the previous knowledge and inherent potential to do things, but they need one another to share and integrate knowledge and skills relevant to their needs. Vygotsky (1997), reveals that the distinctiveness of the mature learner is acknowledged throughout the knowledge process. Adult learners learn by exploration and not being told what will happen but are left to make their ideas, extractions, and conclusions. As was the case at GNC, the rural women were actively and fully involved in the construction of knowledge and skills rather than receiving the information. Furthermore, during the knowledge and skills creation, adult learners are encouraged to understand their learning rather than memorize (Vygotsky, 1997). This allowed adult learners to base their learning on understanding the real world and making sense of it.

Vygotsky (1997) maintains that knowledge construction occurs within the social context that involves adult learners collaborating with others on activities that build one another on new ideas, knowledge and skills. Collaboration among the adult learners inspired their communication and social skills using their known environment. Vygotsky (1997) asserts that adult learners are learning collaboratively using their experiences and the real world to find solutions to their needs. Throughout their learning, the adult learners were taught knowledge and skills that encouraged collaboration among one another, which led to solutions for their daily lives, households, and communities. The rural women’s learning provided them with a sense of ownership and control over the information created for them. That encouraged rural women to solve their challenges and had the potential to change their lives, households, and communities.

2.4.5 The humanistic learning theory OR learner-centred learning theory

Learning is a developmental process. The learner-centred theory is about studying the person especially as an individual grows and develops over the lifespan (Alon, 2011). Ellias & Merriam (2005) argue that the learner-centred theory “sees teaching as a means of fostering self-actualizing and fully functioning individuals” (p. 125). This theory emphasizes on growth and development of the whole person including the creative, social, and practical skills which concentrate on growth and development (Ellias & Merriam, 2005). During learning, the adult learners were allowed to bring their topics of interest and actualize them in whatever way possible for them.

Knowles (1970) asserts that mature individuals are motivated to what they want to study and take charge of their learning journey. Correspondingly, Knowles (1970) asserts that adult learners are willing to learn if they understand “why” they should learn and its relevance to their needs. In addition, Knowles (1970) argues that adult learners should understand their areas of interest and be self-motivated to learn knowledge and skills relevant to their needs. Ellias & Merriam, (2005) argue that humanists believe in the intrinsic satisfaction of the individual rather than grading the extrinsic learning. In the same vein, Alon (2011) reveals that humanists focus on how students develop using practical learning which is intrinsic and essential. To them extrinsic learning is irrelevant, and that self-evaluation is meaningful for them to develop. The rural women learned what was relevant and of interest to them, households and communities.

Rogers (2004) also puts stresses on the importance of the individual in the learning environment. The learner-centred approach proved to be useful since the learners have great potential and an inborn principled sense to develop one another (Ellias & Merriam, 2005). The rural women were interested to learn with an understanding of how learning would impact their lives.

Lastly, Ellias & Merriam (2005) expose that promoting the well-being of humanity by letting people participate and be involved has promoted learning for adult learners. This type of learning also prepared the learners to be responsible, and be able to make decisions in their learning, and share their different experiences drawn from their variegated socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The rural women learned by using their daily activities and participating with one another to find a solution to their needs. This is what was emphasized at the GNC where the rural women actively participated in their learning environment.

2.4.6 Transformative learning theory

People are transformed as they continue learning. Mezirow (1990) notes that learning is the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the experience. Adult learners learn through direct experience with others on how they view the world. Freire (1970) notes that if adult learners are conscious of their current state, they can work together to change devastating situations in their lives. Rural women have their historical lived experiences relevant to meaning making relevant to their needs.

Mezirow (1990) explains that transformative learning helps adult learners to make meaning of their experiences using their environment and other structures that influence their change. In addition, Mezirow (1998) explains how individuals learn and engage critically in activities while creating new knowledge and skills relevant to their development. Furthermore, Mezirow (2000) states that people change their disorienting dilemma by critically examining their beliefs, values, and assumptions relevant to their personal and social change. The rural women were participating collaboratively in questions and dialogue which allowed them to create knowledge and skills relevant to their needs and change.

Mezirow (1998) reveals that transformative learning takes place when individuals change their way of thinking by critically reflecting on beliefs and consciously gaining new experiences in their new real world. The knowledge and skills gained through individual collaboration with one another in organizational activities led to the empowerment and transformation of their lives. Transformative learning has provided rural women with the opportunity to be fully developed and be able to solve their problems in households and communities.

2.4.7 Critiques on the theories of adult learning

The learning theories discussed above are all relevant to the research study and have much in common. The theories presented emphasize collaboration, and context in creating knowledge, skills, and strategies for interaction with the organizational activities.

Knowles (1980) notes that andragogy is about gaining new knowledge, skills, and strategies that are created through the experience of the adult learners who bring in their learning. The importance of intrinsic motivation to learn can never be underestimated, for rural women to transform their lives. Also, learning is self-directed and learner-centred which allows the learners to identify the learning activities that could bring a solution to their needs. However, there is a constant struggle for adult learners to complete the activity and learn from the activity; hence there is a need for the facilitator to guide the learning.

The behaviour learning theory fails to address the cognitive and biological processes that influence human action, and this shows that the behaviourist approach is scientific, and objective (Baulo & Nabua, 2019). The behaviourists are of the view that learning takes place through observable behaviours. Also, behaviourists allow greater control over variables instead of adult learners and their participation.

Constructivists believe that knowledge is social, mutually built, and constructed by adult learners in their social context with other group members. Vygotsky (1997) further acknowledges that adult learning is socially constructed that helps adults with the development of knowledge and skills within the short term which builds their confidence and self-esteem. Vygotsky (1997) puts more emphasis on the importance of social interactions and knowledge created within the interactions with the environment and other people. Vygotsky (1997) emphasizes the importance of the interaction of adult learners among one another which resulted in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that would provide knowledge, skills, and coping strategies for rural women. Vygotsky (1997) concurs with other learning theorists when explaining that knowledge is created using the known experience. That gave the opportunity to old-timers to transfer knowledge, and skills to the new timers which resulted in the rural women gaining coping strategies relevant to households and communities.

Experiential learning puts more emphasis on the experiences the adult learners bring to their learning. Rogers (1998) reveals that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience which results in new knowledge and skills needed by adult learners. As a way of finding solution, the adult learners collectively participated and exercised their freedom as they created new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs. Through their interaction, rural women were able to learn from one another using one other's experiences which enabled them to create new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to their needs which resulted to change in their lives, households, and communities. During their interaction, prior learning became key as adult learners constructed knowledge, skills, and strategies that were relevant to their needs.

Transformative learning is very critical as it empowers adult learners to learn and think critically as they create knowledge, skills, and strategies that would transform their lives. Mezirow (2000) notes that transformation is about making meaning using the experience gained as they develop one another. Adult learners were able to take decisions that would bring solutions to their problems and transform their lives, households, and communities.

All the learning theories agree on learner-centeredness, taking ownership of their learning objectives which provides them with confidence in their learning activities. The learning theories discussed in this research study correspond to the fact that adult learners bring their understanding and build on it. Also, the role of the facilitator has been mentioned throughout the discussion as bringing life to learning. Through the guidance adult learners got from the facilitators, they were able to learn from the discussion, and tasks that led to their development.

2.5 Definition of concepts

Concepts used in research study include empowerment, gender, coping strategies, culture, patriarchy adult, learning and women. Below, is a definition of these concepts: -

2.5.1 Empowerment

Rappaports (1984) explains that empowerment is an intentional ongoing process centred in the local community involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation through which people gain greater access to their lives. The rural women empowered one another at GNC by interacting with one another in making meaning to their lives, households, and communities.

2.5.2 Gender

Roberts (2008) defines gender as a term used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed and biologically determined. In addition, Roberts (2008) highlights that gender includes the roles associated with being a woman or a man as well as relationships with each other. All members at GNC are women.

2.5.3 Coping strategies

Skinner and Zimmer- Gembeck (2016) define coping strategies as the basic processes integral to adaptation and survival and show how people deal with and learn from stressful encounters. In addition, Skinner & Zimmer- Gembeck (2016) note that coping is a conscious or unconscious strategy used to reduce unpleasant emotions. The rural women learned the coping strategies relevant to their survival needs.

2.5.4 Culture

Culture is the pattern of learned and shared behaviours and beliefs of a particular social and ethnic group (Lebron, 2013). Also, Lebron (2013) describes culture as the complex whole of collective human beliefs with a structured stage of civilization that can be specific to a nation or period. It is important to note that culture is learned, shared, patterned, and adaptive (Jump

up, 2009). Human beings use culture to adapt and transform the world they live in as is the case with rural women at GNC.

2.5.5 Patriarchy

Ann (2001) defines patriarchy as the form of political organization that distributes the power unequally between men and women to the detriment of women. Ann (2001) notes that patriarchy is a primitive social organization in which authority is exercised by a male head of the household, extending his power even to distant relatives of the same lineage. The rural women were subjected to the challenges of patriarchy as it was mostly practiced in an African culture which brought the challenges women find themselves in today.

2.4.6 Adult learning

Adult learning is the practice of educating adults to develop their knowledge and skills to adult learners (Knowles, 1980). The adult learners decide on the strategies on what they want to learn to improve their lives. The rural women learned the organizational activities created by themselves according to their need in households and communities.

2.4.7 Women

Women are adult female human beings belonging to a particular category (Ann, 2001). The rural women had membership and were interacting with one another at GNC.

2.4.8 New timer

A new timer is a person who is new to the learning environment but has experience and the same concern as the old people in the learning environment (Ann, 2021). In the context of GNC, a new timer is someone who is less than three years in the organisations and is acquainting herself with the rules, regulations, constitution and policies of the centre

2.4.9 Old timer

An old timer is someone with vast experience in the learning environment (Ann, 2021). According to the research study, an old timer is someone with much experience on the constitution, activities of the centre. The old timer has more than three years at the centre.

2.6 Related studies

In this section, related studies to this research project were presented. The presentation will look at international studies, African studies as well as South African studies. The studies have

been reviewed internationally, within Africa, and also in South Africa. Nikkah, Samah and Realzuan (2010) presented a study on “the effect of NGO’s functions on adult female participation” Iran. The study used a sample of a group of women who were involved in NGO activities to participate together as women change their lives due to changing times. The study examined the effects of NGOs’ functions to promote participation among women in capacity-building programs. In their study, they found that local NGOs have a high impact on participation in learning. Also, the participation of women in the NGO s provided individual development, making decisions about themselves, and their families, and subsequently empowered women. The above mentioned study was selected since women in Iran were participating together and empowering women with programs relevant with the changing times in women’s lives. Hence the study was selected since it addressed the coping strategies of women’s learning in an NGO context which is similar to my research study. Through voluntary participation, rural women were able to learn, and empower one another with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to bringing change in their lives, households, and communities.

Balachandran and Brintha (2012) investigated “the role of self-help in empowering women” in India. This study focused on the exploration of the empowerment of women with skills in the context of a community. They used a sample of a group comprising women. In their study, they found that women were participating and empowering one another with skills to boost their finances to eradicate poverty. That allowed them to realize their personal and professional goals for an improved better future (Balachandran & Brintha, 2012). A similar study was interested in finances to eradicate poverty and set out to explore how women are involved and develop one another on strategies to boost their finances (Balachandran & Brintha, 2012). In this study, women learned ways different skills to better their lives. Same as in this study, I wants to establish the coping strategies learned by rural women in the context of GNC.

In a similar study in Africa on “literacy needs of non-literate women in Benue state” in Nigeria. The study was interested in the acquisition of skills critical to women’s social, personal, and economic emancipation. Women’s views on the challenges of illiteracy and coping strategies were also explored. Data were collected from the sample of 134 women using the semi structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that illiteracy was the cause of their poverty, and that literacy is an empowerment option (Muodumogu, 2012). This study has equipped the women with literacy and coping strategies relevant to empower and change women’s lives in Nigeria. The researcher was interested in this study since it addressed

similar issues as the research study. The study was interested in the acquisition of skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to the needs and empowerment of women which is like the researched study.

Although the above mentioned studies by Balachandran and Brintha (2012) and by Muodumogu (2012) have shown how women acquire skills, support and empower one another on common challenges of eliminating poverty within their households. I find a study presented by Hlela (2017) on “learning through participation towards defining adult learning in an African rural village context” in South Africa as bringing closer to what I wish to explore when he highlights learning through participation which is similar to the research under study.. The purpose of the research was to allow the community to reflect on the learning spaces. The study explored the learning spaces characterized by different types of learning. The results showed villagers were learning through sharing their daily events which provided solutions to their needs. Of importance in this selected study is that the participation was voluntary, collective, and problem-based learning which provided the opportunity for adult learners to engage and empower one another. Moreover, a waterhole was also found as a place of learning and teaching, especially for women in Ebunzimeni rural community. Through their engagement, and participation women acquired knowledge and skills from one another that were relevant to their needs. The above-mentioned study is like my study since I am interested in learning in the rural context using the informal way of learning.

Also, Francis and Moyo (2015) conducted a study on “women empowerment initiatives for rural development” in South Africa. The study was interested in women empowerment of rural women using different ways of learning. The study revealed that the involvement, improved engagements, and participation of women in decision-making and solving issues that affect them accelerated women’s potential and boosted their self-confidence. Furthermore, engaging rural women as a collective in solving their problems in a favourable learning environment provided rural women with the chance to create information and abilities relevant to daily needs in households. I was interested in this study since it addressed similar issues as the research study. In this study, I am interested in the ways rural women use learning in the context of GNC.

The study by Ndlela (2017) was based on “exploration of learning in a women’s church group” in South Africa. The research examines the nature of education at St Anne’s Catholic Women’s Group (SACWG). The aim of the study was to discover the relationship between what was

learned within the group and how it touched the SACWG members' lives. The research was concerned in looking for women's engagement in a church organization. The findings of the research revealed that the SACWG members learned by using different types of learning. SACWG members created knowledge that benefited a wider community. This study showed the different ways of learning used by a group of SACWG women as they empower one another with skills relevant to their lives. This study is similar to my research which is looking on the ways of learning learned by rural women to be applied to the households and communities.

Also, in a research study conducted by Tawiah and Ngmenkpieo (2018), on the "perspectives of rural women in Khotso location" in the Eastern Cape. The research is interested on the views of country adult females in their learning. Findings revealed that rural women showed positive results in the social challenges they experienced and were empowered. This study showed that the rural women acquired the coping strategies that yielded positive results relevant for the rural women's lives. The study is like mine because rural women empowered one another through their interaction, and collective participation in organizational activities and were able to create knowledge and skills relevant to their needs or livelihood.

The studies presented here above demonstrate the importance of learning through participation with other women. This type of learning created the opportunity for women to empower one another with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to bringing change to their lives.

2.7 Theoretical framework

The study is underpinned by the theory of Community of Practice (CoP) because of its relevance to this study. The discussion of the CoP is important to this research study since it shows how rural women learn in the context of GNC.

2.7.1 Meaning of CoP

Lave and Wenger (2006) cited in Preece (2014) highlight that "CoP is a group of people who share a common concern or passion for something they do and learn, how to do better as they interact regularly, on how they function and what capabilities they produce" (p. 43). The GNC rural women had the same need in their households and were meeting at GNC participating in different activities and sharing their experiences related to their need in households. The GNC members people in the same community having the same common concern in their livelihood decide to organize themselves and learn together in a CoP. The GNC founder (Gabisile)

gathered the rural woman with the same concern to share their experiences and support one another as a way of finding a solution to their need. In addition, Lave and Wenger (1991) reveal that the people learn from each other through participating together sharing information, experiences from each other which provides them with the opportunity of developing one another. The group of rural women meet and share their experiences as they learn from one another to gain knowledge and skills relevant to their specific needs. Similarly, to the research study, a group of rural women has the same interest which allowed them to meet regularly and bring their own experiences as they create knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to their needs.

CoP promotes learning through disseminating knowledge within a group of individuals (Lave and Wenger (1991). The CoP is suitable for the research study

Consequently, Lave and Wenger (1991) note the three components of learning namely: domain, community, and practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that a CoP is a “group of like-minded, interactive people who filter, amplify, invest and provide, convene, build, learn and facilitate to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in their domain” (p. 1). The rural women were engaging, participating, and sharing as they developed knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs. In addition, Preece (2014) highlights that in any CoP, for members to qualify as members, they must have the same interest to which other members are loyal, must participate together in all activities, and support one another by sharing knowledge and building each other’s understanding within the community. In this research study, all GNC members at GNC attended, participated together and empower one another with skills relevant to their needs in their households and communities. The above study is the same as rural women of GNC attend, participate and loyal to one another.

Moreover, Wenger (1998) state that people make meaning by meeting together continuously, sharing stories that identifies with their need. The GNC members were meeting from Tuesdays to Thursdays, sharing, engaging and participating together in activities identified by them according to their daily needs in households and communities.

Wenger (2014) notes on “people engage in the same practice, form learning partnerships because they recognize each other as partners or practitioners and establish a learning contract” (p. 2). In addition, Wenger argues that the value of belonging to a CoP is having people to turn to when there is a challenge. The above definition shows that GNC is a place where rural

women meet, interact and engage as they learn from each other in the CoP. The above definitions of the CoP show that people learn when they meet together, engage and share their experiences as they create knowledge, skills, and coping strategies in their environment or community. Therefore, the interest of the research is to understand the participation of rural women and the ways of learning at GNC using a CoP.

2.7.2 Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) to understand the CoP in the context of the GNC.

Lave and Wenger (1991) note that LPP is a process of learning that refers to a group of people that participate in the CoP moving towards full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community. Lave and Wenger (1991) note that “the process of learning begins with LPP, where the newcomer is allowed access to practice, but spends some time at the periphery and then becomes a full participant” (p. 53). Lave and Wenger (1991) explain how newcomers become experienced members of the CoP through the collaborative experience they learn from the old-timers. In addition, Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that LPP “provides a way to speak about crucial relations between new-comers and old-timers, about their activities, identities, artifacts, knowledge, and practice” (p. 29). This allows the newcomers to learn from the old, experienced members (old-timers). Wenger (2014) asserts that the new timers engage in menial tasks which gave them a sense of what was needed, and how things were done which allowed them to learn from their mistakes and interact with the final product” (n.p.). Also, through observing others participate and possibly perform simple tasks of the organization, adult learners were learning from one another. Gradually the adult learners slowly moved away from the periphery and become engaged in activities that are more complex and later on transit to the role of experts.

Lave and Wenger (1991) argue about how the group works and how to participate in group activities. Thereafter, the adult learners collectively participate as a group which allows them to learn from one another. It is during this stage of learning that adult learners were able to empower one another and create and transfer the knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to their needs.

2.7.3 Rationale of the use of CoP

Responding to my research questions of this research, I have used CoP by Lave and Wenger (1991) as a critical lens to shape and direct the study problem. The research explored the amount of participation by rural women that provided strategies to cope with changing their

lives for the benefit of their households and communities. The CoP was used as the study dealt with a group of rural women that voluntarily met to achieve their goal. In a CoP, a group of people agrees to interact regularly to solve a persistent complex problem and improve their practice on the role they have assumed in households and communities. CoP brings adult learners together to connect as they engage themselves collectively to gain new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that will be relevant in households and communities.

Similarly, Lave and Wenger (1998) maintain that knowledge is not just accepting the knowledge but collective involvement in the CoP, which involves one's commitment toward achieving their common goal, is increased. The rural women's goal was to be empowered in the new roles assumed in their households and communities, which used to be the husbands' or spouses' roles in an African context. When the rural women met, they hoped to achieve their goal, and gain knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that would be transferred to the generations.

Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the CoP is a social learning activity that occurs from the interaction and participation of community members in their daily activities to meet a particular need in an organization or society. In their argument, adults learn as a collective rather than as individuals. In their learning, sharing experiences, collaborating, and interacting as a team was very critical for this study. Non-formal and informal learning took place at the centre because all adult learners were participating in the learning of the content and activities of their choice. Adult learners gained their identity from their learning.

In addition, Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011) claim that a CoP is a learning partnership among people who find it useful to learn from each other about a particular domain using each other's experience of practice. Correspondingly, Wenger (2014) states that a learning partnership is about how learning occurs or how adult learners create a practice for learning. This shows that rural women depend on each other's experiences, conversations, knowledge, and skills in finding solutions to their problems. It is anticipated that teamwork might have a positive influence in the manner in which rural women contribute to their societies as they assume roles in households and communities. Therefore, Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoP theory is the best practice to explore learning and participation within a group of adult women within a specific goal and concern in their local community.

2.7.4 Critique of the CoP

The CoP has received some critiques from research studies. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that CoPs are useful for transferring knowledge in specific contexts. In a CoP, the individual members learn from one another as they engage in their daily activities and were creating knowledge, skills, and coping strategies among themselves.

Lave and Wenger (1991) note how the group works during learning without emphasizing the role of the facilitator in guiding the learning process. The role of facilitators, in the learning process is restrained, yet the facilitators guide the meaning-making process. In this research study, the facilitator plays a critical role in guiding and supporting the learning which provides solutions to the learner's needs.

CoP overemphasizes the LPP as the major learning process treating newcomers as clean slates yet Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the newcomers come to a CoP with experience, skills, and strategies to the group or organization. At GNC, the newcomers bring the experiences for the learning activities which bring solutions to their challenges at hand. In addition, Preece (2014) notes that for members to qualify, they must have the same interest and be loyal to other members and the organization. The newcomers remain in the periphery even if they are loyal to the organizational principle which is a requirement for membership. The newcomers are loyal to the group by attending regularly, engaging, participating and sharing their experiences during learning. The newcomer's attendance and participation in the group should be valued as that of the old timers since the new timers play the same role as that of the old timers during learning.

Lave and Wenger (1991) note that the old-timers were developing the new timers, yet the way newcomers are developed is not clear since they also bring previous knowledge, skills, and experience to the group. In addition, Lave and Wenger (1991) highlight that new members move from the periphery to a position of full participation as they develop their knowledge and learn from skilled or experienced old-timers, some may remain in the periphery. During learning, all of the people participate equally as old and new timers create knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs. The new timers must be given the same status as the old timers since the new timers bring their experiences to the group which become relevant even to the old timers.

Lave and Wenger (1991) note the significance of power in shaping the legitimacy of peripherally and participation, but they fail to explore the implications of the distribution of power, especially for the new timers. The role of the new timers within the group is not clearly

stated except for being seen as receivers of knowledge, yet all rural women participate, share and engage equally in their learning. The role of new timers must not be underestimated even on the sharing of power, since some of the new timers are experienced in learning.

It is important to note that the pressures from the sources of powers and old timers can inhibit the ability of members especially the new timers to engage effectively in the creation of knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to the households and communities.

2.8 Conclusion

While the reviewed literature is not conclusive and exhaustive on women empowerment issues, there is consensus amongst scholars in a few aspects. It is noted that an increase in rural women assuming roles in heading households and communities. There is evidence also that shows the shift in the approach, seeking avenues to bridge inequality and gender disparities to an approach or approaches that begin to empower rural women. It is upon the analysis of literature, personal experiences as well as exposure to a Women Empowerment Centre that this study was conceptualized. Lastly, although much has been written on the survival strategies of women, very little has been conducted on my research study, which is the coping strategies assumed by rural women that fix a mark in developing, and empowering women in households and communities.

CHAPTER 3

Research design and methodology

3.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the main concepts, similar studies, and the theoretical framework of the study. This chapter comprises the research design, sampling procedure, research tools, data collection data analysis and trustworthiness issues of the research study. The qualitative exploration research is located in a constructivist paradigm and used the case study design.

3.2. Research design

According to Mouton (1996), the research design serves to “plan, structure and execute” the research to maximize the “validity of findings” (p.175). Creswell and Creswell (2018) defines a research design as a plan for collecting and analysing data that will make it possible for the investigator to answer the research questions that he or she has posed. The research design is the main strategy of how the research study has to be conducted gives guidelines from the causal assumptions to research design and data generation.

3.3. Research qualitative methodology

The qualitative research approach has been used in this research which is a style oriented towards understanding the meanings and experiences of informants (Crowe, Inder & Porter, 2015). According to Newman (2006), a qualitative exploration research is interested in exploring the *whys* and *hows* of the events in a research study. Qualitative research focuses on the phenomena in their natural setting (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff & Ferreira, 2014). It assumes that reality is not absolute but multiple and socially constructed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The researcher will have an in-depth understanding of the knowledge, skills and coping strategies gained by the rural women at GNC and how they were using them to adapt to their newly assumed roles to improve their lives. The researcher used the qualitative approach as it is fitting to research the phenomenon in their own environment which was convenient for rural women understudy.

