

Adult Learning in a Bible Study Group