Creswell et al (2014) highlight that “qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding where the researcher develops a complex, holistic picture analyses words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 257). Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that “qualitative researchers do not bring the participants to the lab but in the site where the participants experience the problem under study” (p. 181). Newman (2006) highlights that qualitative research is a form of inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear and understand which is committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human nature. The rural women’s learning and the nature of activities were studied from the perspective of participants in their natural settings.

Babbie (2010) notes that qualitative research is based on the set of topics to be discussed in depth rather than based on the use of standardized questions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that the process of research has emerging questions and procedures which assist the investigator to get interpretations on the significance of information. I used a set of closed and semi-structured questions to understand the learning activities and coping strategies used by rural women’s learning and the extent their participation provided change for their lives, households, and communities.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) show that “qualitative researchers attempt to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied” (p. 50). The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to deeply explore the issues and get detailed and rich information on the experiences of the rural women from their perspectives while accommodating the uniqueness of each participant’s experience.

In addition, Creswell and Creswell (2018) reveal that talking directly to participants, in face-to-face interaction, and seeing them behave and act within their context is the main characteristic of qualitative research. The researcher was able to gain a deeper and more holistic picture (Creswell et al, 2014) from the direct interactions with the participants where the researcher could probe further into areas that were hazy which would not have been possible with an alternative approach like quantitative. The qualitative research approach was appropriate to obtain a deeper understanding of the rural women and their real world.

3.3.1. Research paradigm

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2015), a research paradigm is a worldview or belief held by a community of researchers, on the nature of the world, what can be known about the world, and the methods that can be used to learn about the world. In light of this, I also have my own beliefs in terms of how I view things in the world in terms of my position on the nature of reality, knowledge, how to acquire the knowledge, and the role of values in the research process. These beliefs influence the way that researchers conduct research, and thus, informed the paradigm that the researcher adopted for the research study. From the different possible paradigms that include positivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatism, the study was located in the constructivism paradigm.

3.3.2. Constructivist paradigm

The constructivists' paradigm position assumes that reality is multiple and that it is socially constructed and at the same time value-laden (Cohen, Manion & Morrison., 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Constructivism, thus, asserts that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016) thereby making knowledge dynamic and contextual. Constructivists also believe that a researcher has to get immersed in the research process and understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live in it (Schwandt, 2000). This constructivist paradigm also acknowledges that research is influenced by the values of researchers and cannot be independent of them thereby making the process subjective (Creswell, 2003).

A constructivism paradigm was used in seeking to understand the ways of learning used by rural women; how learning took place at GNC and how rural women acquired skills and coping strategies. The researcher's aim was to understand everything from their perspective whilst acknowledging the researcher's influence on the process. Constructivism is inductive in nature, meaning that it involves searching for patterns from participants' views to generate themes and develop explanations or theories. The Constructivist worldview is aligned to the qualitative research approach which justifies why the researcher adopted the approach for the research study.

3.3.3. Case study

The case study design was adopted for the study. Creswell et al (2014) define a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 107). Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that a case study explores phenomena in a deeper manner using variety of data collection procedures. The case study allows for an in-depth understanding of real-life issues through the use of multiple sources and techniques in data-gathering procedures (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, Creswell (2014) asserts that the case study uses a variety of disciplines to answer “how” and “why” questions. The case study allows an understanding of how participants relate and interact with one another in a real-life problem at hand and how rural women make meaning to the problem under study. That will assist the researcher to get better understanding of what is happening in the rural women’s learning at GNC. The intention of the case study is to get a greater understanding of the experiences of rural women. Similarly, the case study allows not only the voice of one participant but also the other group members and the interaction between them. In this situation, the case study design is therefore appropriate as it allowed the researcher to triangulate data from multiple data sources to reinforce the research findings.

The case study has been unpopular because of its dependability on a single case which fails to address generalisability issues (Creswell, 2014). However, the intent of the case study is to provide greater insight into the experiences of rural women as they learn at GNC.

3.3.4. Population

Goddard and Melville (2001) define a research population as any group that is the subject of interest for the researcher. Creswell et al (2014) maintain that population is the theoretically specified aggregation of the elements in a study or the group of individuals that the researcher is interested in generalising about them. Creswell and Creswell (2018) further explain that population is a means of acknowledging its size and the individuals to supply relevant information to the study. It is the total number of people and or sites that could be included in the study. It can be whatever the researcher needs to be; it may be large or small. The population for this study was all GNC women which constituted a total of twenty- eight (28) enrolled rural women for the project.

3.3.5. Sampling procedure and sample size

It was not possible and necessary to collect data from the whole study population, so sampling was done. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) define sampling as a selection of a portion or segment of a whole which is representative of the whole. Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that this can yield information-rich cases. Patton (2002) also concurs with this by asserting that qualitative samples focus on the purposeful selection of information-rich cases that allow the researcher to learn a great deal about the central phenomena thereby facilitating better insights and in-depth understanding.

3.3.5.1. Purposive sampling

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study. Purposive sampling involved the selection of cases based on their possession of defined characteristics done based on expert judgment (Cohen et al., 2011). Babbie (2015) asserts that the researcher uses his or her judgment about which participants to choose and picks only those that best meet the purpose of the study. Babbie (2015) also notes that the researcher can use his or her research skill and prior knowledge to choose the participants. This type of sampling was used to ensure that a certain sample of the identified population with old and new timers of rural women was represented in the sample. The researcher came up with defining criteria for the cases that were eligible to serve as data sources (Morgan, 2014). The inclusion criterion was that used was that a participant should have been part of the project for at least three (3) years, were less than sixty (60) years except a founder who was more than 60 years old. That would ensure that that they have rich and detailed information and knowledge about the program offered at GNC. Participants had to be less than 60 years so that they would be able to engage in a logical and meaningful discussion. The chairperson and the founder of GNC worked with the researcher on selecting the members according to their expertise at GNC. Register was served since the names were selected from it. In this study, a total of eight (8) rural women were used as the sample selected purposefully with specific choices of new and old-timers from the total population.

3.3.5.2. Sample size

The sample size comprised eight (8) members of rural women, the founder of GNC, the chairperson, facilitator, an old timer and four (4) new timers. One of the members was the founder (an old-timer), the other was the chairperson (an old-timer) while the other one was

the facilitator (an old-timer), and the last one was an ordinary old-timer in the GNC. Four of the new members were purposively selected. I selected a few numbers to get in-depth information on critical information relevant to the study such as rural women's learning, the document reviews, and the GNC. Also, the intention of selected participants was to get participants that would give rich information to the researcher.

3.3.6. Location of the study or the Research site and composition

The study was conducted at GNC in Manzamnyama location in the Eastern Cape. Manzamnyama is a rural area located about 13 kilometres from Mthatha town. The GNC is a standalone site at the bottom of the location. The municipality was selected due to its challenges such as crime, unemployment, municipality patriarchy, and a large number of women-heading households. The South African government has provided bad conditions which resulted to rural women to find solutions to their challenge through the learning that took place at GNC. The men resided in bachelor hostels that had been built for migrant workers and had no provision for women which led to a decline in marital and household life quality (Segar, 1991). The husbands or partners were involved in unofficial polygamy which led to the decrease of men to support their rural households. In addition, Gelderblom and Kok (1994) state that the absence of men in most households forced the women to take over the responsibilities of their husbands thereby assuming new added roles. Therefore, GNC was nominated since it is the NGO run by rural women having challenges in their households. The next section discussed the data generation methods.

3.7. Data generation

Various forms of data generation were administered to strengthen the research findings such as document analysis, observation, individual semi-structured and focus group interviews. Various forms of data generation methods were used to strengthen the research, get more deeper information for a particular problem. The next section has discussed the documentary analysis.

3.7.1. Document analysis

Document analysis was one of the methods used to generate data at GNC. According to Newman (2006) document analysis is a form of qualitative research that uses a systematic approach to analyse documentary evidence and answer specific research questions. The documents that were reviewed in detail focused on their relevance to the educational activities,

learning, and empowerment of rural women. The relevant documents were analysed and interpreted in order to gain a better understanding, bring meaning, and develop knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Different documents such as the mission, vision, agendas for the meetings, attendance registers, and minutes of the minutes, lesson plans, proposals and letters from the funders were reviewed by the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the learning, and activities that took place at the centre. Each document was thoroughly reviewed by the researcher with the assistance of the management of the organisation. The documents were also analysed by the researcher in order to get their relevance to what was happening at GNC. The researcher engaged and analysed each document mentioned above because of its relevance to data collection. The documents gave the researcher an insight and a clear understanding of what was happening at GNC.

3.7.2. Individual semi-structured interviews

Data were generated at GNC using individual semi-structured interviews that provided a clear set of instructions for interviewees, which provided reliable, comparable qualitative data (Margaret and Bradley, 2009). Moreover, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) explain that an interview is a dialogue between the investigator and the participant. In addition, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) take note of the investigator who employs a conversation, with a set of programmed questions. The researcher used a set of individual semi-structured questions as a guide to the discussion (See Appendix E). The researcher asked a question (explain) to the participants and listens carefully to the participants as they respond. Each individual interview was held at GNC, lasted for about 30 minutes, and were recorded by the researcher after being granted permission to do so. The researcher was interested in old women's learning, how rural women learn, and what new strategies were learned from them. The participants' answers were very crucial as the participants freely gave their views, and experiences as individuals without the intimidation of others. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews allowed the dialogue which served as communication during the interview process. The researcher listened to the participants' dialogue as these conversations and dialogues strengthened the findings. The semi-structured interviews were administered to get rich first-hand individual views and experiences from rural women's learning processes at the centre.

The facilitator at GNC was also interviewed to express herself on what she taught the participants as GNC is located on liberatory learning. The rural women were better placed to

have knowledge about the extent of their participation at the centre and the benefit they had for their lives, households and communities.

3.7.3. Focus group Discussions

Creswell et al (2014) refer to a focus group interview as a type of in-depth interview whereby a limited number of interacting individuals, with common interests and characteristics relevant to a particular study, are used to elicit information that could not be obtained when using other methods. Moreover, Nyumba, Kerrie, Christiana and Mukherjee (2018) state that focus group discussion assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of the participants through a moderate interaction. Furthermore, Creswell et al., (2014) highlight that focus group interviews yield rich data in detail that is difficult to get from other research methods. Consequently, Nyumba et al (2018) also state that focus group discussion involves assembling a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic with the aim of drawing from complex personal experiences and beliefs.

In this study, one group of 8 rural women was selected because of their relevance to the study. One focus group (eight rural women) discussion was conducted at GNC, which was a neutral venue for the participants and where the activities took place. Creswell et al (2018) maintain that a focus group discussion should be among “six to eight interviewees in each group” (p. 187). Focus group discussions comprised of eight rural women of which, 4 were the old-timers (the experienced women with more than three years in the organisation) and the other 4 were the new-timers (the new rural women with less than three years in the organisation) to get more insight on their learning. The old timers were the old rural women that were the members of the GNC for three years and more whilst the new timers were the group of rural women that were members of GNC for a period of less than three years.

There were structured questions for the focus group (See Appendix G). The focus group interviews permitted in-depth rich data about the perceptions and experiences of the group on a specific topic. In addition, those with power (the founder and the chairperson) and those with less power (the ordinary members of the GNC), represented all GNC members. Although this would seem a disadvantage since as the ordinary members would allow those with power to share first, it was not the case since the individual semi-structured interviews were gathered before the focus group discussions. Session was scheduled for an hour, but the interview

exceeded 23 minutes from the hour due to the preparedness of the rural women to share with the researcher. The focus group discussions with 8 participants allowed each of them to talk freely about their experiences in their natural setting. All members selected for the interviews were given an opportunity to contribute since their opinions, experiences and understanding were of value to the study. The participants were willing to share their experiences which helped the researcher to achieve her purpose of using the focus group interviews. All the discussions were of help to the researcher as they provided the opportunity for the researcher to understand the rural women's learning and their daily experiences at GNC.

During the focus group discussion sessions, participants were allowed to express themselves in the language they were most comfortable in, that is, isiXhosa, in their case. This was based on the background from the chairperson of the organization that some of them could not complete their basic education. The focus group discussion schedules were also translated to their vernacular language (isiXhosa). The researcher understood very well that English could handicap them and limit their responses.

3.7.4. Observation

The observation was used to generate data. Observation took place at GNC. The researcher conducted the observation two times a week. It was done concurrently with the individual semi-structured and focus group discussions. The researcher observed the participants' reactions when participating in the activities. The researcher was involved and interacted with the participants as she was asking the structured questions (See Appendix H) and taking notes to get a deeper understanding of the rural women's learning. The researcher observed the participants during learning. The participant's engagement and participation during learning was observed by the researcher. Also, the places where learning took place were also observed by the researcher.

Creswell et al., (2018) note that observation happens when investigator gather reports the happenings, conduct and performance of members during meaning making. The researcher took notes of the activities and pictures (both from the inside and outside) after being granted permission to do so. I observed the participants' feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours while sharing the information about their learning. The researcher was interested in the link between what was said and the feeling of the participants when answering the questions confronted with different situations related to their learning. This helped the researcher to make

honest objective and reliable conclusions. Apart from the observation of what was happening within the classroom, also, I observed the buildings at GNC.

3.8. Data analysis

Creswell et al (2014) state that qualitative data analysis “focuses on understanding how participants make meaning of a given phenomenon by analysing their perceptions and experiences” (p. 370). According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data by searching for relationships among categories of data. The process of data analysis constitutes of mainly three activities which are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

The process of analysing qualitative data can be done manually or using computer programs. Qualitative data can be analysed using different software programs that include NVivo, MAXQDA, Hyper RESEARCH, and ATLAS.ti. The researcher opted to use ATLAS.ti to analyse the data rather than the manual analysis because of the bulkiness of the data that would have been overwhelming for the researcher to deal with effectively. The other advantage of using ATLAS.ti was that it speeded up the coding process and made it more flexible (Hwang, 2008) thereby affording the researcher more time to do the ‘actual’ analysis (Barry, 1998). According to Hwang (2008) and Konopasek, (2007), using ATLAS.ti allows the analysis process to be more transparent and more replicable which increased the credibility of the study.

It should be noted that the scrutiny of qualitative data is interactive and non-linear procedure (Smit, 2001) even though the researcher has presented it here as a linear process. This process is described by Konopasek (2007)’s guide on using ATLAS.ti.

3.8.1. Entering primary documents

The researcher entered the transcriptions from the focus group discussion and 8 interview transcripts or primary documents into the hermeneutic unit of ATLAS.ti. Lewis (2004) describes the hermeneutic unit as the database for a particular project.

3.8.2. Defining quotations from primary documents

The primary documents were broken into quotations. The cutting of primary documents into quotations reduced the data to comprehensible levels. Quotations are basic units of analysis and their limited textural sizes and meaning make it easier to construct their meaning. It should be noted that the breaking down of primary documents into quotations on the other hand made the data more distant from each other as the quotations increased in numbers thereby calling for greater effort to identify the connections (Konopaske, 2007). The researcher therefore had to spend many hours reading and reading the data to identify the connections.

3.8.3. Reintegrating data by coding

The process of coding involves assigning selected portions of the primary documents with one or more codes. Codes are labels or names that indicate the kind of quotations in a particular thematic group. In assigning the codes, care had to be taken to ensure that codes were simple whilst showing the content of the quotation clearly. The coding process gave the quotations more relevance and made them more meaningful. Codes were not fixed but could be moved, renamed, split, or even linked to each other.

3.8.4. Commenting and memoing

The researcher attached comments and memos to some of the analytic units like the quotations, links, and networks. The comments differed depending on the analytic unit to which the researcher had attached them and the purpose for which they were meant to serve. The comments on the codes described and explained the labels that were not very descriptive while the comments on the links or quotations explained the interesting aspect of the analytic unit. The memos were more specific compared to the comments. The memos involved the integration of partial observations and informed the research report based on empirical data and the wider argument of the study. The commenting helped to preserve the ideas that came up as the researcher was reading the data. The comments also formed part of the interpretation process and allowed the researcher to infuse her own additions to the participants' accounts which transformed the data into sociological data in a gradual way.

3.8.5. Categorising data into families and seeing the relevance

The researcher grouped the codes into families and sub-families (axial coding). The researcher was also able to get a view of the nature and density of the links and connections in the data set from ATLAS.ti.

3.8.5.1. Reading data in a new way

Selective coding was done and this involved putting together segments of data cut off from the primary documents according to themes to tell a new story. I found out that what could initially have appeared to be insignificant became significant from the frequency by which it was mentioned by different people. The researcher's interpretation of the participants' voices resulted in new sociological reading that constituted a combination of the participants' voices and the researcher's voice through her construction of meaning.

3.8.5.2. Producing the report

The researcher's aim was to tell the story in a way that convinced the reader of the trustworthiness of her analysis so, I provided sufficient evidence from each theme by giving sufficient data extracts to show the prevalence of the theme. I also presented network views to show the relationship between the data codes.

3.9. Ethical issues

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define ethics as the study of standards of conduct and values in research and how this impacts both the researcher and the research subjects. Before conducting the research study, the researcher had to write a letter to the chairperson, Ms Mxo (not her real name) asking permission to conduct the research study at GNC and explained the purpose of the study (See Appendix A). The researcher had to explain the purpose of the research study. Ms. Mxo responded by granting permission to conduct the study. The permission to conduct the study was granted by the chairperson of GNC (See Appendix B). Furthermore, the participants were informed about ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation (See Appendix C).

The researcher clearly explained the informed consent to the participants so as to decide to be included in the study. According to Newman (2006), an informed consent is "a written agreement that explains the aspects of the study to participants and asks for their voluntary

agreement before the study begins” (p. 135). The researcher explained the informed consent the purpose of the study and the nature of the study before rural women were given the opportunity to sign the informed consent forms (See Appendix C). The informed consent was presented to the participants both in English and in isiXhosa, their local native language

The rural women were guaranteed with confidentiality, that the information given would remain confidential throughout the study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that confidentiality is the ethical protection for those participants that are being studied. Newman (2006) and Creswell et al (2014) state that confidentiality will be maintained to protect the privacy and the identities of the individual. Confidentiality was maintained by the researcher to protect and keep the information about rural women secret. Also, to protect the results and findings of the study from being known by other people except the researcher and the supervisor. Anonymity was also maintained in the study. Newman (2006, p. 139) defines anonymity as the right of participants to remain “nameless” and their identity remains protected from being known by the public. Pseudo-names were used to protect the real identities of rural women. The rural women were also informed of their right to withdraw from participation if they felt a need to do so.

Nonmaleficence was maintained throughout the study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that nonmaleficence is maintained if there is no harm of any kind physical, emotional or socially caused to the participants and that was assured. The chairperson of GNC informed me that they would prefer Wednesday for data generation. Lastly, the supervisor will also assist the researcher in ensuring that all ethical issues are maintained.

3.9.1. Trustworthiness issues

For qualitative studies, trustworthiness is considered a key quality assurance factor. Mouton (2013) states that trustworthiness is very critical in a qualitative study can be advanced by providing high reliability and neutrality. I used a vernacular language to collect data. All data collection instruments were checked with the supervisor before actual data collection to seek to collect and triangulate data. Creswell et al (2014) show that “triangulation is a method used in qualitative research to check and establish validity in the study by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives” (p. 274).

Measures of trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability ((Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were discussed in-depth. Since the research was

qualitative in nature, trustworthiness to guarantee quality research was maintained and issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were addressed during data collection.

3.9.1.1. Credibility

Credibility is the extent of the findings when they are congruent or are in agreement with the reality on the ground (Shenton, 2004). The measures that I used to ensure credibility for the study include using well-established research methods for the study by selecting an appropriate research design that allowed the researcher to address the research questions adequately. The use of an appropriate sampling technique further helped to ensure that the researcher was able to get a rich information case that had detailed information on the phenomena. Also, Babbie (2010) notes that member checking is a technique for exploring the credibility of results.

3.9.1.2. Transferability

Shenton (2004) describes transferability as the extent to which the study can be applied to other situations. The use of purposive sampling in the research study supports transferability since the research study can be applied in other situations. The researcher enhanced the transferability of the study by providing clear details of the processes and context to allow the reader to make an informed assessment on the applicability of the findings to similar contexts (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006).

3.9.1.3. Confirmability

The degree of neutrality of the study or the extent to which findings are shaped by the participants and not researcher bias is the confirmability of the study (Niewenhuis, 2016). Member checks and triangulation were used to enhance confirmability in this study. Data analysis was clearly planned, systematised and organised with the purpose of understanding the phenomena under study. Lastly, member checking was done by the researcher to check the participants' validation. Babbie (2010) notes that member checking is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. In this study, once data was transcribed it was taken back to the participants for verification. The next part was dependability.

3.9.1.4. Dependability

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), notes that dependability is the extent to which research processes are explained granting the reader to understand, audit, and analysis the research process (Sandelowski, 1986). The researcher provided detailed information on the research design and data-gathering processes to enhance the dependability of this study. Different techniques were applied and findings could be repeated to show consistency.

3.9.1.5. Triangulation

Creswell et al (2014) show that “triangulation is a method used in qualitative research to check and establish validity in the study by analysing a research question from multiple perspectives” (p. 274). The data-gathering methods were also triangulated to corroborate the researcher’s data and findings. Data analysis must be clearly organized with the intention of knowing the occurrence in the research studied.

3.9.1.6. Member checking

Babbie (2010) notes that member checking is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. In addition, I also conducted member checks which are described as the most crucial technique to ensure the credibility of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) so as to check the accuracy of the transcriptions and observation notes that the researcher captured. I double-checked the responses together with the participants to confirm member checking and the validity of the findings. This was done on Wednesday and participants were allowed to check the validation of the information they had given to the researcher. Also, the participants were also given the opportunity to check the errors.

3.9.1.7. Debriefing sessions

I held frequent debriefing sessions with my supervisor and asked my peers to scrutinise my work to refine my methodology and instruments. The supervisor, to ensure its relevance to the purpose mentioned earlier by the researcher, checked the data collection instruments. Triangulation was also used since there were a variety of sources for data generation.

3.10. Conclusion

In this chapter, discussions centred around issues of research design and its method, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness issues, and ethical considerations were aligned to the study. The study used the qualitative research approach with a case study design. The study had 28 members from the total population and 8 participants that were judgementally sampled from the total population since they were relevance to the study. Data were created from various sources namely; documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

Ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to privacy were maintained during data generation. In the next chapter, data analysis will be a point of focus.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation and discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction

This section deals with presentation and discussion of findings from the instruments that have been mentioned in the previous paragraph. The study focused on rural women's learning experiences at the GNC. The purpose of the study was to explore an understanding of how rural women learned in the context of GNC. In addition, the focus of the study was how the knowledge gained from GNC brought coping strategies to change the lives of rural women, was. The research used the following research questions:

- What educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with changing times?
- In what ways do rural women learn at the GNC?
- What strategies do rural women learn as they participate in the GNC educational activities?

The research used a case study as a research design. This chapter starts with the presentation of a case study followed by a data presentation.

4.2 The case study- the GNC - Description of the case

The case under investigation, the GNC, is the only project run for rural women, at the Manzamnyama location. GNC is a building at the bottom of the Manzamnyama location, which is battling unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, and crime. The community project is a standalone building situated next to the secondary school. The building has a big hall with tables and chairs, two offices, a kitchen with a storeroom to keep their groceries, and the sports grounds. GNC has a well-fenced security room. The GNC is located at Manzamnyama (not the real name) location and is about 13 kilometres from Mthatha town in the KSDM of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The place where the study occurred is a traditional, disadvantaged rural location with the order of the family structure. It has a low socio-economic status and socio-cultural challenges. The centre was named after an old woman, Gabisile (not real name) who initiated the project as she had all the experiences as a rural woman.

GNC is the only project in this community run for and by rural women in the area. This information was subsequently confirmed during the interviews. The preliminary discussions with the chairperson and the founder revealed that GNC has 8 members comprising of two single women, two widows, and four married women. These were the 8 participants that were later interviewed. Rural women become full members when they understand the principles of the organization and have a need to learn and change their lives. The rural women gathered in the building, to learn through educational activities and gain knowledge and skills that changed their lives. The rural women attended three days a week starting from 8H30-14h00. The facilitators taught the rural women and everyone acquired knowledge and skills from one another which allowed them to change their lives for the better.

From 13h00 -to 14h00, the rural women shared lunch among themselves, including those who did not receive social grants from Development of Social Department (DSD). The documents reviewed revealed that GNC among many activities includes workshops, trading, sporting activities, and team building. Table 4.1 below shows the educational activities at GNC.

4.3 Presentation of Findings

The findings were presented below. The first theme on educational activities was presented below showing the different activities done at GNC by rural women to equip one another with different skills relevant to their needs in households and communities. The timetable below presented the educational activities done at GNC in different days.

Table 4.1: Educational activities at GNC

DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Tuesday Wednesday Thursday	8h30-9h50	Worship (Praises, sharing of word, prayer)	Vakalisa, Somdywili Thangana and all women
	09h00-10h00	Physical exercise/ sporting exercise (alternatively)	Sango and all women
	10h00-10h15	Teatime	All

	10h15-11h15	Artwork	Mpondokazi and all women
	11h20-12h45	teambuilding/ monthly meetings (once in month) trading (quarterly)	Solwandle and all women
	12h45-13h20	Lunchtime	All
	13h20-14h00	Singing and closing prayer/	Any member as led by the holy Ghost and all members followed

Table 4.1 above shows the distribution of activities among the members of GNC. The GNC, through informal and non-formal educational activities, imparts knowledge, skills and coping strategies that enhance the women's potential to maintain their lives, households, and communities (GNC, Constitution, 2008). Ahmed and Coombs (1974) note that informal education takes place, incidentally, is unplanned and unstructured and influences the understanding and attitudes of the individuals. Moreover, informal learning that takes place among the participants is ongoing learning and depends upon the hands of adult learners (Rogers, 1997). The worship, physical exercise, and craftwork were examples of informal learning at GNC. Of importance is that informal learning continues throughout the lives of rural women. Non-formal learning is organized, consciously, deliberately, and systematically implemented learning outside the school classroom (Ahmed & Coombs, 1974).

It is planned to serve the needs and provides solutions to the real-life challenges of a particular group (rural women). Worship, physical exercise, craftwork, and monthly meetings were examples of non-formal activities learned at GNC. For the rural women, GNC became their hope since they were provided with basic needs and were taught knowledge, skills and coping strategies that would change their lives, households, and communities.

In concluding this section on GNC, the research participants were presented. The sample of the study comprised 8 rural women, which were purposively sampled according to the experience rural women had at GNC. One of the members was the founder (an old-timer), the other was the chairperson (an old-timer) while the other one was the facilitator (an old-timer), and the

last one was an ordinary old-timer in the GNC. Four of the new members were purposively selected. All the participants were carefully selected according to their importance, relevance and to their significance in the research study. The next section presents the biographical details of each participant used in the study. The biographical details provide an understanding of why each participant was selected and relevant to the research study. All the participants were given pseudo names to maintain anonymity and for the participants' freedom during interviews.

4.2.1. The GNC participants

The participants, in the study, were GNC rural women within the age range of fifty-five to seventy-three years. The age differences in the group contributed to the debate about what is to be understood as old age. The United Nations (2001) generally understands old age as 60 plus. The age differences here suggest that old age, in the rural context, might be much lower than that in United Nations.

Table 4.2 below shows the demographic information of the GNC participants.

Table 4.2: Participants' biographic information

Participant	Age	Marital Stat	Enrolment	Education Status	Qualification	Source of income	Centre status	Frequency to the Doctor.	Residential Area
Gabisile	75	Widow	2008	Matric and Teacher's certificate	Teaching	Government pension	Old-timer	Once in 6 months	Manzamnyama
Mpondokazi	58	Single	2013	Matric and Nursing Diploma	Nursing	Government pension	Old-timer	Once in a while	Manzamnyama
Mhlana	55	Married	2019	Standard 4/ Grade 6	Housewife	Government children's social grant holder	New timer	Not Occasionally	Manzamnyama
Sango	55	Married	2010	Standard 10/ Grade 12 and Teacher's Diploma	Teaching and a gardener	Government pension and profit from vegetables	Old-timer	None	Manzamnyama
Somdywili	66	Widow	2012	Standard 10/ Matric	Gardener	Government old-age pension grant	Old-timer	Do not remember	Manzamnyama

Xaba	56	Married	2020	Standard seven/grade 9	Housewife	Government children's social grant	New timer	Yearly for check-ups	Manzamnyama
Solwandle	58	Married	2019	Matric and Nursing Diploma	Nursing pensioner	Government old pension grant	New timer	2 years	Manzamnyama
Thangana	61	Single	2020	Matric	Unemployed	Government old pension grant holder	New timer	Before joining	Manzamnyama

Table 4.2 above shows the participants' demographic information.

The participants' pseudo names, age, enrolment, marital, educational, and employment status of each participant were of importance to the study. Table 4.2 above, showed that the members at GNC ranged between 55 to 75. The participants' ages ranged between fifty-five years to seventy-five years of age. The rural women learned the educational activities at GNC as people with similar challenges in their lives, households since they share, participate and learn together from each other's experiences.

Marital status

Out of eight participants in this study, two were widows (66 and 75 years old). The other two were single (58 and 61 years) while four of them were married (55,55,56 &58 years). All participants, regardless of their marital status and age difference, had the same challenges and need to face them and support their households without being prepared to do so.

Enrolment

The year of enrolment was very critical for the study, for two reasons, sampling, and theoretical framework. As implied in the sampling, which was purposive, enrolment was relevant because of the experience participants had, and the number of years learning at GNC, which was three years and above. The theoretical framework that informs this study is CoP, the shift, and movement from the periphery to the centre by the novice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The enrolment dates for the participants were different which showed growth in GNC. One member was a founder and the other members joined GNC at its inception in 2008 since she was part of the meetings called by the founder. From 2010-to 2018, three members joined, and in 2019, two joined GNC. The last two members joined GNC in 2020. Only those rural women who were participants were discussed in full. The enrolment date was very important for the study since it declared whether the participant was an old-timer or a new timer. The participants enrolled from 2008-to 2013 were the old-timers and the rest of the participants from 2019-to 2020 were the new-timers that were observers. Four of the rural women were old-timers while the other 4 were new timers. It transpired that the participants enrolled at GNC at different times according to their needs.

Educational status

Educational attainment in South Africa, particularly in rural areas, is very low (Botha, 2010). Table 4.2 above revealed the educational status of each participant sampled for the study. Participants who had education status mean they had different perspectives that were most useful to develop other members. One of the participants had a matric and teacher's certificate. Two participants had matric and nursing diploma, the other three had matric and teacher's certificates or diplomas. Similarly, one of the participants had matric only. One participant did not finish the Intermediate Phase (grade 4- grade 7) and the other one did not reach the Senior Phase, which is grade 9. Correspondingly, none of them had a university degree. Their low educational status was not a hindrance to their learning, participants learned the educational activities with support from one another.

The participants had a variety of qualifications that provided different knowledge and skills at GNC. It perhaps suggested that those participants with educational qualifications had different perspectives since they had knowledge and skills on the phenomena under study. One participant had a teaching qualification and used her knowledge and skills to facilitate learning which led to the empowerment of other women. Also, some other qualified rural women developed other women, namely: chairing a monthly meeting and following the rules of the meeting. Two participants had nursing qualifications and were able to empower other women on suitable exercises for their different age groups. Also, the two participants engaged other women on healthy eating habits for them to avoid illnesses and become healthy. Four of them were housewives and the last one was a gardener. Most members had formal schooling, and some participants did not have formal schooling due to many challenges of the era.

Source of income

All rural women depended on stipends, government pensions, old age pensions and social grants, which were not enough for supporting their households, and had to devise coping strategies for their households. Four of the participants received the government children's social grant, and two received a government old pension, as their source of income. Two of the participants had a government pension, which was not enough for their household needs because of the numbers they were supporting in their households. Other participants encountered the same challenge. The rural women were expected to support their households even if women were not working. Hence, the GNC participants were working together as a group engaging, interacting, sharing their experiences, and supporting one another in their

challenges. It transpired those educational activities such as selling their craftwork in the GNC, money won from soccer and netball provided some financial relief to the participants.

Ethnic group

All eight participants were Africans and their home language was isiXhosa. The medium of instruction during learning was isiXhosa.

Residential area

All the participants came from the same local area known as Manzamnyama. The participants knew each other as they came from the same locality and were able to participate and support one another during learning. Below is the description of each participant with pseudo-names to maintain confidentiality.

4.2.2 Description of each research participant

Gabisile

Gabisile is a widow with one child and two grandchildren who founded the organization in 2008. Her husband died leaving her as the only one supporting her household with the government pension from her former teaching practice. She stayed at Manzamnyama location, which is almost 2km away from the centre. As a founder of GNC, she stated that “I saw a need for rural women to learn from one another through participating and sharing knowledge and skills as they find solutions to their lives”. Hence, came up with the idea of empowering other women in their life challenges through the GNC.

Gabisile is an active participant involved in other community projects such as the Masimanyane community project and the Vukuzenzele project equipping men and women, old and young with agricultural skills. At the Vukuzenzele community project, people (men and women) were planting mealies on a large scale of land as a community and selling the mealies thereafter. Masimanyane project encouraged people to plant all kinds of vegetables in their gardens for subsistence and commercial use. Gabisile was a research participant because of her role at GNC, a well-experienced person in empowering women, and the founder of GNC.

Mpondokazi

Mpondokazi is a single rural woman with two children and four grandchildren. She is fifty-eight years old surviving on her government pension since she was a nurse. She joined GNC

in 2013 and has learned a lot from the educational activities and the experiences of other rural women at GNC. As she stated, “I joined GNC because I needed emotional, physical, and financial support from other women”. Mpondokazi also noted that “my two grandchildren were stealing other people’s items and selling them since they were smoking drugs”. Moreover, Mpondokazi stated that all the above-mentioned cases were reported to her “I was forced, at times, to pay back people’s items, and I felt that I needed support from other women”. Hence, she decided to join GNC. Mpondokazi became a member of GNC in 2013, and she was an old-timer. Around 2015, she was elected the chairperson of GNC because of her active participation in the organisation. Mpondokazi noted that “due to illness, she did not wait to reach sixty-five years of pension employment. Instead, she resigned and decided to be part of the GNC.” Mpondokazi was chosen as one of the research participants because of her executive role at GNC.

Sango

Sango is a married woman of fifty -five years with five children and seven grandchildren. Sango was an old-timer who became part of the centre in 2010. Sango was a schoolteacher surviving on a government pension and the profit from the vegetables. I joined GNC because my husband was a mine worker long time ago and he is unable to support my family instead, he is an alcoholic”. Sango articulated as follows “I support my family with everything since there is no one working”. She is an old-timer since she understands the principles and learning that take place at the centre. She was chosen among the participants because of her facilitation role at GNC.

Xaba

Xaba is a widower and a housewife of fifty-six years. Xaba highlighted as follows “my husband died and did not have pensions since he was a security guard in a local shop”. Xaba became part of the centre in 2020 and is a new timer. She had one child and three grandchildren. Her only child died and her- in-laws took her estates like cows and sheep. The in-laws took all the estate and was told that she came to her household with nothing. “I decided to be part of the group to get physical, emotional, and mental support from other women”. She did her school education up to standard seven or grade nine. She survived with a government children’s social grant to support her grandchildren. Again, she noted that “I decided to be part of the GNC, because of the support I see from other women”. Her commitment as a new timer has allowed her to be one of the research participants.

Mhlana

Mhlana is a married woman of fifty-five years. She was a housewife with five children that were not working. Three of them had university qualifications, one of them was a university drop-out, the other one did not finish grade 12 and the last one was at a high school level doing grade 10. Mhlana had standard 4 which is equivalent to grade 6. She has been part of the centre since 2019 after she took early retirement as a domestic worker due to health-related issues. Mhlana decided to be part of the group when she saw that other women from GNC were coping with real-life challenges in their lives. Mhlana asserts “Since I joined the group, I no longer have the health issues and I do not visit the health centres as I used to”. Mhlana is a newcomer and will become an old-timer as she understands the principles of the GNC. Mhlana was one of the research participants since she was committed to the principles that take place at the centre.

Somdywili

Somdywili was a widow of sixty-six years of age. Her two children died and were left with her two grandchildren. Her husband was a schoolteacher and she survives on the pension of his husband. She informed me that the South African Revenue Services, through tax, took most of the pension money. In addition, she was earning the government old-age pension and the government social grant for her two grandchildren. Health issues troubled her and decided to be part of the GNC when she saw other rural old women’s health (news). Somdywili had a matric qualification. Due to the support old rural women showed one another, Somdywili is an old-timer who joined GNC in 2012. She was chosen as a research participant since she was an active member in organizational activities.

Solwandle

Solwandle is a married woman of fifty-eight years of age. Solwandle articulated as follows “I have three children and six grandchildren”. Solwandle’s husband is unemployed and physically abusive (this is news). Solwandle joined GNC because she needed support as well as strategies to deal with her household challenges. She survived on a government pension because she was a nursing pensioner. She needed financial support to meet her household needs since her husband was unemployed and had a casual job. Solwandle articulates as follows “Uyisela yonke imali ayifumana xa ecoce iiyadi” which relates as follows, her husband would drink the money she got from cleaning other people’s yards (news). Solwandle became part of GNC in 2019 and was still a new timer. Solwandle was a newcomer and will be an old-timer when she

understands the learning activities taking place at GNC. She decided to be part of the GNC since she has seen the support, which led to the success stories of old rural women in their lives, household, and community. She became one of the research participants since she is an active participant, eager to learn from other old women at GNC.

Thangana

Thangana was a single woman of sixty-one years. Thangana has two children and four grandchildren. Thangana had matric and was unemployed. She depended on her government's old pension. The social grant for the grandchildren was paid to the children's parents. She informed me that she is the breadwinner for the whole household since her children were not contributing anything from the social grant money (data analysis). She was a new-timer who became part of the centre in 2020. Thangana joined GNC because she needed support from other women. Thangana used to be part of the other group in town when she was staying with one of her children attending to her health issues (data analysis). Although she was a newcomer, she was chosen to be part of the research participants because of the experience she held which will add value to the research study.

4.3 The four main activities at GNC

The data collected using various forms was analysed. The following 4 activities arose, namely, worship, physical exercise, craftwork, and monthly meetings. These themes are diagrammatically presented.

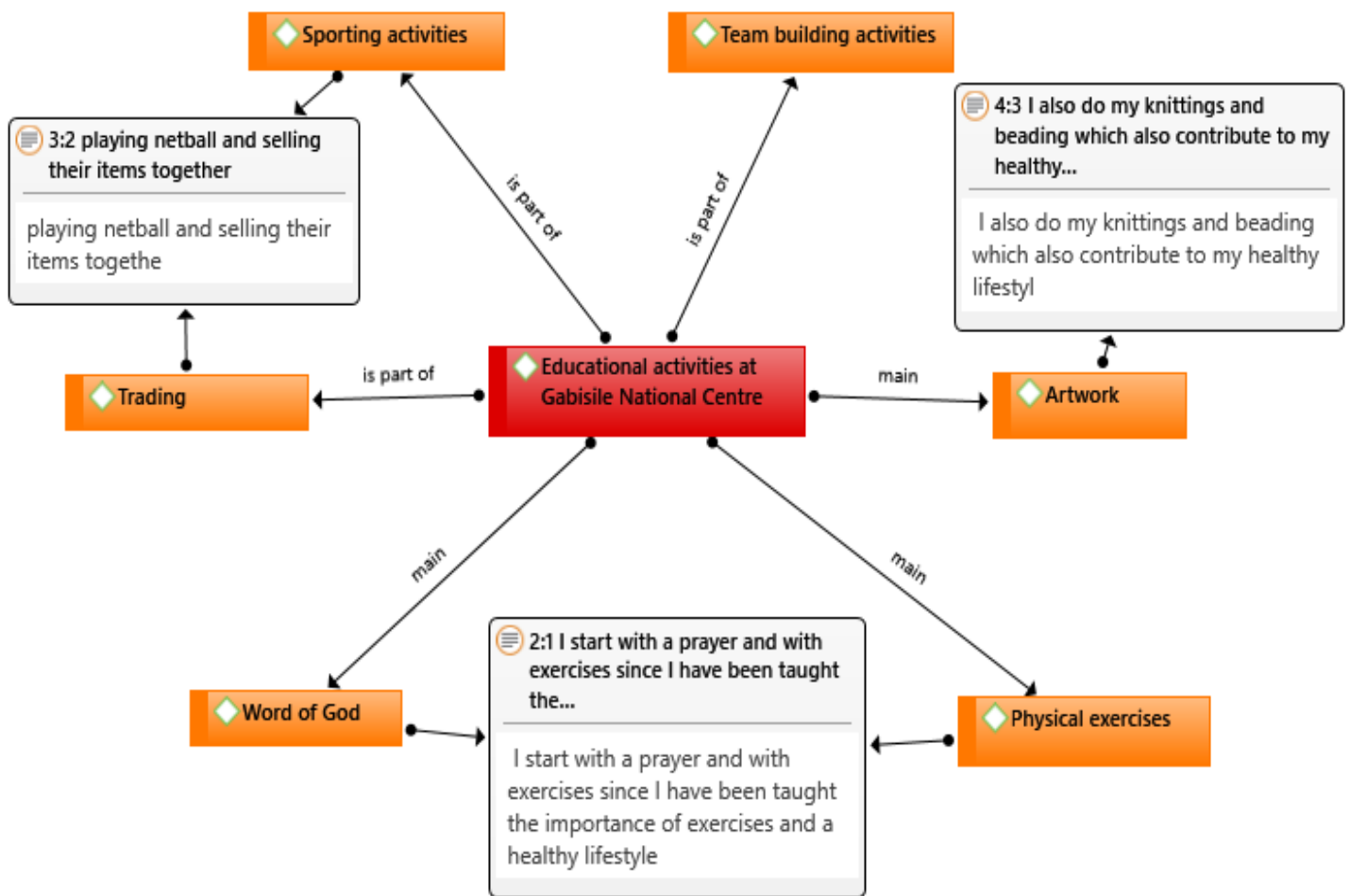


Figure 4.1 Educational activities at GNC

The above figure 4.1 shows the educational activities transpired from the findings. The figure also reveals the main themes and the sub themes reflected by participants' responses.

Motivation for rural women to learn educational activities came from various sources. There is scholarly evidence that suggests that adults were motivated to learn. According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012), adults are motivated to learn what is relevant to their real-life situations and what is useful to them. The effective learner's environment has been noted as a critical factor for the adult learner's motivation to learn (Knowles, 1984). The rural women at GNC were motivated to learn through educational activities because they (women) want to see the direct benefits of learning in their lives. The rural women learned the educational activities at GNC through adult education using non-formal learning. Merriam and Sharon (2007) argue that adult education allows the adult learner to engage in systematic and sustained self-educative activities to gain knowledge, skills, and strategies for personal fulfilment as a lifelong

learner. Rural women learned and engaged in non-formal education since it is organized flexible, problem and learner-oriented, and focuses on providing solutions to the needs of a particular group of people (Ahmed & Coombs, 1974). The following four themes at GNC emerged from the evidence of the participants.

4.3.1 To understand the educational activities learned at Gabisile national centre by rural women

4.3.1.1 Worship as a learning activity

Worship, as a form of learning, was one of the major themes in response to research question number one which sought to ask the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with challenging times? The evidence from the participants on both the semi-structured and FGD exposed that the participants were regular attendants to the group since they were faced with many daily challenges in their households like unemployment, alcohol, drug abuse, and poverty.

The facilitator led worship for the day, encouraged the participants, and shared her experiences and the word of God on healing while other participants listened attentively since they would be granted the opportunity to share Sango's verse.

One member noted:

“Attending, praying with other women, gave me hope and confidence that one day my son will be delivered from drug disease” (Xaba, new-timer).

Also, another participant, the old-timer from the FG interviews supported the views of other participants by saying:

“As gogos, we start with a prayer, sing, read the bible together, share our challenges and experiences, cry together and support one another (Gabisile, founder).

Sango (facilitator) read the story about Jesus healing people and calming the situations in Matthew 8:1-10. Suddenly, I noticed that one of the participants was crying heavily.

After some time, one of the participants noted saying:

“I am reminded of my situation at the hope that led me to high blood pressure and depression” (Xaba, new timer).

Thereafter, (Gabisile, founder), encouraged other women to support one another throughout their lifetime to change the situation in their lives and households. The worship lasted for about fifteen minutes when it was done by (Sango, the old-timer) and twenty minutes when it was done by Xaba (new timer).

4.3.1.2 Physical exercise

Physical exercise was another form of learning, major theme in response to research question number one, which sought to ask the educational activities, offered at GNC for rural women to cope with challenging times? Participants learned the physical exercises by interacting practically with one another from 9h00-10h00 (refer to Table 4.1). The results revealed that members learned physical exercise through the guidance of the facilitator, and they (women) were motivated to improve their health.

One of the participants, a facilitator noted by saying:

“As a facilitator, I teach other women the physical exercises relevant to their healthy lifestyle” (Sango, facilitator).

Also, another participant from the FG noted by stating that:

“When I joined the centre, I had my limping stick but now I no longer use the walking stick as you can see that I am happy and healthy, I always give thanks to those who came up with the idea of exercise” (Solwandle, new-timer).

The findings from the participants highlighted that the rural women engaged in the physical exercises to improve their healthy lifestyles and to change their lives and households. The evidence from the participants noted that the rural women participated in physical exercises with other household members.

4.3.1.2.1 Sporting exercise as a sub-learning activity

The sporting exercise was a form of learning, a sub-theme emanating from the main theme, the physical exercise. The sporting exercises were responding to the first research question which, is to ask the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with changing times? The evidence from the participants and documents noted that the rural women were playing netball and soccer on Wednesdays afternoon, which changed the women’s lives.

One of the participants in the semi-structured interviews, explained by stating that:

“As a facilitator, I guide the rural women to learn from one another using each other’s experiences which enable us to support one another in different ways like health improvement” (Sango, facilitator).

In addition, another participant from the FG interviews showed that the participation of rural women in sporting activities provided them with economic benefits that changed their lives, households, and communities:

“As women, we participate with other teams and win some money and trophies from local, provincial, and national netball competitions” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

The above evidence from the participants showed that the rural women all engaged in sports activities regardless of their age.

4.3.1.3 Craftwork as a learning activity

Craftwork was another major theme in response to research question number one, which sought to investigate the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with challenging times? Motivation for GNC members to participate in craftwork came from the evidence of the participants which noted that the rural women crafted items using their own hands guided by the facilitator.

One of the participants, the facilitator, noted by saying:

“I facilitate engage and participate with other women, become experts in crafting items that are relevant in their households and communities” (Sango, old-timer).

In addition, one of the participants, a new-timer in the semi-structured noted by stating that:

“Yes, the sharing of information and experiences with group members has given me the opportunity to learn the skills from other women which changed my life and household (Thangana, new-timer).

Also, one of the FG interview participants noted as follows:

“We as women at GNC are learning the crafting skill sand crafted items for our households and sold some items to the community at large even to stakeholders like CSU and NGOs” (Somdywili, old-timer).

4.3.1.3.1 Trading as part of learning activity

This section presents trading as a sub-theme coming from the answers of the GNC members in craftwork responding on the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with changing times in households and communities. The participants highlighted that they sold the crafted items during imbizo, heritage, and special days which led them to interact, and market their sales and the GNC activities.

“We interact, and communicate, recruit people through conversations and dialogue while selling our crafted items to the community at large” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

The evidence from the participants noted the rural women were trading their items to different stakeholders to change the financial status in their lives and households.

One of the participants, a new-timer noted by highlighting that:

“We are selling our items to the community, stakeholders’ profit that provides the second income for my household”. (Xaba, new-timer).

In addition, the participants confirmed that during the special days,

“We interact, and communicate, recruit people through conversations and dialogue while selling the items” (Solwandle, new-timer).

One of the participants, noted by saying:

“We sell our items to our community and to our stakeholders like CSU and NGOs from the prison which we normally do as a group and we then share the income with all of us” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

Consequently, the participants revealed that the bulk orders from CSU provided more funds to GNC and some funds that boosted rural women’s lives and households.

Also, another participant, during the FG interviews noted by saying:

“I supplement my pension with dividends from our knitting and beading project that we share among ourselves and that has relieved my financial stress” (Somdywili, old-timer).

The findings from the participants in the study noted that the rural women’s participation at GNC has provided them with the platform to change their lives, households and communities.

The founder, a participant in the study articulated as follows:

“I learned the financial knowledge and skills relevant to my economic and financial growth which assist me at GNC and even in my household” (Gabisile, founder).

Figure 4.6: The following items were created by the GNC members through artwork and for trading.



Figure 4.7: Items created by the GNC members through artwork for trading

4.3.1.4. The monthly meetings as a place of learning

The monthly meeting is one of the major themes emerged from the evidence of the participants in response to the first research question enquiring on the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with the changing times. This showed that the participants learned from a monthly meeting through observing, participating and imitating others.

One of the participants, a new-timers articulated as follows:

“I have learned to communicate my ideas freely, contribute to the issues that affect me with other members regardless the fact that I am a new member” (Thangana, new-timer).

Also, another participant, in the FG interviews articulated as follows:

“We learn through sharing our experiences, expressing our own ideas freely as we find solutions to our problems” (Somdywili, secretary).

The participants gave evidence freely in the individual semi structured interviews as well as FGD.

4.3.4.1 Team building as part of the place of learning

Team building was part of the sub-theme that emerged from the educational activities done at GNC. The evidence from the participants showed that the rural women learned through team-building as they engage and participate together in the educational activities at GNC.

Another participant from the FG interviews articulated as follows:

“Mmmmm, I lead the team building activities since I engage a lot with other women in different committees of the centre”

Also, one of the participants noted as follows:

“After realizing the need for psychosocial support, we then added team-building activities that encouraged the members to work together, opening up sharing and supporting each other emotionally, physically, and materially” (Gabisile, founder).

The findings from the study revealed that the team-building activity provided the GNC women with various skills and coping strategies that empowered one another in their lives, households, and communities.

Figure 3 below shows coping strategies learned at GNC.



Figure 4.8: Coping strategies learnt at GNC

4.4 To understand the educational activities learned at Gabisile national centre by rural women

4.4.1 To understand the learned and coping strategies at GNC

Schumaker and Deshler (1992) define a learning strategy as an individual’s way of organizing and using a particular set of skills to accomplish a particular task. Moreover, a coping strategy is a process of managing stress successfully by providing skills to overcome the stressors using the approaches to deal with hurtful situations (Thompson Murphy and Stradling, 1984). In addition, coping strategies are the behaviors and emotions that one uses to adjust the changes that occur in their lives (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The rural women who attended GNC minimize stress women faced in their daily lives, households, and communities. Following activities: namely worship, physical exercises, craftwork, and monthly meetings were used by the GNC women to cope with their daily challenges in households and communities. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) posit that coping strategies are the behaviours, thoughts, and emotions that one uses to adjust to the changes that occur in their lives. The rural women attended GNC to minimize stress and manage the challenges they experienced and encountered in their daily

lives, households, and communities. The following educational activities were learned by the rural women to deal with their everyday situations in households. These were: worship, physical exercises, craftwork and monthly meeting.

4.4.2. Worship as a learning strategy

Worship as a learning strategy was one of the major themes in response to research question, which sought to ask the strategies do rural women learn as they participate in the GNC educational activities? Participants in this study revealed that they (women) learned the strategies through worship to reduce the stress caused by the challenges in their lives and households.

One of the participants highlighted by noting that:

“I joined GNC, I needed support from depression caused by my two grandchildren who are stealing people’s things, sell them for smoking drugs and at times had to repay back” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

Also, the evidence from the participants revealed that encouragement and support they (women) gained from one another were the motivating factors for learning strategies.

One of the participants in the FG interviews stated that:

“During prayer time, we read the encouraging verses, cry and pray together to the Almighty as we gain support, hope and healing from one another”. (Thangana, new-timer).

One of the participants, an old-timer noted by saying:

“I develop courage as Xaba was sharing and reflecting on the story of Job’s story of losing everything and God brought again everything” (Mpondokazi, old-timer).

The evidence from the participants highlighted that the rural women learned the coping strategy from other women’s experiences and from the bible.

4.4.3. Physical exercise as a coping strategy

Physical exercises were one of the major strategies that emerged from the themes in response to the research question which sought to ask the strategies learned by rural women as they participate in the GNC educational activities?

The participants in the study stated that women were engaging in physical exercises to improve their health.

A participant from the semi-structured interviews noted by saying:

“Oh no, I used to have asthma but now I no longer have that challenge, ever since I joined GNC, as started doing the physical exercises” (Somdywili, old-timer).

Also, a participant in the FG group interviews noted by stating that:

“Physical exercise has become a lifestyle after joining GNC, I used to have persistent headaches, always angry with people, let alone always depressed and alone.” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

Another participant noted by saying:

“I joined a healthy buddy group, this has assisted me to exercise regularly and kept me away from the doctor” (Thangana, new-timer).

The evidence from the findings revealed that physical exercises were one of the coping strategies the rural women participated on to improve their lives and households.

4.4.4. Craftwork as a learning strategy

Craftwork has been another form of learning the strategies that came as a major theme in response to research question number three, which sought to ask about the strategies learned by rural women as they participate in the GNC educational activities. The findings from the participants highlighted that the collaborative interaction with one another using their own hands empowered the rural women with different skills relevant to their need.

The founder during the FG interviews contributed by saying:

“Our involvement and interaction with other women provide us with the opportunity to create items that empower us and our households” (Gabisile, founder).

Consequently, another participants during the FG interview noted by saying:

“We work together, learn, show skills and talents, support one another as we create items that are relevant for our lives, households the community” (Somdywili, old-timer).

Additionally, the results from the members showed that the rural DSD provided a workshop on financial skills that enhanced them to control budgets instead save for their households and reduce unnecessary expenditures.

One of the participants during the FG interviews noted by saying:

“GNC has developed us with skills to boost us financially.” (Solwandle, new-timer).

The data presented above show that rural women from GNC who participated in the study learned from the experiences of other women which brought solution to their need in their lives, household and communities.

4.4.5 Monthly meetings as a learning strategy

The monthly meeting was identified as a learning strategy that emerged as another theme in response to study question number three on the strategies learned by rural women as they participate in the GNC educational activities. The findings from the study noted that participants learned the strategies through participating informally and observing other women participating in the educational activities as they (women) develop the observable strategies to one another.

One of the participants stated that:

“The monthly meeting taught me how to communicate and raise your ideas with respect which are my strategies in my household” (Solwandle, new-timer).

The participants noted that they learned the coping strategies through the monthly meeting since everyone participated in the monthly meetings learned knowledge, skills relevant even to their households.

Another participant noted this by saying:

“Everyone is given time to share, ask questions, bring experiences and be part of decision making” (Solwandle, new-timer).

Lastly, the data presented above showed that rural women from GNC who participated in this study learned and participated with one another as rural women developed the strategies to address their challenges in households and communities.

4.5 To understand the ways of learning at GNC

The discussion section of this chapter seeks to discuss and present the ways of learning. This section presents the nature of learning that took place at GNC. The presentation guided different learning theories as presented in Chapter 2, this includes constructive learning, participatory learning, customized lessons, experiential learning, observation, and interactive learning. In this section, I will argue how these theories seem to be at play when GNC members participate using the themes of the study.

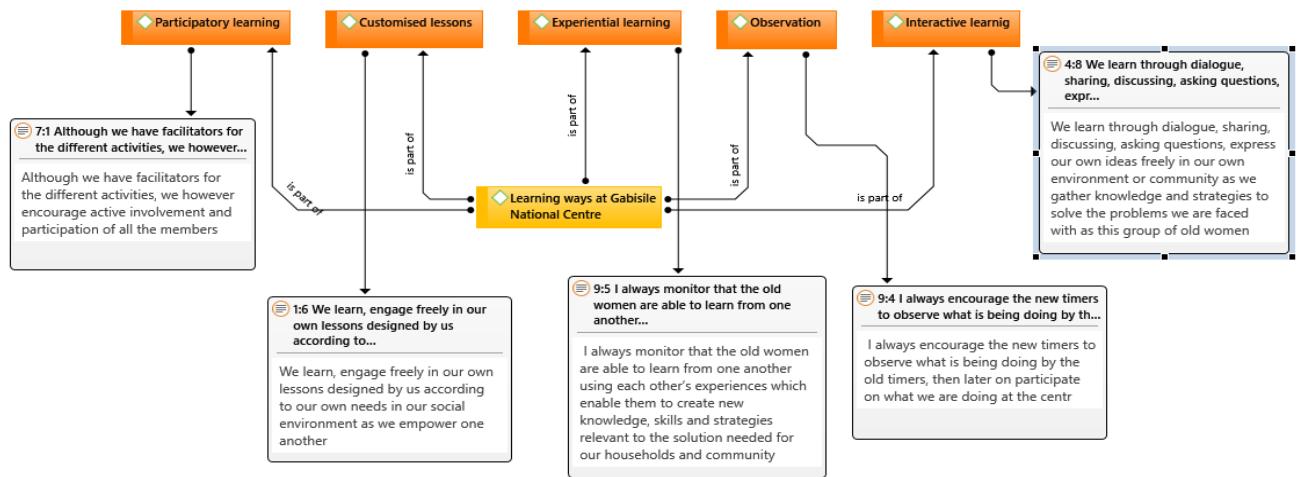


Figure 4.10 The diagram below summarises the nature of learning at GNC

4.5.1. Worship as a way of learning

Worship as a way of learning was one of the major themes rural women used to empower one another at GNC? The responses from the participants noted that the rural women learned worship non-formally using a participatory approach. Cox (2013) asserts that non-formal “learning that involves programs that are not classroom-based but has learning objectives which are relevant to the learners and to what the program wants to achieve usually is contextualized and uses participatory approach” (p. 22). The responses from participants showed that rural women were influenced to learn since they were actively involved and participating in their learning.

One of the participants, the founder noted by stating that:

“We encourage active involvement and participation of all members in whatever way worship but being guided by the facilitator for the day” (Gabisile, founder).

The evidence from the participants noted that the rural women were motivated to learn at GNC using the dialogical approach, sharing experiences, question and answer methods, and sharing experience. Also, the participants highlighted that all rural women were given the opportunity to participate either by sharing the verse they listened to, pray or sing during worship.

In conclusion, the findings from the participants showed that all women were actively participating during learning which provided rural women with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their households and communities.

4.5.2. Physical exercises as a way of learning

Physical exercises are another learning way that emerged from the participants’ response to research question number two on learning ways used by rural women during their learning at GNC. The findings from the participants noted that they were motivated to learn the physical exercises informally on the content designed by themselves that will change their health needs.

The chairperson, in the FG interviews noted by stating:

“We encourage women to bring topics of interest as part of our needs that benefit all of us (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

It transpired from the evidence of the participants that they (women) were influenced by the collaborating, engaging together in physical exercises as a group guided by the facilitator, who is enrolled in one of the health centres in town using her own experiences.

One of the participants, the new-timer noted by saying:

“I was motivated by the women doing the walks, physical exercises, playing sport together with or without the facilitator and improving in their health as well” (Xaba, new-timer).

Therefore, the results of the study highlighted that the participants learned the areas of content that brought change to their healthy needs. In conclusion, the data in this study exposed that the participants were central and practical in their learning, which enabled them to create knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their health needs in their lives and households.

4.5.3. Craftwork as a way of learning

Craftwork as a learning way was one of the major themes in response to the research question which sought to investigate the learning ways rural women learn at GNC. The evidence from the participants revealed that they (women) were learning non-formally from Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday every week crafting items using their own hands (refer to figure 4.1). Participants in the study noted that they were learning by observing, imitating sharing previous experiences, and participating with other women.

One of the participants noted by saying:

“I learned different skills through observing, asking questions imitating and participating with other rural women” (Solwandle, new-timer).

Also, from the participant’s point of view, confirmed that all rural women were actively and collaboratively participating when learning among one another through crafting.

Mpondokazi (chairperson) noted that:

“As rural women we knit blankets, hats, scarfs as we learn, participate with one another in craftwork activities”.

A member from the FG highlighted by saying;

“Although we have facilitators for the different activities, we, however, encourage the active involvement and participation and sharing skills and experiences by all members” (Gabisile, founder).

In conclusion, the data from the study noted that women learned by doing with one another crafting items relevant to the needs in their lives, households and communities.

4.5.4 Monthly meetings as a way of learning

Monthly meetings were another way of learning in answering research question number two which seeks to ask about the ways of learning rural women learn at GNC. The evidence from various sources like the participants’ responses and the documents analysed by the researcher confirmed that the rural women were attending the monthly meetings once a month using the informal way of learning. Rogers (1997) highlights that informal learning happens from daily life activities through observation, social interaction, and problem-solving with others.

One of the participants in the semi-structured interviews articulated by saying:

“I observe, imitate, and participate through conversations, discussions, dialogue, asking questions during learning” (Thangana, new-timer).

The views from participants also noted the behaviour shown by rural women like collective interaction and respecting one during conversations, dialogues and decision-making.

Another participant, in the FG interviews noted by saying:

“As women, we engage, interact through communications by voicing our ideas freely and respectfully as we learn together using our own experiences in finding solutions to our problems (Sango, old-timer).

In conclusion, evidence of research study exposed by the participants revealed that ways of learning at GNC were one of the ways the GNC women learned the new knowledge, skills and coping strategies to enhance their lives, households and communities.

4.6 Discussion of findings

4.6.1 To understand the educational activities learned at Gabisile national centre by rural women

4.6.1.1 Worship as a learning activity

The participants noted that worship, is a major form of learning offered at GNC for rural women to cope with challenging times. Participants revealed that the rural women learned through worship from Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday every week. The participants were the regular attendants to the group since they were learning, participating on learning that would bring solution to their need. The rural women were faced with many daily challenges in their households like absence of husbands to take their responsibilities through unemployment, alcohol, drug abuse, and poverty. The participants joined GNC to learn new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies through worship which led to the participants’ being able to find solutions to their challenges and being healed emotionally.

The facilitator led the worship for the day, encouraged the participants, and shared her experiences and the word of God on healing while other participants listened attentively since they would be granted the opportunity to share Sango’s verse (facilitator) later on relating to their challenges. During worship, learning took place, the rural women were constructing knowledge, skills, and coping strategies to change their lives, household and communities.

Observation at GNC took place over a 5-day period, I went to observe the extent in which GNC operates, and based on the timetable with educational activities, I obtained during the document analysis (Refer to figure, 4.1 below with the timetable). My observation was on one of the days when Sango was facilitating the prayer session. Sango (facilitator) read the story about Jesus healing people and calming the situations in Matthew 8:1-10.

Suddenly, I noticed that one of the participants was crying heavily. The other rural women supported and comforted her using the above mentioned verse. After some time the woman began to share highlighting on how the sharing triggered her emotions, felt comforted and later healed. This learning emanated from activities like storytelling where women survivors used the bible, prayer, and worship as sources of hope and knowledge. Through interaction and collaboration with one another, the rural women were able to learn and change their real-life situations in their households and communities. That showed that learning took place among the rural women. Also, Knowles (1980) concurs with what happened during worship session by noting that adult learners base their present learning on their prior knowledge and experience.

In this study, I argue that there is a correlation between learning and worship as a learning activity. Baelz, Griffin, Bowen, and Koenig (2004) suggest that more frequent worship sessions or services reduce stress and depression symptoms among the participants. The findings of the study noted that worship helped the rural women to develop emotional healing, hope, and good health. It can be further argued that worship provided spiritual growth, which relieved stress to the GNC women and enabled them to empower one another during the challenging times. In addition, it became clear that through worship, the participants were able to cope with their challenges which led them to save money for not attending the sessions from the doctors and psychologists.

In extending, Knowles's (1980) narratives with the participants' views that emerged from the findings, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the CoP is a social learning activity that occurs from the interaction and participation of community members in their daily activities to meet a particular need in an organization or society and having people to turn to when there is a challenge. The rural women gathered at GNC, to learn the educational activities that brought change in their lives and households.

Similarly, the rural women learned together as a group, which promoted a sense of belonging and warmth, which made them closer to one another (Wenger, 1998). This belongingness to

the centre and other women created the space to share their challenges together and have some women to turn to them when experiencing challenges.

In conclusion, the GNC has provided rural women with a platform for learning and worship. This platform became a learning environment where women gained knowledge, obtained skills, and coping strategies that enabled them (women) to find solutions to deal with the challenges in their lives, households, and communities.



Figure 4.2-The above photograph showed the participants engaging in worship at GNC.

4.6.1.2 Physical exercise

Physical exercise was another form of the educational activities, offered at GNC for rural women to meet their need. Participants learned the physical exercises by interacting practically with one another from 9h00-10h00 (refer to Table 4.1) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for physical exercises. The physical exercises were practically done through the guidance of the facilitator. Thereafter, all participants engaged, participated in the physical exercises regardless of their age. The participants were jogging, playing sports, stretching their muscles, and tai chi exercises (standing with one leg) and walking together as a way of improving their health and with the support from other women in the group. Correspondingly, the participants noted that physical exercise was a daily educational activity collectively participated by all women to improve physical fitness, overall improvement of their health, and wellness.

My observation was in one of the 5 days to observe how rural women were learning the physical exercises based on the timetable, I observed during document analysis (refer to the time-table, figure 4.1). From my observation, the group of GNC women were learning through observation, imitation (new-timers), then interacting, and engaging collectively as a group of rural women to achieve their needs that would change their lives and households. Also, during my observation, I noticed that some old-timers participated in simple tasks due to their age, yet their lives improved as well.. Moreover, the analysis of GNC documents confirmed the evidence that physical exercises were one of the educational activities that promoted and improved the health of rural women.

Tawiah and Ngmenkpieo (2018) present the importance of learning through participation with other women which showed positive results in the social challenges when interacting and collectively participating in organizational activities. The above presentation by Tawiah and Ngmenkpieo (2018) reveal that knowledge also created through the transformation of experience resulted in new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies to empower rural women. Through interaction and collaboration, the rural women were able to learn and improve their real-life situations in their households and communities.

The experience from the above authors, as well as the new evidence that emerged from the participants using the CoP by Lave and Wenger (1991) expose that the rural woman were communicating knowledge, events, and skills with group members to promote learning among one another. This study has found that rural women were no longer frequent visitors to the doctors since they were practical on the physical exercises. The research findings also confirmed that rural women were making meaning through knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that empowered them and brought change to their lives and households. Through the physical exercises, the rural women participating at GNC saved lot of finances that were beneficial to their lives and households.

In this study, I argue that the rural women's attendance, engagement, and participation in the physical exercises improved the rural women's healthy lifestyle, by reducing the stressors and depression they (rural women) suffered from their households and communities.

Consequently, the narrative report from the documents revealed that the rural women's lives improved their health and lives through engaging, participating, and supporting one another through physical exercises. The documents also revealed the monies won by the rural women also changed their lives and households

Finally, one can conclude by noting that physical exercise has provided knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that changed their (women) lives, and households and were later transferred to their households and communities.



Figure 4.3-The above photograph showed the participants standing on their own without the walking sticks.

4.6.1.2.1 Sporting exercise as a sub-learning activity

The sporting exercises were responding to the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with their health. It became evident from the participants and documents that the rural women were playing netball and soccer on Wednesday afternoon, which changed their lives in many ways such as their health and finances. The participants noted that they all engaged in sports activities and acquired knowledge, skills and coping strategies from one another that improved blood circulation and changed their health. The participation of rural women in sporting activities suggested that the rural women neither were no longer frequent visitors to the doctors, instead, they were saving some finances that improved their lives, households and communities.

Moreover, Malema and Naidoo (2017) present the benefits of women's participation collaboratively in activities effective in women's lives, which restored their decency, and

emotional experience, and help them to be part of the community. The evidence from Malema and Naidoo (2017) explain that the rural women's collaborative participation restored their emotions and develop confidence as dignified human beings in their environment. Additionally, the evidence from the participants, literature, and the CoP confirmed by Preece (2014) that members had the same interest to which other members were loyal, participated together in all activities, and supported one another by sharing knowledge, skills, strategies, and building each other's understanding within a community. In conclusion, it became clear that the continuous interaction and engagement of rural women with one another has provided them with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their economic and health needs that brought change and transformation to their lives, households, and communities.

Thus, it can be concluded that learning took place among rural women since it provided the activities that changed their lives, households, and communities. Lastly, the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies were transferred to households and communities.

Figure 4.4 below showed the rural women acquiring knowledge, skills and coping strategies from one another through playing soccer which later improved their health and their households' lives.



Figure 4.4 above shows some of the GNC members in the soccer field.

4.6.1.3 Craftwork as a learning activity

Craftwork was another major theme in response to the educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with challenging times. The participants learned crafted items using their own hands under the guidance of the facilitator and the old timers since they are knowledgeable on the educational activities of GNC. In addition, the participants in the study acquired knowledge and skills through observing, participating, engaging with other women which led to growth and skills development.

In my observation at GNC on one of the five days, I observed the rural women participants collectively crafting the items, new-timers observing, and performing simple tasks. The old-timers participated and developed the new-timers including other women on crafting items that led to them (women) acquiring new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to change their lives and households.

Dlamini, (2013) highlights that the students' ideas, knowledge, and experiences are considered while providing new knowledge that empowers and better their lives. Dlamini (2013) presents the reasons for the participants learn the content designed by themselves. The study found that when participants had the opportunity to learn their content, they were able to create new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that changed their lives and households. On the same note, Dlamini's (2013) narrative and the evidence from the findings, concurred with Preece (2014) that in any CoP, members must have the same interest to which other members are loyal, must participate together in all activities, and support one another by sharing knowledge and building each other's understanding within the community.

The rural women from GNC who participants in this study learned from the experiences of other women. This learning emanated from craftwork activities like knitting and beading where women show their creativity and talents that were relevant to change their lives and households. Through interaction and collaboration, the rural women were able to acquire knowledge and skills that changed their real-life challenges in their households and communities.

In conclusion, I argue that GNC has motivated the rural women to craft items, participate in the beaded and knitted items (refer to figures 6 and 7) provided them (women) with creative development and skills. WHO (2022) asserts that craftwork has provided self-development using creativity to build self-esteem and confidence, which improved the lives of adult learners. It can be further argued that the rural women got profits which were divided themselves. In addition, the rural women were empowered with survival skills relevant to their needs in

households and communities. In conclusion, all rural women's lives, households, and communities were changed by the new knowledge, skills and coping strategies women acquired during learning at GNC. Lastly, learning took place, and the knowledge, and skills were transferred to their (women's) households and communities.



Figure 4.5: below showed the rural women crafting items at GNC.

4.6.1.3.1 Trading as part of learning activity

This section presents trading as a sub-theme as evidenced by the GNC members. The participants were participating in craftwork responding on educational activities offered at GNC for rural women to cope with changing times in households and communities. The participants highlighted that they sold the crafted items during imbizo, heritage, and special days which led them to interact, and market their sales and the GNC activities.

The documents analyzed by the researcher revealed that the GNC women also learned through workshops on marketing and financial management organized by DSD (service provider). Moreover, the documents showed that GNC women were economically developed with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to the centre, and their households.

Consequently, the participants revealed that the bulk orders from CSU provided more funds to GNC which boosted rural women's lives and households.

This study presents a similar view from the evidence of Malema and Naidoo (2017) claiming that knowledge is created by local communities in response to the particular physiological, socioeconomic, cultural, and political challenges they encounter. The writer's interpretations, suggestion that emerged from the study using the CoP, by Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the CoP is a social learning activity that occurs from the interaction and participation of community members in their daily activities to meet a particular need in an organization or society. The participants' collective interaction and engagement with other women improved their lives in their households and communities.

In this study, I argue that there is a relationship between learning and the profits generated collaboratively from the craftwork, which were divided among the participants and changed their households and communities. Also, the needy people in the community benefitted from the donations of GNC, since some rural women donated their dividends to them (needy households) in the community. In conclusion, the study found that GNC played a big role as an economic entity that contributed to the development of rural women who liberated themselves financially. Lastly, learning took place among the rural women, and women were empowered with knowledge and skills that the GNC members transferred to the households and communities.



Figure 4.6: The following items were created by the GNC members through artwork and for trading.



Figure 4.7: Items created by the GNC members through artwork for trading

4.3.1.4 The monthly meetings as a place of learning

The monthly meetings were also another theme that emerged from the evidence of the participants. The rural women attended the monthly meetings at GNC for rural women to cope with the changing times. LeBlanc and Nosik, (2019) state that a monthly meeting is the coming together of two or more people, gathering to discuss specific topics to achieve a common goal through verbal interaction such as sharing information, resolving problems, and making decisions. Consequently, the participants learned from a monthly meeting through observing and imitating others. Also, the participants showed that they (rural women) all had the opportunity to communicate, voice out their ideas freely and respectfully in their own environment without fearing anyone.

Furthermore, the documents analysed showed that Somdywili (secretary) of the meeting, gave the programme to rural women three days before the meeting to avoid unnecessary delays and to ensure that they have an idea of the meeting in order to prepare themselves for the meeting. The rural women were developed with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to their lives, households, and communities.

The above discussion reveals that people attend meetings to develop themselves and make decisions that bring solutions to their challenges in their households. Also, Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that engaging and participating together “provides a way to speak about crucial relations between new-comers and old-timers, about their activities, identities, artifacts, knowledge, and practice” (p. 29). This allows the newcomers to learn from the old, experienced members (old-timers) the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that changed their lives, households, and communities.

The results of the study showed that the knowledge and skills acquired by GNC women during the monthly meetings were relevant to the participants to chair and conduct different meetings in the community. In conclusion, the study found that the GNC women were developed during monthly meetings with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to deal with their real-life challenges and be able to make decisions at GNC, in their households, and in communities.

It became clear that learning took place from the monthly meetings since rural women acquired knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that changed them for their households and communities. Lastly, the rural women transferred knowledge, skills, and coping strategies to households and communities.

The findings suggested that the participants learned through the monthly meeting the knowledge, skills and strategies needed for their growth and development.

Table 4.3 below shows the agenda for the GNC meeting from the documents in the centre that were analysed by the researcher.

Table 4.3: Agenda for the GNC meeting

GNC meeting to be held on Thursday, 25 November 2021 at 11h00, held At GNC Site

Chairperson: Ms Mpondokazi		
Secretary in attendance: Ms Somdywili		
Item	Title	Pages
1.	Introduction	

A.	Opening, welcome and personalia	Ms Mpondokazi (chairperson)
B.	Constitution of the meeting Roll call of members in attendance Welcoming of new members Notices for leave of absence	Ms Mpondokazi
C.	Emergencies to be included in the agenda	
D.	Confirmation of the agenda NOTE: Once the agenda has been confirmed, no other items may be added and the order of items must be strictly adhered to.	Anyone who was present in the previous meeting
E.	Minutes of the previous meeting	Ms Somdywili
F. m	Discussion of subsidy report from DSD	All members
G.	Update on development and financial status at GNC	Ms Sango
H.	Report from coordinators of committees (Recruitment, Social& Welfare, Activities)	All coordinator
I.	Duties of sub-committees	All coordinators
J.	Closure and date for the next meeting	Gabisile (founder)

4.3.4.1 Team building as part of the place of learning

Team building was part of the sub-theme that emerged from the educational activities done at GNC. The participants showed learned team-building together to develop and support one another as they engage and participate in the educational activities at GNC.

Hlela (2017) presents the reasons that promoted learning among adult people like voluntary participation, collective, and problem-based learning which provided the opportunity for adult learners to engage and empower one another. The researched study brought a new dimension

of learning that team building reduced stress and depression in rural women since they acquired knowledge, skills, and coping strategies to deal with their challenges in households and communities. Hlela's (2017) narrative on adult learning, the evidence that emerged from the study, using the CoP theoretical framework by Preece (2014) highlights that the CoP allows members to participate together in all activities, support one another by sharing knowledge and building one another's understanding within the community.

The study found that the GNC members learned with one another through participating in team-building activities, which provided the GNC women with lifelong knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their daily life challenges in households and communities. It became clear that the GNC women were provided with the opportunity to learn and build one another in their respective committees or groups. In addition, the study found that the team-building activity provided the GNC women with various skills and coping strategies that empowered one another in their lives, households, and communities.

Figure 3 below shows coping strategies learned at GNC.

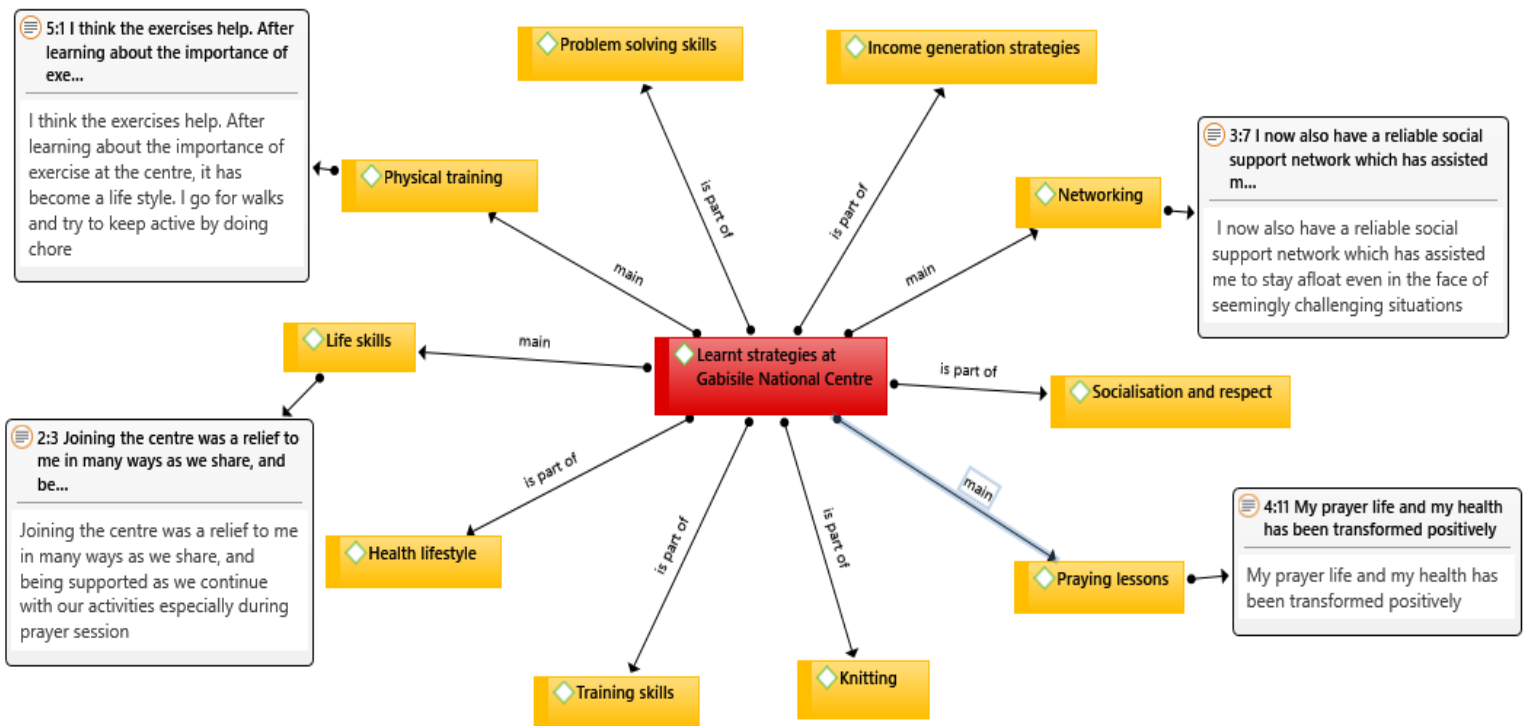


Figure 4.8: Coping strategies learnt at GNC

4.4 Learned and coping strategies at GNC

Schumaker and Deshler (1992) define a learning strategy as an individual's way of organizing and using a particular set of skills to accomplish a particular task. Moreover, a coping strategy is a process of managing stress successfully by providing skills to overcome the stressors using the approaches to deal with hurtful situations (Thompson Murphy and Stradling, 1984). In addition, coping strategies are the behaviors and emotions that one uses to adjust the changes that occur in their lives (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The rural women who attended GNC minimize stress women faced in their daily lives, households, and communities. Following activities: namely worship, physical exercises, craftwork, and monthly meetings were used by the GNC women to cope with their daily challenges in households and communities. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) posit that coping strategies are the behaviours, thoughts, and emotions that one uses to adjust to the changes that occur in their lives. The rural women attended GNC to minimize stress and manage the challenges they experienced and encountered in their daily lives, households, and communities. The following educational activities were learned by the rural women to deal with their everyday situations in households. These were: worship, physical exercises, craftwork and monthly meeting.

4.4.1. Worship as a learning strategy

The study revealed that worship is the first learning strategy done by participants before they engage themselves in the learning activities of the centre. The rural women learned the strategies through worship to reduce the stress caused by the challenges in their lives and households, which could result to depression and eventually death.

During my observation at GNC which took place over a 5-day period, I went to observe the extent to which GNC women operate learning the strategies using the educational activities, based on the timetable I obtained during the document analysis (Refer to figure, 4.1 with the time-table). My observation was on one of the days when Xaba (a new-timer) facilitated the

worship. The participants were encouraged to be patient with their situations and supported through storytelling (Job's story in the bible) and sharing their (women's) own experiences

The participants learned unseen strategies like patience, and emotional healing through worship and were benefited by their households and communities.

The study found that worship provided hope, patience, and healing of GNC women through the support they (women) get from other women. The participants learned through the interaction and engagement with other women which provided them with strategies that enabled them to cope with their real-life situations in their households and communities. Also, the study found that the participants overcame their situations by listening to other women's experiences which became coping strategies for rural women in households and communities. Also, the narrative evidence from Ei Senberg, and Legedza (2014) also note that worship is a coping mechanism to address the health concerns of individuals with physical and mental health and they develop hope within themselves. From my observation, on what I saw and heard from the rural women I concluded that the participants learned the coping strategy from other women's experiences and from the bible.

In conclusion, the GNC has provided rural women with a platform for learning and worship. This platform became a learning environment where rural women gained knowledge, obtained skills, and coping strategies that enabled them (women) to find solutions to deal with the challenges in their lives, households, and communities.

4.4.2. Physical exercise as a coping strategy

The rural women engaged in physical exercises to develop strategies to improve their health. The GNC members noted that tension, anger, anxiety caused by daily challenges were dealt with accordingly during the physical exercises. Also, Tusso and Perm (2015) present the reasons for people to participate in physical exercises such as preventing diseases, creating a healthy environment by increasing the percentage of people that are physically active, and improving one's quality of health. The conclusion from the above authors, evidence that emerged from the study, using the CoP by Lave and Wenger (1991) suggests that learning deepens the process of participation, which draws members together to provide benefits for the members to complement and develop one another's expertise in the organization.

The rural women engaged in physical exercises as a group to improve their lives and saved their money as well. Consequently, the narrative report from the documents analysed by the researcher revealed that the rural women's lives improved their health and lives through engaging, participating, and supporting one another through physical exercises. In addition, the participants showed that rural women were interacting with one another women in the organizational activities which provided them with coping strategies relevant to their lives and households.

In this study, I will argue by noting that the rural women were self-motivated to engage in physical exercises since their health improved in many ways like the development of muscles and blood circulation. The rural women were no longer using walking or supporting sticks, nor were depressed and frequently visiting the doctors, instead, they saved their finances that improved their lives and households. In addition, the study found that the rural women acquired both physical and emotional healing through encouraging and supporting one another during physical exercises which transformed their lives and households. Finally, it can be concluded that learning took place at GNC and the coping strategies were transferred to households and communities.

4.4.3. Craftwork as a learning strategy

Craftwork has been another form of learning at GNC. The participants collaborated, interacted with one another using their own hands in crafting items that were relevant to their need in households and communities. The rural women learned together and created strategies that were useful for their daily living.

Malema (2017) highlights the reasons for art and craftwork improve well-being, enhanced sense of self, and economic gains. According to Malema's (2017) views, with the participant's views together with CoP, the process of disseminating knowledge and encounters provides rural women with the opportunity to learn and develop one another. Through craftwork and selling items, the participants developed skills and coping strategies relevant to change their lives, households, and communities. Through interaction and collaboration, these women were able to learn and change their real-life situations in their households and communities.

The study found that collaborative interaction, participation of rural women in producing hand-crafted items has developed self-confidence which led them to become talented and entrepreneurs. In addition, the study found that the rural women's learning at GNC has

provided the women with the opportunity to learn and develop the strategies relevant to find solutions to the daily life challenges in households and communities. All that was learned by rural women as coping strategies were transferred to their households and communities.

4.4.4. Monthly meetings as a learning strategy

The monthly meeting was identified as another learning strategy that rural women learned as they participate in the GNC educational activities. The participants learned the strategies through participating informally and observing other women participating in the educational activities as they (women) develop the observable strategies to one another. The participants learned the coping strategies through the regular attending a monthly meeting. During the monthly members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions by raising a hand, showing respect to others and make decisions. In addition, Participants in a monthly meeting observed were communicating freely their ideas without any intimidation and their ideas were respected. All members were encouraged to take decisions that were relevant to the centre and households. All the knowledge, skills and behaviours were imparted to each other and were relevant even to their households and communities.

Also, my observation in one of the 5 days to observe how rural women were learning the educational activities to acquire strategies relevant to change their lives based on the time-table, I observed during document analysis (refer to the time-table, figure 4.1). From my observation, the group of GNC women were learning through interaction, engaging collectively as a group of rural women to achieve a strategy in their lives. Also, during my observation, I noticed that the new-timers participated in simple tasks instructed by the old-timers or facilitators. Moreover, the analysis of GNC documents by the researcher suggested that women's participation in the monthly meeting provided the GNC women with teamwork, and problem-solving skills needed in their everyday lives, households, and communities.

The evidence from the participants corresponds with Lave and Wenger's (1999) which states that participation in a CoP is not just attending and involved but being active in the practices of social communities with other members. This shows that the participants become involved in the learning through observation first, then move from LPP and become full participants or old-timers. The data presented above showed that rural women from GNC who participants in this study learned and participated with one another as women gained the strategies relevant to cope with their lives in households and communities.

In this study, I conclude by noting that the monthly meetings equipped rural women with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies to deal with their everyday challenges in their households and communities. Consequently, the rural women used the skills and coping strategies when addressing similar life issues in their households and communities.

The rural women also applied their knowledge, skills, and strategies to their households and during imbizo and other social meetings in the communities. Consequently, the study found that rural women’s lives were transformed and they were able to address their daily needs in their households and communities. Lastly, rural women transferred the coping strategies to their households and communities.

4.5 The ways of learning at GNC

The discussion section of this chapter seeks to discuss and present the ways of learning. This section presents the nature of learning that took place at GNC. The presentation guided different learning theories as presented in Chapter 2, this includes constructive learning, participatory learning, customized lessons, experiential learning, observation, and interactive learning. In this section, I will argue how these theories seem to be at play when GNC members participate using the themes of the study.

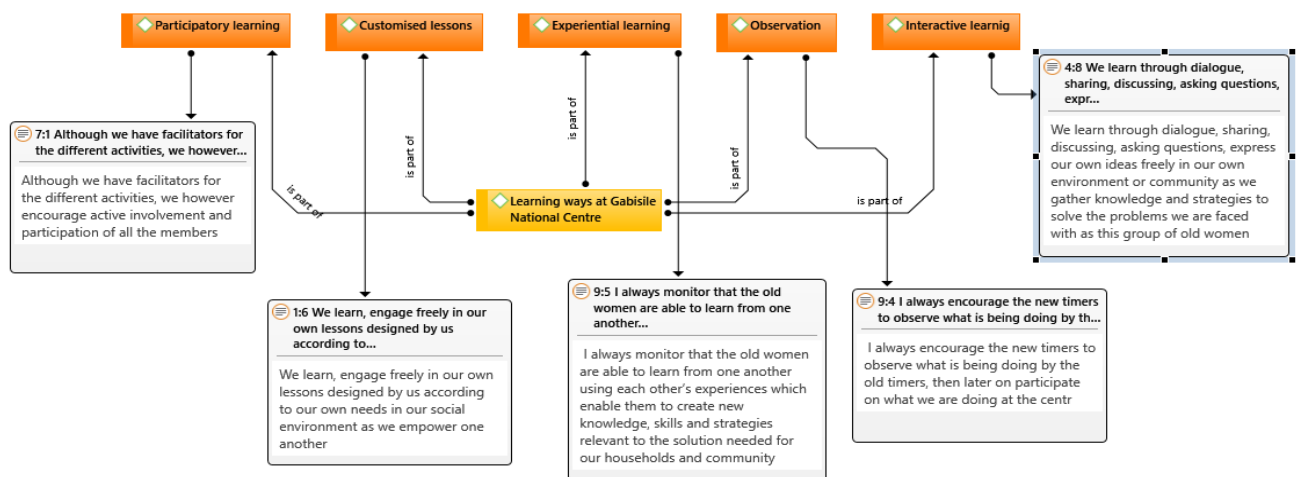


Figure 4.10 The diagram below summarises the nature of learning at GNC

4.5.1. Worship as a way of learning

Worship as a way of learning was one of the major themes rural women used to empower one another at GNC. The responses from the participants noted that the rural women learned worship non-formally using a participatory approach. Cox (2013) asserts that non-formal

“learning that involves programs that are not classroom-based but has learning objectives which are relevant to the learners and to what the program wants to achieve usually is contextualized and uses participatory approach” (p. 22). The participants noted that the rural women learned using different approaches of learning like conducting the worship, starting a song, share a bible verse with other women as well as experiences. Of importance is that the rural women were influenced to learn since they were actively involved and participating in their learning.

From my observation at GNC using one day from their 5-day schedule, Sango was facilitating the worship, she read the verse from the bible and asked women to contribute showing their listening skills. The participants noted that they were motivated to learn at GNC using the dialogical approach, sharing experiences, question and answer methods, and sharing experience. All participants were given the opportunity to participate by sharing the verse they listened to. This led to rural women acquiring knowledge, skills and coping strategies relevant to their households and communities.

Mukherjee, (2002) presents that participatory learning is the body of the lesson where adult learners are involved as actively in the learning process as possible. This study presents a critical and new view from Mukherjee (2002) that active involvement is the actual learning for the participants. Also, the author’s views, the evidence from the participants, and CoP by Lave and Wenger (1991) note that the process of learning begins with LPP, where the new-comer is allowed access to practice but spends some time at the periphery and then becomes a full participant. It became clear that the participants learned through observation and collective participation also, their experiences contributes a critical part in social participation in daily activities with a group of people.

In conclusion, I will argue by saying that learning ways through worship has provided rural women with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that empowered them to survive in their lives, households, and communities. Lastly, the study found that active participation has provided rural women with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their households and communities.

4.5.2. Physical exercises as a way of learning

Physical exercises are another learning ways used by rural women during their learning at GNC. The responses from the participants suggested that rural women were motivated to learn the physical exercises informally on the content designed by themselves that will change their health needs. It transpired from the evidence of the participants that they (rural women) were influenced by the collaborating, engaging together in physical exercises as a group guided by the facilitator, who is enrolled in one of the health centres in town using her own experiences.

Whilst, Ellias and Merriam (2005) attest that customized learning is about learning objectives and instructional content based on the needs of the learners which aims to each learner's strengths, needs, skills, and interests. On the same note, Lave and Wenger assert that the CoPs are self-organizing systems that have benefits and characteristics associated with life. Hence, rural women learned physical exercise as customized learning to deal with their needs and benefit for their lives.

Therefore, this study found that the participants were self-motivated to learn the areas of interest that allowed them to improve their health through the learning ways that suit them in with their needs. The data in this study exposed that the participants were central and practical in their learning, which enabled them to create knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their health needs in their lives and households.

In conclusion, the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies learned through various learning ways at GNC empowered rural women in their lives, households, and communities.

4.5.3. Craftwork as a way of learning

The evidence from the participants revealed that rural women were learning non-formally from Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday every week crafting items using their own hands (refer to figure 4.1). The participants actively learned from one another through observing, imitating sharing previous experiences, and collaboratively participating with one another through crafting items relevant to their households and communities.

Knowles (1970) highlights that adult learners learn best when they “do “what they find relevant to their everyday needs. The rural women were collaboratively participating, doing, and crafting items designed by themselves according to their needs. Knowles's (1970) views on learning by doing, as well as evidence that emerge from the study, coincided with CoP by Lave and Wenger (1991). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the CoP is a social learning activity that occurs from the interaction and participation of community members, doing and learning together to meet a particular need in an organization or society.

In conclusion, I will argue by saying that learning by doing, craftwork items has been a significant way of learning which promoted new knowledge and skills relevant to the needs of rural women in their lives, households and communities. Data from the study showed that the participation of rural women developed one another with crafting and beading skills relevant to their households and communities.

4.5.4 Monthly meetings as a way of learning

The participants learned at GNC through attending the monthly meetings once a month using the informal way of learning. Rogers (1997) highlights that informal learning happens from daily life activities through observation, social interaction, and problem-solving with others. The participants learned in a monthly meeting through observing, imitating, and modelling others in their natural setting. The participants' behaviour shown by rural women like collective interaction during the meeting, respecting one another during conversations, dialogues and decision-making were the ways of learning that eventually empowered the rural women for their daily lives.

During my observation on one of the 5 days at GNC. Mpondokazi (chairperson) chaired the monthly meeting following the agenda and all GNC women were interacting, engaging, and participating collectively in conversations, asking questions, discussions, dialogues and were also taking decisions in some aspects of the centre and for their lives, and households. Freire (1972) argues that when adults express their ideas freely, they stand a chance to solve their problems. Hence, dialogue has been relevant to rural women learning since it allowed all of them to participate freely as they develop arguments relevant to their needs. In addition, Skinner (2011) reveals that learning is about the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that produce objectively observable changes in behaviour. Skinner's (2011) views, the evidence from the study using CoP by Wenger (2014) notes that knowledge means a comparatively long-lasting change in conduct, which results from practice.

In this study, I argue that learning through the monthly meetings using various ways of learning has led to observable change among the rural women at GNC. Also, new knowledge and skills relevant to their needs in households and communities were acquired by women at GNC. The knowledge and skills gained in the monthly meeting were transferred to the women's households and communities.

In conclusion, evidence of research exposed that the ways of learning at GNC were impactful to rural women's lives, households, and communities. Lastly, the study found that the ways of

learning have provided the GNC women with new knowledge and skills that were relevant to their needs which were transferred to their households and communities.

4.6 Discussion

4.6.1 GNC as a CoP for participation for rural women

The Case Study presented above outlines the description of GNC participants learning the educational activities at the centre. The CoP as a theoretical framework was suitable to describe learning that took place among the rural women at GNC. Participation at GNC as CoP “The tribe to survive. Wenger notes that “people who engage in the process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression” (p.48).

This section offers opinions on rural women’s learning that took place at GNC using educational activities that were later identified as themes by the evidence from the participants. The themes identified the four ways of learning at GNC, namely the worship, physical exercises, craftwork, and monthly meetings were used for the members’ development in the research. The discussion is guided by the four key criteria that define a CoP: community, identity, meaning, and practice (Wenger, 1998).



FIGURE ONE: COMPONENTS OF A SOCIAL THEORY OF LEARNING: AN INITIAL INVENTORY. SOURCE: ETIENNE WENGER.

Figure 4.11: criteria of the social theory of learning

The diagram above showed how learning took place at GNC. The diagram presented that learning at GNC is situated in the community. The purpose of this part is to explain learning at GNC and how rural women were developed using the four criteria of the social theory of learning that define a CoP (Wenger, 1998). The GNC women learned and empowered one another with knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to households and communities using the four criteria in their learning. The first criterion is a community, followed by identity and practice.

Community is the place where a group of people share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as women interact together regularly at GNC (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The GNC women learned through participation, engaging one another in dialogues, conversations, discussions, and sharing of experiences during learning at GNC. The GNC members were organized and learned from one another as a collective to meet a particular need in their lives, households, and communities. The GNC women were learning using past experiences. Identity is a crucial developmental process by which each individual incorporates past experiences with present circumstances within the social environment (Wenger, 2000). The GNC women were collectively learning together and sharing their experiences when engaging in organizational educational activities making meaning to their learning. The GNC

women confirmed that the rural women at GNC were in a CoP (GNC) learning from one another the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their challenges in households and communities. The GNC members were in a practice engaging in the learning ways in the context of GNC.

In addition, this section will respond to the research questions and GNC as a CoP. The discussion of findings and chapter two have shown that GNC is a CoP. Here, I only present the three dimensions by which the CoP is a source of coherence in a community (John, 2006). The three dimensions by CoP mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire are the three dimensions in a CoP by Wenger (1998).

In this section, I showed how learning ways at GNC use the four ways of learning which are themes, operate using three dimensions. Wenger (1998) notes that there are three aspects that need to be met in a CoP, namely, mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and the shared repertoire. Each aspect is shown in figure 4.12 below. The figure shows the members interacting through mutual engagement that leads to the new-timers moving from the periphery to the centre and

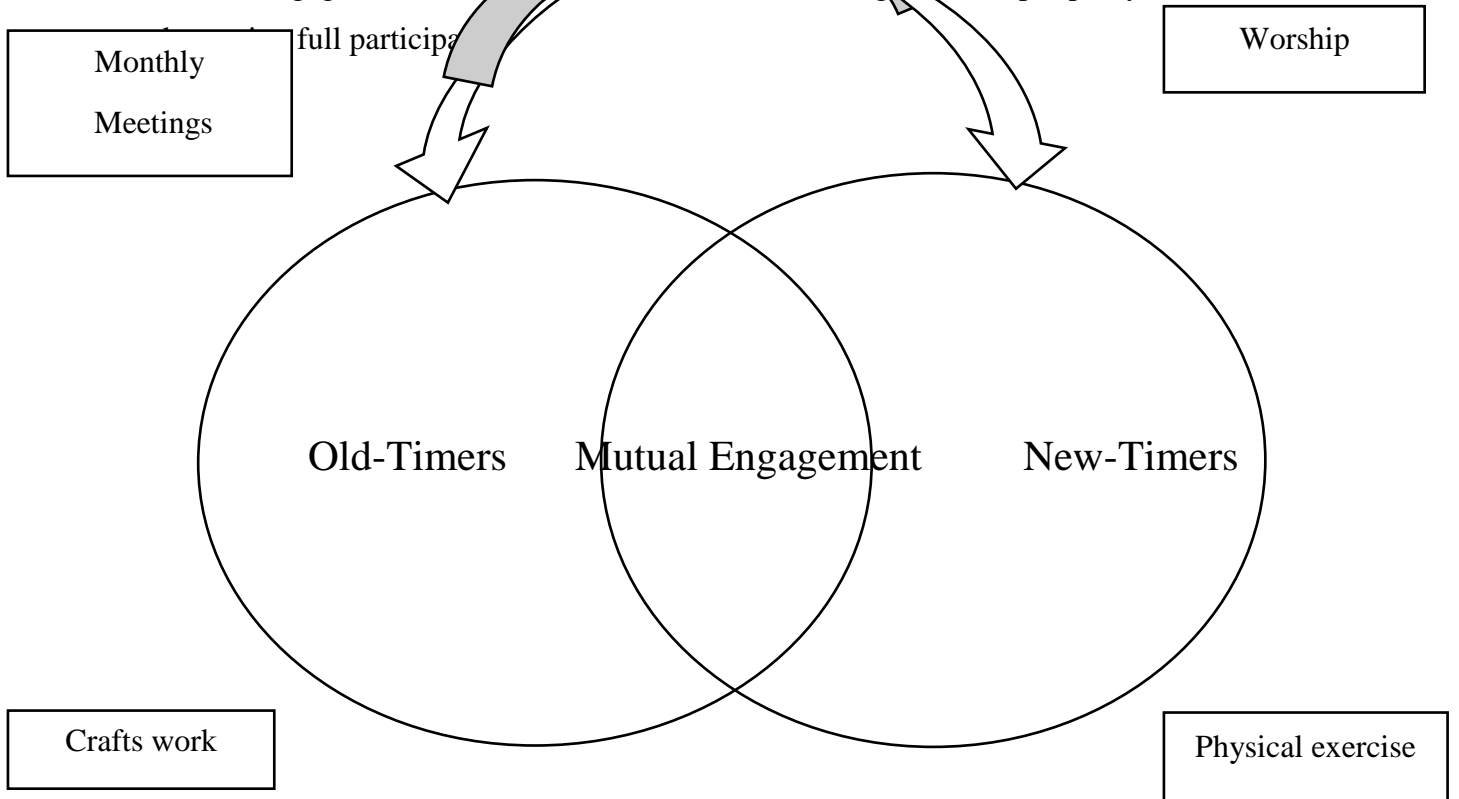


Figure 4.12: The diagram showing how learning take place at GNC

According to Wenger (1998 cited in Gau, 2014), mutual engagement is a fundamental element of CoP that refers to the amount of learning, interaction, participating, supporting, and building

one another in the community. The GNC women meet, interact, and participate with each other three days a week, to achieve a common goal in their lives. One of the principles at GNC is the regular attendance of meetings, interacting and participating well with other members in the GNC activities (GNC, Constitution, 2008). Wenger (1998) highlights that members are brought together by joining, engaging and interacting in common activities and discussions to help each other share information and build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. To, Lave & Wenger (1991) initially, people join, interact and learn at the periphery but their involvement in doing tasks promotes the dissemination of information which led to the new-timers moving from LPP into full membership. However, people acquire knowledge from the trajectories other members bring in learning, by embracing each other's individual uniqueness and understanding their own differences during learning (Wenger, 1998). This shows that learning through mutual engagement took place at GNC.

4.6.1. 1 Mutual engagement

Lave and Wenger (1991) note the importance of social engagements providing the context for learning to take place. This shows that learning moves beyond the activities and people to active engagement and participation in the ways of learning as they acquire knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to their daily lives and households.

One of the participants in the semi-structured interviews articulated as follows:

“Participation at GNC has healed me from my depressive state and given me strategies with my children that are drug users and stealing other people's items which I am forced to pay them at times” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

Also, another participant in the FG interviews noted by saying:

“We meet, engage, interact and participate during worship as we empower one another skills to solve our daily challenges (Somdywli, old-timer).

During my observation on one of the days at GNC, I noticed that the old timers and the facilitators were well-vested in problem-solving skills that brought coping strategies to rural women at GNC.

One of the participants noted by saying:

“I advise other people in my community who have the same challenge of drugs in their households through the skills I gained at GNC” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

Using the responses above and evidence from the participants, it became clear that the active participation and learning ways have empowered them (women) with knowledge, skills, and strategies that transformed their lives and households. However, there was a need for continuous dialogues (one on one) with experts or facilitators to deal with women's issues in a more private setting, since some of the challenges were deeper and more sensitive. In this study, one can conclude by noting that all the above discussion and evidence showed that four ways of learning provided learning at GNC and the rural women acquired knowledge, skills, and strategies that were relevant to their needs in households and communities.

4.6.1.2 Joint enterprise

According to Wenger (1991), a joint enterprise is a process in which people are engaging and working together toward a common goal. Furthermore, Wenger (1998) indicates that "joint enterprise refers to the needs of the group rather than an external mandate" (p.83). The participants noted that they (women) learn through the four ways of learning that provide different purposes to the rural women as they achieve their common goal of finding solutions to their challenges in households and communities.

One of the participants noted by saying:

"Each learning way has different benefits and missing one is a huge loss" (Thangana, new-timer).

The GNC women were working together in the organizational activities holding each other accountable for their learning in finding a solution to their common needs. Lave and Wenger (2001) sees the joint enterprise as the common purpose that binds the people together and offers a merging goal and ensures that there is stability for their actions. The GNC women gathered together to learn the activities using the ways of learning towards achieving a common goal of finding solutions that bettered their lives and households.

Wenger (2014) found that it is common for people to belong to the CoP to share their challenges and have some people to turn to when they (women) encounter challenges. The rural women formed joint enterprise to exchange ideas as women. The rural women's interactions, engagement, and participation bringing the teamwork in solving problems using organizational activities led them to achieve their challenge through the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs in households and communities. In the same vein, all these

activities were done at GNC, which is their CoP where the rural women created meaning relevant to their needs in households and communities. Consequently, Wenger and Trayner (2011) highlight that the CoP is formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain to provide a useful perspective on knowing and learning. Collaborating together in activities, sharing ideas, experiences enable the rural women with real-life solution relevant in their daily lives. As Wenger (1991) comments practice is demonstrated when people are engaged in actions and when they create and negotiate their meanings with each other. Additionally, Wenger (2014) notes that the information flows very fast and members are prone to fast-track development. Thus, it can be concluded that practice and collaborating in activities developed the members with knowledge, skills and strategies relevant to find solutions to their real life problems.

4.6.1.3 Shared Repertoire

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), members use jargons to negotiate meaning and facilitate learning within a group. Lave and Wenger (2001) mention that members develop a shared repertoire of resources such as members themselves, shared history from the founder, experience, stories, and ways of addressing recurring problems. From the above-mentioned resources, they (women) build up, shape over time, and give a sense of identity and belongingness to one another (Lave and Wenger, 1991). It is important to note that the rural women combined the resources from the shared repertoire to address a particular challenge. The rural women were learning to share their negative and good stories, challenges, and experiences using their local vernacular language (isiXhosa).

One of the participants in the FG interviews articulated by saying:

“During worship, we share our painful stories in our own local language as we express our emotions, supported and given new knowledge, and strategies to deal with our situations and that healed me” (Xaba, new-timer).

Also, during my observation at the centre, all rural women were learning interacting, and engaging freely with one another in their own language, since they were all isiXhosa speakers from the same locality.

The following learning ways like dialogues and sharing their stories and past experiences were used to negotiate to mean and build one another within GNC. In their learning, women were

equipped to share their stories and challenges and to find solutions to their challenges in households and communities. Additionally, Lave and Wenger (1991) note that shared repertoire has developed a set of stories and cases that have become a shared repertoire for their practice. This is what has happened at GNC, where women were to address and solve their own challenges using their shared repertoire. In conclusion, the data from the study found that they (women) contributed to their enterprise and provided solutions to their challenges in households and communities. Lastly, the rural women promoted a sense of belonging among one another at GNC which provided solutions to their needs in households and communities. The succeeding part discusses the questions of the research.

4.6 Discussion

4.6.1 GNC as a CoP for participation for rural women

The Case Study presented above outlines the description of GNC participants learning the educational activities at the centre. The CoP as a theoretical framework was suitable to describe learning that took place among the rural women at GNC. Participation at GNC as CoP “The tribe to survive. Wenger notes that “people who engage in the process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression” (p.48).

This section offers opinions on rural women’s learning that took place at GNC using educational activities that were later identified as themes by the evidence from the participants. The themes identified the four ways of learning at GNC, namely the worship, physical exercises, craftwork, and monthly meetings were used for the members’ development in the research. The discussion is guided by the four key criteria that define a CoP: community, identity, meaning, and practice (Wenger, 1998).

4.7 Research questions in response to the study

Does this section discuss the key research questions as the themes to which this study attempted to respond to **What are the educational activities offered in Gabisile National Centre for rural women to cope with changing times?**

4.7.1 Worship

The rural women were learning through worship as one of the educational activities learned by rural women at GNC. The rural women were learning the educational activities through regular attendance at GNC, sharing experiences (from their own and the bible), and storytelling. The rural women learned the educational activities through observing and imitating others gaining new knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that were relevant to change their lives. Bandura (1997) asserts that people learn through observing, and imitating others. The rural women learned to worship, which developed their emotional health, reduced stress, and depression, and saved money for the specialists. Through worship, the rural women's lives changed through interacting and participating with other women which resulted to women being promoted from the periphery (new-timers) and becoming the experts (old-timers) in their households and communities.

4.7.2 Physical exercises

Members learned physical exercise through engaging, interacting, and developing one another. Knowles (1984) notes that adult learners are self-directed individuals who take charge of their learning and learn what is relevant to their needs. The rural women's lives changed through physical exercises since they (women) no longer frequently visited the doctors nor took chronic treatment and were well able to save money which was benefited by their households. Also, the participation of rural women at GNC has improved their health since they were no longer using walking sticks as their third legs. It became clear that the rural women's lives improved, and the skills acquired at the centre became a lifestyle for them and their households.

4.7.3 Craftwork

The members at GNC learned through doing, participating, and socializing in their own environment. Knowles (1970) attests that adult learners learn best when they (women) do what they find relevant for their everyday lives. During crafting, all GNC women were actively participating, asking questions, as they were engaging, collectively participatin

g with one another creating new skills that changed their lives. Kolb (1984) on experiential learning shows how learning takes place from observation to being the full participant through

engaging. The rural women became entrepreneurs, gained profits, and shared them among themselves and needy households in communities. The rural women became self-reliant on their own products. One can conclude that the GNC women's lives, households, and communities were transformed.

4.7.4 Monthly Meeting

The members learned through engaging and interacting with one another in a monthly meeting by asking questions for clarity on the items in the agenda, having dialogues, sharing their ideas freely, and respecting one another. Mezirow (1998) explains how individuals engage critically in activities while creating new knowledge. Participation of rural women in a monthly meeting has promoted mutual engagement among one another. The rural women were transformed intrinsically through direct experience with others as they viewed their world. In conclusion, it became clear that the rural women learned the knowledge, and skills that changed their lives, households, and communities.

4.8.1 What are learned strategies by rural women as they participate in the GNC educational activities?

4.8.1.1 Worship a coping strategy

The participants in the study noted that they (women) learned the strategies by attending regular GNC which provided them with the opportunity to listen, observe, and imitate the experts (old-timers) During worship, the participants (new-timers) listened to other women (old-timers) sharing their experiences, success stories, bible stories, storytelling, and their ideas which led to emotional healing, hope, and spiritual growth.

One of the participants, a new-timer noted by saying that:

“I listen to other women's stories, observe, listen to women sharing their success stories, and their experiences, and imitate their practices which have healed my emotional wounds, and I have developed and grown spiritually” (Thangana, new-timer).

Another participant, an old-timer stated by noting as follows:

“My regular attendance at GNC, imitating other women’s sharing on the word of God has developed me with good ideas and lot of encouragement resulting to faith, hope and spiritual growth” (Somdywili, old-timer).

Lave and Wenger (1991 cited in John 2005, p.53) note that “the process of learning begins with legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), where the newcomer is allowed access to practice, but spends some time at the periphery and then becomes a full participant” (p.53). Similarly, to the research study, a group of rural women had the same challenge that allowed them to meet regularly and bring their own experiences as they create strategies relevant to their needs. Moreover, Lave & Wenger (1991) reveal that the rural women are communicating with one another using the information they already have to develop one another during learning. Thus provide the rural women to trust, turn to others during challenging times as well as spiritual growth. In conclusion, it became clear that a group of rural women met and shared their experiences, learned from one another as were acquiring knowledge, and strategies relevant to their specific needs, and were (strategies) transferred to households and communities.

4.8.1.1.2 Physical exercise a coping strategy

The evidence from the participants showed that the rural women were all committed to participating in physical exercises. The rural women learned through mutual engagement and participation in activities that provided skills and strategies to promote a healthy lifestyle among one another and households.

One of the participants, a new-timer noted by saying:

“I start and end my day by exercising with my household members” (Xaba, new-timer).

In addition, another participant, the facilitator articulated by saying:

“I exercise with other women and formed relationships, with other women through our buddy group, our health has improved and we are healthier than before” (Sango, old-timer).

Wenger (1998) notes that members are brought together by joining common activities through mutual engagement in those activities. It became clear that engaging and participating of rural women in physical exercise has developed and promoted a healthy lifestyle among themselves, their households, and their communities.

4.8.1.1.3 Craftwork a coping strategy

The evidence from the study revealed that the participants were collaboratively participating in craftwork, which enhanced rural women with the development of skills that were relevant to improve their lives.

A participant, the new-timer noted by saying:

“I learned the crafting skills under the guidance of the experts” (Xaba, new-timers).

Furthermore, Wenger (1998) mentions that the participants not only valued their personal learning experiences but also their relationships with one another. In conclusion, it became clear that the rural women’s participation in craftwork provided the coping strategy for their challenge since rural women (got) dividends from the profits of the crafted items. Their (women) finances were improved.

4.8.1.4 Monthly meetings

The evidence participants noted that the monthly meeting empowered the rural women with communication skills learned through conversations, and discussions.

One of the participants’ view in the semi-structured, a new-timer noted by saying:

“I learn the communication skills how to communicate and respect one another in a monthly meeting (Xaba, new-timer).

Another, participant, an old-timer noted by saying:

“Communicating in monthly meetings through sharing ideas freely, conversations through dialogue and discussion” (Mpondokazi, chairperson).

Lave and Wenger (1991) highlight that interactions of members through conversations allowed the members to gain new knowledge as they exchange information to accomplish a specific goal. In conclusion, it became clear that interactive communication in a monthly meeting has been a critical skill and a strategy for rural women in their lives, households, and communities.

4. 9. In what ways do rural women learn at the GNC

Learning at GNC took place both non-formally and informally. UNESCO (1997a, p. 14) mentions that “the non-formal learning is not formally organized but continuing learning programs which can be short term learning without certification but with knowledge and skills to achieve a learning objective or to meet a particular need for a marginalized group of adults” (p.14.) Non-formal learning takes place within the organization’s framework and arises from the learner’s decision to master some knowledge, and skills for a particular activity under the guidance of a mentor or facilitator (Marcia and Garcia, 2016). Correspondingly, UNESCO (2019) maintains that non-formal learning provides alternative opportunities to people of all ages who need knowledge and skills to overcome different obstacles. The assessment is done based on the commitment of people to achieve their goals in the activities they (people) are performing their activities learning their own content (Marcia and Garcia, 2016). Similarly, UNESCO (2019) maintains that non-formal learning provides alternative opportunities to people of all ages who need knowledge and skills to overcome different obstacles. The rural women were using non-formal learning to achieve a goal relevant to their lives, household, and communities. However, Marsick and Watkins (1990) note that informal learning arises from the learner’s involvement in activities that are not planned but just happen naturally without objectives, time, and learning support. In addition, Marcia and Garcia (2016) take place unexpectedly and involuntarily by observing other members experiencing learning that comes naturally from daily life activities.

Learning at GNC is situational. Situational learning is concerned with how learning takes place every day. Horng and Ming (2011) highlight that learning is situated, interpreted, and created in what people are doing daily, to acquire new knowledge and skills that lead to full membership. Lave and Wenger (1991) note that learning is a contextual social phenomenon achieved through engagement and participation in a CoP. In conclusion, I can argue that GNC as a CoP has provided learning to rural women through practice and participation using situated learning. It became clear from this study that situated learning is about participation and the GNC women learned new knowledge, skills, and strategies, which were relevant to their challenges in households and communities.

Learning at GNC is experiential. Many literature sources argue that learning is experiential since people are learning and making sense of the experiences of other members (Marsick, and Watkins, 1990, UNESCO, 2019). People learn using the dialectical process of action, practical skills, and reflections from one another, learning out of need when they encounter a situation that requires new information and skills (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Also, Horng and Ming

(2011) note that experiential learning is learning by doing which allows members to develop new ideas, reflect, connect the learned knowledge and take positive actions towards achieving their goals in their real situations. Lave and Wenger (1991) reveal that the members learn through the LPP, which allowed members to learn from being new-timers and become full participants. In addition, learning at GNC took place through stages as highlighted by Kolb (1984) in order to move from the periphery to the centre and become full participants (old-timers). According to Kolb (1984) on experiential learning, the members learn through observation. The members start by observing an experience as an activity followed by the members' reflections on their experience and the generalizations they make during learning (Kolb, 1984). The GNC women engaged critically with one another as they constructed knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to their challenges. One can argue that in all the learning stages the new-timers were learning and developed by experts to become full participants that become relevant to solve problems in their households and communities. In this study, I can argue, that the GNC members learned best from each other's experiences since they (women) were directly involved in their learning with other members and were empowered to find a solution to their challenges in households and communities. It became clear that the GNC members learned and acquired new knowledge, skills, and strategies through interacting, participating, and learning from experts, becoming experienced members that were problem-solvers in their households and communities.

4.10 Conclusion

GNC as a CoP has been outlined in this chapter. This chapter discussed the educational activities learned by the rural women at GNC. The ways of learning, using the non-formal and informal learning were discussed. The research presented learning using three dimensions of CoP as articulated by Wenger's theory of (1998). The learning ways were presented showing how learning happened from new-timers learning through observing, imitating, and moving to full participants through the (LPP). Lastly, the GNC members learned the strategies needed by rural women to solve the challenges, encountered by women in conclusion, the evidence from the study acknowledged the change in rural women's lives including households and communities. in their households and communities. All the knowledge, skills, and strategies learned were transferred to their households and communities. The following chapter explains the summary, conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in this last chapter. The research study followed a qualitative research method using the constructivist model informed by a case study research style informed by the CoP guiding research study. Eight members were carefully chosen using the purposive sampling method.

The preceding chapter presented the findings using themes guided by the research objectives and questions. The purpose of the study was to explore an understanding of how rural women learn in the context of Gabisile National Centre (GNC) in a bid to cope with their changing roles in their lives and households. To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives were used namely:

- Explore educational activities offered in GNC for rural women to deal with or survive in their new household roles
- To explore and identify ways of learning for rural women in the context of GNC
- To identify strategies learned by rural women in the context of GNC.

The findings were summarised according to topics that transpired on objectives. Conclusions are presented and the recommendations are outlined built on the findings of the participants. The next unit deals with the summary of findings.

5.2 Summary of key findings

The findings were summarised according to the research objectives and main themes. Three themes were identified from data analysis, and each theme summarises the findings of the research. Conclusions and recommendations were created from the evidence of the participants. The summary of findings is presented in the following subsection.

5.2.1 To understand the educational activities learned at Gabisile national centre by rural women

In this section, I discuss the different educational activities offered to the group of rural women at Gabisile National Centre (GNC). The educational activities were presented as themes that came from the evidence of the participants. I will discuss worship as the first theme to be discussed below:

5.2.1.1 Worship

Evidence from the study confirmed that women gathered and learned from one another on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays about the activities of the centre. The evidence from both the semi-structured and FG interviews revealed that the rural women were actively participating together in worship which reduced the stress level that resulted in depression for some of them. In addition, the rural women learned through participation, interaction, and sharing experiences with one another developing themselves with information and talents to survive. Evidence from the participants showed that the GNC women acquired knowledge and skills that promoted dependency on worship and among themselves. Evidence from the study acknowledged that the rural women were actively and fully supportive to one another which contributed positively to women's emotional health lives. One can conclude by noting that participation of rural women in worship has played a significant role in the emotional health and spiritual growth of the GNC members. Lastly, their (women) interaction with one another through worship, freed them from surviving with anti-depressants and blood pressure tablets. It became clear that the knowledge and skills acquired by the GNC women brought the solution to deal with the challenges in their lives and were transferred to the households and communities.

5.2.1.2 Physical exercises

The evidence from the participants revealed that rural women learned and participated in physical exercises to promote a healthy lifestyle. The rural women learned the physical exercise activity under the guidance of a facilitator. According to Knowles (1984), knowledge is created through the collaboration between adult learners and the facilitators during their learning. Evidence from the study showed that rural women were collaboratively engaging together in

physical exercises and supporting one another to achieve their common goal. Evidence from the participants in both individual semi-structured and FG interviews confirmed that participating and engaging with other women at GNC has improved their lives and were self-motivated with physical exercises for their own benefit, households, and communities. Evidence from participants noted that engaging and interacting together in the physical exercises has improved their health since they (women) were not struggling with chronic diseases or using the walking sticks as well. According to Silverman and Deuster (2014), physical exercises have been proven to prevent the consequences of stressful events, prevent many chronic diseases, and promote self-resilience and well-being among people. Thus, it can be concluded that learning took place at GNC and rural women's lives were improved and changed through physical exercises. Lastly, the knowledge and skills acquired during learning were transferred to households and communities.

5.2.1.3 Craftwork

Confirmation in the study revealed that craftwork was one of the motivational factors for rural women's learning at GNC. The new-timers were taught by the old-timers who became teachers because of the experience they (rural women) have. Evidence from semi-structured interviews, observation, and documents analyzed revealed that the rural women used their hands to craft items that developed them with lifelong and survival skills that benefited their lives, households, and communities. Consequently, UNESCO (1997) asserts that adult learners are learning knowledge and skills to achieve a learning objective or to meet a particular need for a marginalized group of adults. In addition, it transpired from the evidence of the participants in the FG interviews that the rural women collaboratively participated together in selling items designed from crafting items which provided women with entrepreneurial knowledge. Conclusions from the research showed that the rural women accumulated profits that were divided among themselves. In conclusion, the rural women learned and acquired skills that were useful, beneficial and changed the rural women's lives, households and communities.

5.2.1.4 Monthly meetings

The results from the research suggested that GNC members participated in face-to-face monthly meetings conversing and discussing critical issues, raising concerns freely but with respect to everyone. According to Goman (2015), the members develop one another through

dialogues, conversations and posing questions to other members which promote growth and development of members. The evidence from the participants revealed that the rural women developed communication skills that were relevant to their households and communities. Participation of rural women in monthly meetings builds strong relationships among one another. One can conclude by noting that the monthly meetings developed the rural women with developmental skills that changed their behaviors for the benefit of their lives, households, and communities.

5.2. 2 Learning ways that transform the lives of the rural women at GNC

In this section, different learning ways that transformed GNC members were discussed. The following part explains ways of learning at GNC which transformed the GNC members.

5.2.2.1 Worship

The results in the semi-structured and FGD interviews revealed rural women met regularly and gathered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays every week learning from one another both non-formally and informally. The findings suggested that the rural women were motivated to learn what was relevant and useful to survive in their lives and households. The findings noted that the main reason for rural women to interact and engage with one another was to reduce stress and depression which resulted in their (women's) emotional healing. Participation in worship was one of the reasons the rural women were meeting at GNC which yielded a positive impact on the mental health of rural women. According to Sharp (2010), worship helps women to manage their negative thoughts and anxiety which could have resulted in them to mental institutions if not attended. The rural women interacted, shared, and supported one another on their challenges rather than seeking strategies from outsiders. The GNC women developed relationships that resulted in trust, unity, and support for one another.

In addition, the findings showed that the rural women felt a sense of belonging and support with people to turn to when encountering a challenge. Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that CoP creates a sense of belonging and identity that builds and shapes over time among the members. Additionally, the findings noted that rural women developed spiritual growth and reliance on

the word of God for their challenges which resulted in women gaining faith, confidence, hope, and strength to deal with challenges in their lives, households, and communities.

Lastly, the rural women at GNC acquired knowledge, skills, and experiences from worship and support that enabled them to find solutions relevant to their daily challenges in households and communities. Thus, it can be concluded that learning took place through learning worship activities at GNC. The knowledge and skills were transferred to households and communities.

5.2.2.2 Physical exercise

Physical exercises are another theme that emerged from data analysis that was learned non-formally and informally through the song, which follow a certain rhythm. Participants' responses noted rural women engaged regularly to promote a healthy lifestyle. The findings suggested that the rural women participated together to acquire the lifelong skills relevant to their health needs. The GNC women encouraged one another to be consistent with physical exercise to promote a healthy lifestyle. Ellias and Merriam (2005) note that the growth and development of the whole person include the social, and practical skills which concentrate on growth and development.

The rural women engaged in physical exercises due to their health needs. In addition, the findings from the participants confirmed that the rural women were self-reliant and formed buddy groups to support one another and achieve a common goal through physical exercises. The evidence from the study noted that rural women's lives improved since they (women) no longer frequently visit the doctors. Thus, it can be concluded that rural women's learning transformed them through physical exercises, also, the knowledge and skills acquired through physical exercises were transferred to households and communities.

5.2.2.3 Craftwork

The evidence from the participants revealed that craftwork was a crucial major learning activity learned informally through doing, sharing of skills, talents, and creativity that promoted participation and skills development among the rural women at GNC. Craftwork and beading allowed all members to participate collaboratively and freely as women learned and supported one another during learning. The evidence from data analysis revealed that craftwork provided rural women to learn new knowledge, skills, different talents, and abilities. The rural women

were crafting necklaces, hats, and belts as noted in the previous chapter until they become experts. The findings from the study confirmed that the rural women participated, crafted, and beaded items that provided profits and dividends needed to maintain their lives, households, and communities. The GNC members became entrepreneurs and developed financial skills that were relevant to their lives and households. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1997) states that knowledge construction occurs in a social context that involves the participants collaborating with one another.

What I discovered during observation, was that the rural women were participating together, sharing their previous skills and experiences which resulted in the finished crafting items needed by their households and communities. Also, the documents revealed that the GNC women crafted items as required by people and different stakeholders such as the CSI. Consequently, the GNC women's crafting secured finances to maintain the centre, the rural women's lives, households, and communities. The GNC women were economically prepared and developed to sell the crafted items at a profit that benefited them and their households. The SDU organized workshops to equip the GNC women with marketing and financial knowledge, and skills relevant to their economic growth. The GNC women developed with knowledge and skills to become entrepreneurs and lifelong skills. Thus, it can be concluded that the rural women's participation in the craftwork activities at GNC has empowered the GNC women and the skills were transferred to households and communities.

5.2.3.4. The monthly meetings

The monthly meetings were one of the themes that emerged from data analysis that was attended and learned non-formally by engaging and interacting with one another once a month using a standardized agenda. The evidence from the participants revealed that the rural women learned and participated in dialogues, conversations, and questions, engaging in joint monthly meetings discussing issues relevant to their needs. The participants from both semi-structured and FG interviews noted that the monthly meetings were guided by the items on the agenda. The rural women learned through conversations, question and answer methods, raising their ideas freely and respectfully towards achieving their goal. The monthly meetings provide the members with problem-solving and critical skills to solve ongoing challenges (Goman, 2015). The findings from data analysis showed that the GNC women were equipped with facilitation, communication skills, and problem-solving skills. The documents also acknowledged that the

rural women were developed through engaging and interacting with one another in monthly meetings which improved their learning and evaluation skills. It became clear that the GNC women were developed with knowledge and skills during the month that was relevant to their new roles in households and communities.

5.3. The strategies learned by the rural women in the context of GNC

In this part, I discuss the strategies learned by rural women at GNC. Fred (2008) reveals that a strategy is a general plan for achieving one's goals and objectives. Brenner (1993) states that coping strategies are "direct actions including problem-solving skills that aim to modify the actual stress which relieves the impact of stress without changing the situation" p.1122. Below are the coping strategies learned by rural women in managing specific demands in households and communities.

5.6.1. Worship as a learning strategy

The findings from the study confirmed that worship was a coping strategy for their real-life challenges in households and communities. The findings from the FG interviews revealed that rural women had an intimate conversation with a higher being (God) petitioning for their situations in their households. The rural women at GNC were learning religious practices to cope with stressful life situations in households and communities. The rural women participated together and shared their experiences as women were learning from one another during worship. The rural women worshipped together, constructing the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies to reduce the stresses women encountered in their households and communities. Consequently, through worship, some women developed coping strategies for their challenges rather than taking the anti-depressants to minimize their living. Also, the rural women were psychologically boosted with self-esteem, hope, and confidence from the storytelling and lived experiences of women in real-life situations and in the bible. Lastly, the rural women confirmed that they developed coping strategies and courage for their real-life situations in households and communities through worship. The rural women were practical on worship especially in their households also the worship became relevant and a solution to their challenges in households and communities.

5.6.2. Physical exercise as a learning strategy

The findings from the participants suggested that physical exercise activity has changed rural women's lives by developing strategies to improve their lives through physical exercises. The evidence from data analysis revealed that physical exercise improved rural women's health, kept them away from the doctor, and saved a lot of money which is beneficial to the needs of their households.

Consequently, the rural women developed knowledge and skills from playing soccer and netball together with other teams in town and the province. That did not provide the rural women with finances won during competitions but also healthy physical bodies. The rural women were equipped with knowledge, skills, and finances from the competitions. The evidence from the study showed that the rural women acquired skills and finances they (women) won from netball and soccer which boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem. The rural women empowered one another with knowledge, and skills relevant to their lives and were transferred to their households.

5.6.3. Craftwork as a learning strategy

Craftwork is one of the major and a learning strategy at GNC learned by doing, crafting, and beading items which led to the development of skills. The old-timers who became teachers taught the new-timers new knowledge, and skills relevant to improve their lives in households and communities.

The active involvement and participation of all members encouraged them to develop skills and talents which were relevant to their needs in households and communities. Craftwork enhances thinking skills, boosts self-esteem, improve and the economy of women which improves their quality of life (Mindfood, 2020). Consequently, the rural women developed one another with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies that boosted them economically from the profits divided among themselves to cope with their needs in households. Lastly, the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies learned by rural women at GNC developed them to become entrepreneurs let alone the crafting skills they acquired from their participation at the centre were later transferred to their households and communities. Thus, it can be concluded that craftwork has provided the coping strategies that transformed and brought the solution to the needs of rural women in households and communities.

5.6.4. Monthly meetings as a learning strategy

The monthly meetings were one of the learning strategies that developed the rural women with communication, conversational, and discussion skills that were relevant to their daily lives in households and communities. Consequently, the evidence from the analysed data highlighted that the monthly meetings developed the rural women with strategies on how to ask questions and express ideas freely in their own environment which were relevant to their households. In addition, the rural women enhanced one another when engaging in a meeting constructing knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to solve their daily challenges in households and communities. The rural women's knowledge, skills, and coping strategies acquired during learning bettered their daily lives and improved their relationships at the centre as well as in households and communities. Lastly, the rural women's lives were transformed and the women were able to deal with the daily challenges in their households.

5.7. Conclusions

The study found that learning took place among rural women that were fifty (55) and above at GNC. The study found that learning at GNC was done through educational activities using both the non-formal and informal ways of learning. However, some rural women were unable to perform some activities (physical exercises) due to age which became a hindrance to some rural women's learning. The latest ways of learning educational activities that are flexible, especially for rural women must be provided. Also, the study revealed that GNC was unable to attract young women which could move the vision of the centre-forward.

The GNC women learned the educational activities using both non-formal and informal ways of learning which transformed their (women's) lives and households. The research study acknowledged that the GNC members learned and participated in educational activities using the learner-centred curriculum designed by themselves according to their needs. The participants at GNC learned, developed, and equipped one another using the four ways of learning namely, worship, physical exercises, craftwork, and monthly meeting to develop themselves. The study found that GNC women developed one another through conversations, question-and-answer methods, and sharing of previous experiences by interacting, engaging, and participating in their social environment. The study transpired that the rural women at GNC

acquired knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their daily lives, households, and communities.

Of importance is to note that the curriculum learned by the GNC members was not in line with the challenges encountered by rural women in their social environment like poverty, crime, and drugs. The executive members at GNC, have an obligation of recalculating the GNC curriculum that provides solutions to the social issues in their households and community.

The study showed that the new-timers learned by first observing the old-timers and eventually become full participants. The old-timers taught the new-timers the knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their lives and households, without pointing out clearly the experience the new-timers bring during learning. Furthermore, the study revealed that rural women were empowered with problem-solving skills, especially during monthly meetings where decisions have to be taken. The study also revealed that craftwork has developed rural women with crafting and beading skills using their hands. Also, the GNC women were empowered with entrepreneurship skills that brought profits which were divided among the GNC women. It became evident that teamwork and collaboration during learning developed the rural women with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to their needs in households and communities. One can conclude by noting that learning at GNC has provided rural women with lifelong skills that transformed their lives and households which were later transferred to the members of their households.

The study also revealed that GNC was a gender-based, feminist Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) with a small percentage of rural women developed without involving other ages of women in information sharing and development that would change the households. Therefore, there is a need for a wider study that includes different ages of women also including their counterparts to address the concerns affecting the Manzamnyama community at large.

In conclusion, the study acknowledged that GNC was a standalone project that crafted and sell items to the community without developing the community members or other centres at the Manzamnyama locality. Lastly, all the knowledge, skills, and strategies learned by rural women at GNC were not transferrable to other community centres.

5.8. Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.8.1. Recommendations for the study

The GNC women were participating in the curriculum developed by themselves, without being evaluated by the curriculum experts on adult learning. The relevance of the curriculum was very crucial and there was a need for the evaluation of the curriculum by the curriculum experts or specialists for adult learning at least once in three years as is the case with other learning institutions or centres. Therefore, there is a need for the evaluation of the curriculum-by-curriculum experts to improve adult learning in communities. Similarly, the relevance of what is learned at GNC depends on the continuous assessment, therefore there is a need for continuous engagement, and assessment of the GNC members by DSD (service provider).

The GNC facilitators were not trained in teaching the curriculum that involves adult learning which includes informal and non-formal learning. Also, the facilitator had not been trained to teach adult learning. The facilitator was a teacher in a structured form of learning; hence the old-timers also became facilitators. The service provider (DSD) must make sure that facilitators are well-equipped for facilitating and sharing information with adult learners. As such, the facilitators needed some training on facilitation, information sharing with the service provider, or through workshops on how to do certain things at GNC which is not happening. In addition, rural women must be empowered through organized workshops with knowledge, skills, and strategies that transform their lives and households not with educational activities designed by themselves only.

During the Corvid-19 period in South Africa, the GNC members were unable to continue with their learning since the rural women were not equipped with technological ways of learning. The technological learning ways will assist rural women in not meeting timeously to avoid unnecessary expenses. All participants have smartphones that they can use for their learning rather than using only the traditional ways of learning. Thus, it becomes critical for DSD to play a critical role in developing the learning of rural women since DSD is the service provider. Therefore, there is a need for improvement and infusion of the latest technology and machinery in their learning.

The DSD was the provider of the programmes learned at GNC and also funded some GNC members. The DSD did not mentor the rural women through workshops and training to empower them in activities, but the rural women were learning using the experience they have

from other organizations. At times, the rural women workshopped and trained other members of the community without having the required certification. Therefore, there is a need for DSD to evaluate and improve their training by DSD. Also, the DSD can develop and empower the group of rural women through workshops in different aspects such as minute writing, chairing a meeting, facilitation of lessons, and budgeting funds.

There were many challenges within the Manzamnyama community such as crime, substance abuse, and poverty that needed to be tackled by all members of households and communities. The GNC members should develop a curriculum that would address their concerns and those that involve community members and leaders to address the challenges within the households and communities.

The rural women were growing old and that makes it difficult for them to be empowered or developed by some sponsors due to age limits. The rural women were struggling to make proposals to different Departments or Units due to age restrictions. Their requests were mostly rejected due to their age. Also, some women were unable to participate in some exercises due to age. Therefore, there is a need to accommodate other groups of people especially young people and women that will continue with the vision of the GNC project. This can be done by recruiting and allowing younger people in the community to participate in the learning at GNC. Also, this will allow the development and transformation of other people in the Manzamnyama locality and even at King Sabata Municipality.

5.8.2 Recommendations for further research

The curriculum at GNC was designed by rural women without the involvement of the curriculum experts on adult education. Rural women are using the old traditional ways of learning without using the latest machinery cell phones, electric knitting machine and technology such as whatsapp in their learning.

The current study looked at the educational activities and the ways of learning at GNC which led to the transformation of rural women's lives and households at only one centre, a larger study can be done using different centres in Manzamnyama as well as King Sabata Dalindyebo locality.

The use of a single approach may present methodological limitation; hence there is a need to consider a larger study that may utilize a mixed-method approach.

A further study may also be conducted on centres that may not necessarily accommodate rural women but also other age groups to get their views on how they are managing themselves and learning from one another. Learning take place in any setting, therefore, a further study can be conducted to look at how people organize themselves for their learning.

5.9. Limitations of the study

The study concentrated on the rural women from Manzamnyama locality (pseudo name) which excludes women from many other localities and the townships of Mthatha District in the Eastern Cape. The GNC is a gender-based centre excluding other groups of people from learning at GNC. This has left a big percentage of people unequipped with knowledge, skills, and coping strategies relevant to households and communities. This is a limitation of the research study since the challenges affect the whole community.

The age of the GNC members was another limitation. All rural women learning at GNC were fifty-five years and above excluding other age categories of women. Some of the members were unable to perform well in some of the educational activities (physical exercises) due to age. Some rural women depended on other capable rural women for their learning.

Some rural women did not go far with their education due to social challenges. Some rural women relied on other members to translate for them, although the interview schedules were translated into their local isiXhosa language. Some members were unable to read their local language (isiXhosa) on their own due to low levels of education. That consumed more time during learning even during the interviews. The communications, the members received at GNC were all written in English, so a translator was always needed for the inclusion of other members. Some members were not comfortable being part of the project due to illiteracy. During the interviews more time was consumed by the translation before getting the responses from the participants.

The GNC members were learning using the traditional ways of learning only since the rural women lack the technological skills. Surprisingly, all rural women had smartphones that could be used during learning but were unable to use them due to a lack of technological skills. This hindered learning for rural women. This limitation was clear during Corvid 19 when the rural women were unable to learn due to a lack of technical skills to learn. That was a limitation that hindered the learning and growth of GNC members. There was a need for new ideas and improvements in their learning due to the change in times.

I had been allowed by the GNC executive to do my research with their members. At first, the participants were not comfortable working with the researcher who was a stranger to them. Later on, the researcher worked very well with the participants. The participants highlighted that they were not keen to work with the researcher because some people pretended to be researchers but were at GNC to steal their information and use it for their benefit. That was also, a limitation of the research study.

The GNC was established in 2008, and no other community organizations or centres were established out of this initiative. The group of rural women was excited that they are the only organization in the locality. Also, that hindered the development of other people. Although GNC was funded by DSD, it made less impact on the development of other people since it developed only a few percentages of rural women in their locality.

Lastly, the study used the qualitative form of data collection. The study could not make generalizations about GNC learning to other learning centres. The findings of the research study cannot be transferred to another related centre.

5.10. Strength of the study

All the participants were rural women coming from the same locality with the same need. Most of the members learning at GNC were familiar with one another and most of them were schooling together from childhood age. All the participants were speaking one local language, isiXhosa. There was no need for an interpreter during the learning. The GNC members learned, participated, and engaged together and freely with the educational activities at the centre since rural women had an understanding of one another and the language they used during learning. Also, the commitment showed by rural women was another strength for the rural women's learning.

The findings of the study showed that learning at GNC took place using different learning ways which developed all rural women. I established the relationship between what was learned in the educational activities and how the rural women were learning using the different ways of learning.

5.11 Final conclusion

The study showed how rural women learned in the context of GNC. The rural women learned the educational activities using the hands-on approach to empower one another at GNC. The study showed the relationship between what was learned by the rural women at GNC and how that was learned in the context of GNC transformed their (women's) lives in a bid to cope with their changing roles in their lives and households. The study revealed a few percentages of rural women (55years and above) from Manzamnyama location that was developed with new knowledge, skills, and strategies relevant to change their challenges in households and communities. the findings of the study left me, with some questions, like which other ways of learning can be used to empower a wider number of women participating in a rural project, to change their lives. Lastly, the findings of the study can be used by DSD to improve learning at GNC and other centres with the same understanding of empowering people.

REFERENCES

- Adom, D., Yeboah, A. & Ankrah, A.K. (2016). Constructivism philosophical paradigm: Implication for research, teaching, and learning. *Global Journal of Arts humanities and social sciences*, 4(10), pp.1-9.
- Alon, N. (2011). *Humanistic education. From theory to practice*. Vengelters (Ed.). Education and humanism. Linking autonomy and humanity: Rotterdam. The Netherlands. Sense publishers.
- Alsop, R., Bertelsen, M., & Holland, J. N. (2006). *Empowerment in practice from analysis to implementation*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Ann, J. (2001). Patriarchy. Routledge encyclopedia of international political economy. *Taylor & Francis*. 1197-1198.
- Aveyard, H. (2010). *Doing a literature review in health and social care. A practical guide*. 2nd Ed. Berkshire, Great Britain. Open University Press.
- Aitchison, J. & Land, S.J. (2019). *Secured, not connected: South Africa's adult education system*. 77. South Africa. Available from <http://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe>
- Asante, M.K. (1990). *Afrocentricity and knowledge*. Trenton, N.J. Africa World Press.
- Babbie, E. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research*. U.S.A: Wadsworth.
- Baatjes, I., & Mathe, K. (2004). Adult basic education and social change in South Africa (1994–2003). *Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa*, 393-420.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Baulo, J.M., & Nabua, E.B. (2019). *Behaviourism. Its implication for education*. ResearchGate.
- Balachandran, V. & Brintha, P. (2012). Empowering rural women through self-help groups. A study with special reference to Madurai District. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 4 (1), 61-77.

Bertram, C. & Christiansen, I. (2015). *Understanding research: An introduction to reading research*. 4th Ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Borradaile, K., Martinez, A., & Schochet, P. (2021) Adult Education Strategies: Identifying and Building Evidence of Effectiveness. *Mathematica Policy Research* (No. d68c0b00012645acb7b8644749cec0cc).

Botha, F. (2010). The impact of educational attainment on household poverty in South Africa. *Acta Academia*, 42 (4), 122-147.

Burt, J., James, A, Walters, S, & Von Kotze, A. (2020). Working for a living: Popular education as/ at work for social-ecological justice. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education*, 1.2 (36), DOI: 10.4314/ sajeev36i1.2 ISSN 2411-5959.

Cameron, R., & Harrison, J.L. (2012). The interrelatedness of formal, non-formal and informal learning: Evidence from labour market program participants. *Australian Journal of Adult Education*, 52 (2). pp. 3-33.

Ceballos, R. M. (2006). Adult education for community empowerment. *Global issues and adult education: Perspectives from Latin America, Southern Africa, and the United States*, 319-331.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K., (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. London. Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. 7th Ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Cooke, J. (1996). *The tomy of the migrant labour hostels*. Unpublished research paper, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Coombs, P. H. & Ahmed, M. (1974). *Attacking rural poverty. How non-formal education can help?* Baltimore: John Hopkins University.

Coombs. (1968). *The politics and development*: Nairobi Oxford University Press.

Coombs. (1968) cited in Youngman, F. (2000). *The politics and development*: Nairobi Oxford University Press.

Constitution of Gabisile National Centre (2008).

Creswell, J.W., (2003). *Research design. qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods design*. (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Clark, D.A. (2007). The capability approach: Its development, critiques, and recent advances. *Global Poverty Research Group*- 081. pp. 1-18.

Chan, C.K. (2015). *Experiential community service projects. Engineering Education enhancement and research*. Asia. E3R Asia.

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods design*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W., Ebersohn, L., Eloff, R., Ferreira, R., Ivankola, N.V., Nieuwenhuis, J., Pieterse, J., Clark, P., & Van der Westhuizen, C. (2014). *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.

Creswell, J.W., Ebersohn, L., Eloff, R., Ferreira, R., Ivankola, N.V., Nieuwenhuis, J., Pieterse, J., Clark, P., & Van der Westhuizen, C. (2016). *First Steps in Research*. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.

Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed research methods*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, D. (2018). *Research designs*. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.

Crowe, M., Inder, M. & Porter, R. (2015). *Conducting qualitative research in mental health: Thematic and content analyses*. Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 49(7), pp.616-623.

Delius, P. (2017). The History of Migrant Labour in South Africa (1800–2014). In *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of African History*.

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within*. UNESCO.

Eaton, S.E. (2012). Formal, non-formal and informal learning. What are the differences? Literacy, Languages and Leadership. Europe. Council of Europe.

Ellias, J.L., & Merriam, S.B. (2005). *Philosophical foundations of adult education: (3rd ed.)*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger.

Faure, E., Herrera, F., Kaddoura, A., Lopes, H., Petrovsky, A. V., Rahnema, M., and Ward, F. C. (1972). *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: UNESCO

Fordham, P.E. (1993). Informal, non-formal, and formal education programs in YMCA George Williams College ICE 301 *Lifelong learning Unit 2*, London: YMCA, George William College.

Flick, U, Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I. (2004). *A companion to qualitative research*. London. Sage Publications.

Freire, P. (1972). Education: domestication or liberation? *Prospects*, 2(2), 173-181.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York. Continuum Publishing.

Gelderblom, D., Kok, P., & Kok, P. C. (1994). *Urbanisation: South Africa's Challenge*. South Africa. HSRC Press.

Goebel, A., Dodson, B., Hill, T. (2010). Urban advantage or urban penalty? A case study of female headed households in a South African city. *Health & Place*. 2010; 16 (3):573-580.

Goman, C.K. (2015). *Why you are more successful in a face-to-face meeting*. Singapore. Forbes Publishing Co. <https://www.forbes.com>.

Goddard, & Melville, M. (2001). Research methodology. An introduction. (2nd ed.). Lansdowne. Juta & Co. Ltd.

Hammond, D., Flook, L. Harvey, C. & Barron, B. (2019). *Implications for the educational practice of the science of learning and development*. 24(1): 1-44. doi 10888691.2018.1537791.

Hitt, M, Ireland R.D., & Hoskisson, R.E. (2013). *Strategic management: Competitiveness and globalisation*. United States of America. Southwestern Publishing Co.

Hopfer, C. (1997). Empowering adult education in Namibia and South Africa during and after apartheid. *International review of education*, 43(1), 43-59.

Horng, J.L., and Ming, L.W. (2011). *Adult participation in informal learning activities. Key findings from the adult education and participation*. Taiwan. National Chi Nan University.

Hughey, J. (2020). Individual personalised learning. *Educational considerations*, 46(2). <https://doi.org/10.4148/0146-9282-2237>.

Husen, T. (1986). *The learning society revisited*. Oxford. Pergamon.

Hindle, T. (1998). *Managing meetings*. London, UK. DK.

Hlela, A.Z.N. (2017). *Participatory community learning for community empowerment: A case study in Maputaland*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of KwaZulu Natal.

Jarvis, P. (2004). *Adult education and lifelong learning*. London. Routledge Falmer.

Jump up. (2009). Health and human rights. World Health Organizations. <http://www.HHRETH-activities.pdf>.

King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality. (2018). *Integrated Development Plan*. Available from <http://ksd.gov.za>

King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality. (2020). *Integrated Development Plan*. Available from <http://ksd.gov.za>

Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (revised and updated). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Cambridge Adult Education.

Knowles, M. (1990). *The adult learner, a neglected species*. (4th Ed.) Houston: Gulf Publishing.

Knowles, M.S. (1984). *Andragogy in action*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Knowles, M.S., Holton, E., & Swanson, R. (2012). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (7th Ed.). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Kolb, A.Y., & Kolb, D.A. (2010b). *Experiential learning theory bibliography: Recent research 2006-2010*. Cleveland: Experience-based. Learning systems. www.learningfromexperience.com.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Laal, M. (2012). Collaborative learning. *What is it?* <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/224766528>. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.12.092.

Lawler, P. A. (1991). *The Keys to Adult Learning: Theory and Practical Strategies*. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools.

Lave J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1998). Legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. In R. Mc Cormick & C. Paechter (Eds.), *learning and knowledge*. London. *Paul Chapman Publishing*. pp. 21-35.

Lazarus, R.S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. Springer. New York.

Lebron, L. (2013). What is culture? *Merit Research Journal of Education*.1 (6). 126-132

LeBlanc, A.L., & Nosik, M.R. (2019). Planning and leading effective meetings. *Behaviour Analysis in Practice*. Association for Behavioural [http:// doi.org/10.1007/s40617-019-00330z](http://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-019-00330z)

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. (2015). *Practical research. Planning and design* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Lincoln, Y.S and Guba, E.G. (1985). *The evaluative criteria- Qualitative Research: Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, Ca: Sage Publication.

Lucket, T., Walters, S., & Von Koetze, A. (2017). Remembering practices of popular education in the struggles of alternate S.A. London and New Jersey, CACE Publications.

Mabetoa, M. (1994). Cycles of disadvantage of African families in South Africa. *African family and marriage under stress*, 81-97.

Macia, M., and Garcia, I. (2016). Informal online communities and networks as a source of teacher professional development: A review. *Teaching and teacher education*, 55, 291-307.

Malema, D.R. & Naidoo, S. (2017). Spaces for empowerment: Rural arts and craft project, *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure*, 2 (6), 1-17.

Margaret, C. and Bradley, A. (2009). Data collection methods. *Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. Santa Monica, U.S. Rand National Defence Research Institute Corporation.

Marsick, V.J. & Watkins, K.E. (1990). *Informal and incidental learning in the workplace*. New York: Routledge.

Meredith, S. & Francis, D.L. (2017). The challenges of organizational agility. *Industrial and Commercial Training* 49 (1): 6-14.

Merriam, B.S., & Caffarella, R.S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood. A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco CA: Jossey- Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1990). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1998). *Contemporary paradigms of learning. Adult Education Quarterly*, 46(3), 158-173.

- Miller, C.T. (2001). *The application of Carl Rogers' person-centred learning theory to web-based instruction*. Morehead State University.
- Morgan, D.L. (2014). *Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: A pragmatic approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mouton, J. (1996). *Understanding social research*. A South African guide and resource book. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mouton, J. (2013). *How to succeed in your master's & doctoral studies*. A South African guide and resource book. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Muodumogu, C. A. (2012). Literacy needs of non-literate women in the Benue State of Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 2 (2), 176-185. ISSN:2223-4934 E
- Mohammed, S.U., & Kinyo, L. (2020). The role of education. *Journal of critical reviews*, 7, 249-256.
- Neuman, W.L. (2006). *Social Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. U.S.A: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2016). *Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques in* Maree, K. *First steps in research*. (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Ndlela, N.C. (2019). *An exploration of learning in a women's church group*. A case study of a catholic women's group in Pietermaritzburg Region. Unpublished dissertation. University of Kwa –Zulu Natal.
- Ngozwana, N. (2020). Adult learning theory, andragogy by adult educators in adult learners in the context of Eswatini. *UNWESA Journal of Education*, 3(1).43-54.
- Nyumba, T.O., Wilson, K, Christina, J. and Mukherjee, C. (2018). *The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights for two decades of application conversation*.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Johnson, R.B. (2006). The validity issue in mixed research. *Research in the Schools*, 13(1), pp.48-63.
- OECD. (2000). *Knowledge management in the learning society*. Paris. OECD Publishing.

Patton, M.Q., 2002. Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, 1(3), pp.261-283.

Preece, J. (2014). Community engagement and service learning in South African Universities: Towards an adaptive engagement approach. *Alternation Special Edition* 9:265-291.

Ragnarsson V. and Bak, M. (2020). *Women, the powerlessness of appearance*. Published January 2020.

Ramachandran, V. (1999). Adult education: a tale of empowerment denied. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 877-880.

Reddy, E.S. (1993). *The struggle for liberation in South Africa and international solidarity: A selection of papers published by the United Nations Centre against apartheid*, New Delhi: Sterling.

Richardson, K. & Houghton, V.P. (1975). Recurrent education: A plea for lifelong learning education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*. 23 (1). 100-101. doi 10.2307/3119997.

Roberts, A. (2008). *Empowerment, participation, and social work*. New York. Palgrave MacMillan.

Rogers, A. (1997). *Non-formal education. Flexible schooling and participatory education?* Hong Kong. The University of Hong Kong.

Sachs, C.E. (2018). *Gendered Fields. Rural women, agriculture and environment*. New York. London. Routledge. Statistics South Africa, 2011, *Mid-year population estimates: 2011*, viewed 25 October 2013. From <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/p0302/p03022011.pdf>.

Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. *Advances in nursing science*. 8(3), pp. 27–37.

Schwandt, T. A., (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionist in Denzin N.K. and Y. S. Lincoln. Y.S. (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 189 – 215.

Segar, J. (1991). Living in anonymity: conditions of life in the hostels of Cape Town. *South African sociological review*, pp. 40-61.

Sen & Grown (1988) cited in Youngman, F. (2000). *The politics and development*: Nairobi Oxford University Press.

Soni, S. (2012). *Lifelong learning*. Education and training. Nigeria.

Smit, R. (2001). The impact of labour migration on African families in South Africa: Yesterday and today. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 32(4), 533-548.

Stahl, C. W. (1979). Southern African migrant labour supplies in the past, the present, and the future, with special reference to the gold mining industry. *International Labour Organization*. (No. 991845613402676).

Silverman, M.N., & Deuster, P.A. (2020) Biological mechanisms underlying the role of fitness in health and resilience. United States of America. Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences.

Skinner, B.F. (2011). *About behaviourism*. New York. Knopf.

Stein, M., & Miller, H, (1973). Recurrent education. *Higher Education*. 28 (1). 30-37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.1973.tb00449.x>.

Thompson, N., Murphy, M. (1994). *Dealing with stress*. London. Macmillan.

Tawiah, S., & Ngmenkpieo, F. (2018). Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa: The perspectives of rural women in Khotso. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(1), 57-57.

Teddle, C. and Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(1), pp.77-100.

Tuso, P. and Perm (2015). Strategies to increase physical activity. Fall, 19(4), pp. 84-88. [doi:10.7812/tpp/14-242](https://doi.org/10.7812/tpp/14-242). PMID:26517440.

Youngman, F. (2000). *The political economy of Adult Education and Development*. New York. London. St. Martin's Press, Zed Books.

Youngman, F. (2000). *The Political Economy of Adult Education and Development. Global Perspectives on Adult Education and Training. St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, ISBN: 1-85649-676-7.*

UNESCO. (1997). *Education for all 1997-2000: Achievements and challenges*. The EFA Global Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. (2015). *Concept Note on the post-2015 education agenda. Education. UNESCO guidelines on intercultural education*. Retrieved. December 2015. doi:10.13140/rg.2.2.339.25.70881.

UNESCO. (2019). *An analysis of the national definition of adult learning and education in light of UNESCO's 2015 recommendations*. Retrieved. August 2019. doi: 10.13140/rg.2.2.339.25.70881.

Van Schalkwyk, S. Broonzaier, F, Gobodo- Madikizela, P. (2014). *Selves in contradiction: Power and powerlessness in South African shelter residents' narratives of leaving abusive heterosexual relationships*. SAGE journals. Sage publishing .com <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353513513514245>.

Vosloo, C. (2020). Extreme apartheid: The South African system of migrant labour and its hostels. *Image & Text*, (34), 1-33.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1997). *Mind in society. The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walter, S. Ed, Manicom, Linzi, Ed (2005). *Gender in popular education methods for empowerment*. London and New Jersey, CACE Publications.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., Trayner, B., and de Laat, M. (2011). *Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: A conceptual framework* Heerlen, the Netherlands: Ruud de Moor Centrum, Open University of Netherlands. Available at [http://www.knowledge-architecture.com/downloads/Wenger-Trayner-De Laat-Value- Creation.pdf](http://www.knowledge-architecture.com/downloads/Wenger-Trayner-De%20Laat-Value-Creation.pdf).

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

Wojecki, A. (2007). What's identity got to do with it, anyway? Constructing adult learner identities in the workplace. Available from doi: 10.1080/02660830.2007.11661547.

World Health Organisation. (2022, October 5). *Physical exercise and activity*. Switzerland. Geneva.

Zimmer- Gembeck, M. & Skimmer, E.A. (2016). Coping strategies. *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*.

APPENDIX A: Gate keeper's Informed consent form

The chairperson: Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre: Ngangelizwe

Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre

Ngangelizwe Satellite

Library

Ngangelizwe
Mthatha
22 March 2019

The Chairperson
Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre
Ngangelizwe Satelite Library
Ngangelizwe
Mthatha

Dear Mrs. Peter-Mxoli

Re: Request for permission to conduct an educational study at Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre

The purpose of this communication is to request Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre to grant permission to conduct an educational study in the Faculty of Education.

My name is Alicia Neziwe Mbebe; I am a Master of Education student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. I have submitted the proposal to the University of KwaZulu Natal and have been accepted provided corrections and revisions / extensions are carried out to the satisfaction of the supervisor. That has been done and resubmitted based on the recommendations made by the panel that reviewed my proposal oral presentation.

The title of my research project is: **An investigation of rural women as they assume roles in households and communities: A case study in the Eastern Cape.**

The broad focus of the research project is to explore the coping strategies learned by elderly women in the context of GNC in order to deal with or survive in their new family roles.

Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre has been identified as a possible site of research for this project to yield some data that will help us understand the role of elderly women in supporting their households and communities, especially in the patriarchal society of the Eastern Cape.

The lack of training to prepare women in heading households in a patriarchal society has a disadvantage to most women which resulted in challenges in the household and communities. Qualitative research will be conducted because the researcher needs to establish the extent to which coping strategies learned at Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre are applied by elderly women in their daily lives. Exploratory follow-up will be done to clarify the correlation between the coping strategies learned and their daily lives in supporting their households and communities. Observation, individual semi-structured, and focus group interviews should take about forty- five to sixty minutes.

Permission will be sought to see the elderly women engaging in their daily activities with their facilitators at Gogo Novoti Elderly People's Centre. The interviews will be arranged and conducted with students as explained above.

This process of data collection would not interfere with the day-to-day activities of the Centre. Their participation and their rights in the research processes will be conveyed and each participant will be asked to sign the informed consent forms if she feels to be part of the study. Also, they will be informed of their voluntary participation. Their permission would be sought prior to their participation in the data collection process.

Please note that:

- All confidentiality will be guaranteed as inputs from participants will not be attributed individually to persons. Should the need arise for participant attribution, these would be done with the express permission of the individual concerned, and that pseudonyms would be used to protect the participants' anonymity.
- Any information given by the participants cannot be used against any of the participants, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- The choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research will be left on to the participant. No one will be penalized for taking such an action.

- The interviews will be recorded.
- Participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I can be contacted at: Email: nmapangwana@wsu.ac.za, Cellular phone number: 0834753658,
Home Number: Work number: 0475 02 1991

You may also contact my Research Supervisor, Dr Zamo Hlela: E-Mail address:
HlelaZ@ukzn.ac.za and office number +27 31 2605849

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Kind Regards



Ms Alicia Neziwe Mbebe

APPENDIX B: Informed consent document

Gogo Novoti Elderly Centre

Ngangelizwe location

MTHATHA

14 August 2021

Dear Ms Mbebe

AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

I Mxoli Nomfuneko, the chairperson of Gogo Novoti Elderly Centre hereby grant you the permission

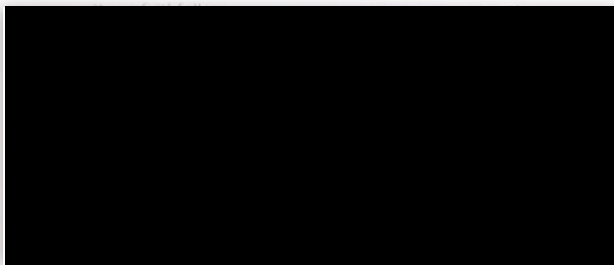
to conduct your research study at our place. I grant you the permission to conduct your study with

our members. We would be glad to cooperate with you on your research project/study. We wish

you all the best in your study.

Yours faithfully

N.Mxoli



APPENDIX C: Informed consent document

Dear Participant,

My name is Alicia Neziwe Mbebe, Student Number 217080876. I am a Master of Education candidate in Adult Education studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: **An investigation of rural women as they assume roles in households and communities: A case study in the Eastern Cape.**

The aim of the study is to explore and describe the coping strategies learnt by the elderly women in the context of GNC in order to deal or survive in their new family roles. In order for me to fulfil the requirements for my degree, I am required to conduct an independent research study. I have chosen elderly women as a phenomenon for study. You have been selected as a participant of this study. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action. Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes, but interviews would not be terminated in the interest of time if you still have something to say beyond the estimated time. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning. If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal at Pietermaritzburg Campus. Email: nmapangwana@wsu.ac.za Cell: 0834753658. My supervisor is Dr. Zamo Hlela who is located at the School of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email: HlelaZ@ukzn.ac.za. Phone: 033 260 5849.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Kind regards

Alicia Neziwe Mbebe

APPENDIX D: Declaration by the participants

I..... (Full names of participants) 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 free to withdraw from the project at any time, should I wish to do so. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I CONSENT / DO NOT CONSENT to have this interview recorded (Delete what is not applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Thank You for your participation.

ISIHLOMELO D: ISIFUNGO SOMTHATHI-NXAXHEBA

Mna..... (Igama nefani lomthathi-nxaxheba) ndiyaqinisekisa ukuba ndiyakuqonda okubhalwe kolu xwebhu kwanendlela oluza kwenziwa ngayo olu phando, yaye ndiyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando.

Ndiyafunda ukuba ndivumelekile ukuba ndibe nokurhoxa nanini na xa ndiziva ndifuna ukwenjenjalo. Ndiyayiqonda injongo yolu phando. Ngoko ke, ndiyavuma ukuthatha inxaxheba.

NDIYAVUMA / ANDIVUMI ukuba lurekhodwe olu dliwano-ndlebe (Cima leyo ungayikhethiyo)

UKUSAYINA KOMTHATHI-NXAXHEBA

UMHLA

Ndiyabulela ngokuthatha kwakho inxaxheba.

APPENDIX E: INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS SCHEDULED FOR THE RURAL WOMEN AT GABISILE NATIONAL CENTRE

The individual semi-structured interview guide

Interview guide questions

Section A: Biographical information of the participant

1. How old are you?
2. What is your marital status?
3. Where do you stay?
4. What is your level of education?

Section B: Being a member of the Gabisile National Centre

1. How did you know the centre?
2. When did you join the centre?
3. Why have you decided to become a member of the GNC?

Section C: Educational activities

1. What are the educational activities offered at GNC?
2. May you explain the educational activities at the centre in view of the new and old members?
3. How have the educational activities evolved over the period that you have been a participant in the programme?
4. What other educational activities would you want to have?
5. Are you able to transfer what you have learned to other people at home or community?

Section D: Learning strategies at GNC

1. What have you learned at GNC?
2. How did you learn at GNC?
3. How effective are the learning strategies that are used at the centre?
4. Do you have any suggestions on how learning can be enhanced at the centre?

Section E: Knowledge and skills gained

1. What have you gained from the programme at GNC?
2. If you compare your life before learning at GNC, can you identify some changes?
3. Are you able to transfer what you have learnt to other people at home or community?
4. What do you like most about being a member at GNC?
5. Is there anything that you dislike as a member at Gabisile?

The researcher asked the participants to add if there was a need. The participants were told that they would be informed about the findings.

The participants were also thanked for their participation.

**ISIHLOMELO E: ISICWANGCISO SEMIBUZO ELUNGISELELWE OOMAMA
ABALUPHELEYO BASEGABISILE NATIONAL CENTRE**

Isikhokelo sodliwano-ndlebe olubulungiselelwa lomntu ngamnye

Isikhokelo sodliwano-ndlebe

Icandelo A: Ingcaciso ngobomi bomntu ngamnye

1. Mingaphi iminyaka yomama owalupheleyo?
2. Ingaba unaye umlingane?
3. Uphela kubani esikolweni?

Icandelo B: Ukuba lilungu e Gabisile National Centre

1. Wazi njani ngeli qela we GNC?
2. Wazibandakanya neli qela ngawuphi unyaka?
3. Kwakutheni ukuze uzibandakanye neli qela? [Mthundeze ukuze ufumane iinkcukacha]

Icandelo C: Inxaxheba zemfundo

1. Zeziphi iintshukumo zemfundo ozifunde kwiziko Mfundo e GNC?
2. Cacisa iintshukumo zemfundo ezifundwe ngoo makhulu abatsha okanye ekudala bese GNC?
3. Ziqhuba njani iintshukumo zemfundo ngeli xesha uyinxalenye yokufunda kwiziko Mfundo e GNC?
4. Zeziphi ezinye iintshukumo Mfundo ozinqwenelayo ukuba zenzeke kwiziko Mfundo e GNC?

Icandelo D: Amacebo okufunda kwiziko Mfundo e GNC

1. Ziintoni ozifundileyo kwiziko Mfundo e GNC?
2. Benifunda njani kwiziko Mfundo e GNC?
3. Ingaba zilulutho kangaka iimfundiso zeengcebiso ezisetyenziswa kweli ziko Mfundo?
4. Ingaba unazo iingcebiso zokuphucula imeko yemfundo kunale iqhubekayo kweli ziko Mfundo?

Icandelo E: Ulwazi nezakhono ozifumeneyo

1. Zeziphi izakhono ozifumeneyo ngokuba ngumfundi kwizinto Mfundo lase GNC
2. Xa uthelekisa ubomi bakho bangaphambi kokuba uzibandakanye ne GNC, ungathi zeziphi izinto ezitshintshileyo?
3. Ingaba unganakho ukudlulisela okufundileyo kwabanye abantu ekhaya okanye ekuhlaleni?
4. Yintoni oyithandayo ngokuba lilungu lalapha? Uzithandelani, cacisa?
5. Zeziphi ozithanda/ozicaphukela kakhulu? Kutheni uzicaphukela nje?

Ingaba unayo into ofuna ukuyongeza phambi kokuba sivale olu dliwano ndlebe besinalo.

Ndiyabulela ngokuthatha kwakho inxaxheba

APPENDIX F: Focus group Interview Schedule

Focus group interviews

Section A: Educational activities at GNC

1. How are new members introduced to the group?
2. How do new members made to feel part of the group?
3. How has your membership, or involvement in the GNC changed your life?
4. How would you describe your relationship with other people before you came at GNC? [Probing question – Why was your relationship like that?]
5. How would you describe your relationship with other people before you came at GNC? [Probing question – Why was your relationship like that?]
6. How would you describe your relationship with other people after you came at GNC? [Probing question – Why was your relationship like that?]

Section B: learning activities

1. How does your association with GNC help you in your daily life?
2. How do you support each other as women?
3. When you have a problem, do you share it with other members at GNC?
[Probing question will follow if yes/no why?]
4. What have you learnt from being a member of this group?
5. What has been your biggest gain in this group?
6. Did learning as a group changed your life? Support your answer

Section C: Knowledge and skills

1. What is the role of women who have been in the group for a long time (old timers) in the different educational activities?
2. What is the role of women who have been in the group for the shortest time (new timers) in the different activities?
3. Are the roles different or similar?

4. If you compare your life before joining GNC and now; what changes can you identify?
5. Mention one strategy that you like most and why?
6. Are you able to use those strategies in your household and community?

Lastly: The researcher asked the participants to add if there was a need to do so. The researcher told them that they will be informed about the findings

The researcher also thanked them for their participation.

**ISIHLOMELO F: ISICWANGCISO SEMIBUZO ELUNGISELELWE OOMAMA
ABALUPHELEYO BASEGABISILE NATIONAL CENTRE**

**ISIHLOMELO F: Isikhokelo sodliwano-ndlebe olubulungiselelwa lomntu ngamnye
Isikhokelo sodliwano-ndlebe**

Icandelo A: Inxaxheba zemfundo

1. Niwaziswa njani amalungu amatsha kweli qela?
2. Yintoni eyenziwayo ukwenzela ukuba amalungu amatsha azive amkelekile kweli qela?
3. Ibutshintshe njani ubomi bakho into yokuba lilungu okanye ukubandakanyeka kwi GNC?
4. Ungabucacisa njani ubudlelwane bakho nabanye abantu phambi kokuba ubeyinxlenye yeziko i GNC?
5. Ungabucacisa njani ubudlelwane bakho nabanye abantu emva kokuba ubeyinxlenye yeziko i GNC?

Icandelo B: Amacebo okufunda kwiziko Mfundo e GNC

1. Ingaba ikuncedise kangakanani into yokuba yinxalenye yeli ziko kubomi bakho bemihla-ngemihla?
2. Nixhasana njani njengoomama?
3. Xa unomthwalo ingaba uyaludinga uncedo kwabanye oomama? [Mthundeze ukuze ufumane iinkcukacha]
4. Yintoni oyifundileyo ngokuba lilungu leliziko?
5. Yeyiphi eyona nto inkulu uyizuzileyo kweli qela?
6. Ingaba ukufunda neqela lomama libutshintshile ubomi bakho?

Icandelo C: Ulwazi nezakhono ezifunyenwe kweli ziko

1. 1. Xa kusenziwa izinto ngezinto, yintoni eyenziwa ngoomama ekusele kukudala bekweli qela?

2. Xa kusenziwa izinto ngezinto, yintoni eyenziwa ngoomama abangabona basanda kufika kweli qela?
3. Ngaba iyafana okanye yahlukile indima edlalwa ngoomama abafikayo kunye nabo kukudala bekhona?
4. Xa uthelekisa ubomi bakho bangaphambi kokuba uzibandakanye ne GNC, ungathi zeziphi izinto ezitshintshileyo?
5. Xela isisombululo sibe sinye osithande kakhulu kweli ziko, kuba kutheni, cacisa?
6. Ingaba uyakwazi ukuzisebenzisa ezo zisombululo ekhaya okanye ekuhlaleni?

Ungahlomla xa kukho into ofuna ukuyongeza.

Ndiyabulela kakhulu ngexesha lakho

APPENDIX G: Interviews schedule for the founder Ms. Gabisile

1. How did you conceptualize GNC? [Probing questions if necessary]
3. How are members at GNC recruited?
4. What are the activities that are offered in the centre?
5. How is learning provided to the participants at the centre?
6. How is the learning programme structured for the new and the old members?
7. How do women support one another? Support your answer.

You can add anything that you feel you want to add before the end of our interviews.

Thank you very much for participation.

ISIHLOMELO G: Udliwano ndlebe nomqali weziko

Icandelo A

1. Kwakutheni ukuze ucinge ngeli ziko [Mthundeze Ukuze akunike Iinkcukacha]
2. Zeziphi iindlela enenza ngazo kweli ziko ukuze umntu azi ngeli ziko kwaye abelilungu?
3. Yeyiphi imisebenzi eyenziwayo kweli ziko?
4. Kufundwa njani kweli ziko?
5. Icwangciswe njani indlela yokufunda kweli ziko?
6. Baxhasana ngoluphi uhlobo oomama kweli ziko?

Ndicela wongeze xa kukho into ofuna ukuyongeza.

Ndibulela kakhulu ngenxaxheba oyithathileyo.

APPENDIX H: Observation schedule

Item to be observed	Yes	No
Knitting activities		
Sewing activities		
Cooking activities		
Pottery		
Health education issues		
Sporting activities		
Recognition of prior knowledge		
Demonstrations conducted before the activity		
Active learner involvement		
Evidence of peer support		
Evidence of absorption in activities		
Evidence of facilitator support and supervision		
Are the products from the programme of satisfactory standards		
Records of stock		

Stock sales records		
Profit sharing records		

APPENDIX I: Ethical certificate



17 March 2020

Mrs Alicia Neziwe Mbebe (217080876)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Mbebe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000469/2019
Project title: An investigation of rural old women as they assume roles in households and communities: A case study in the Eastern Cape
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 10 September 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 17 March 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS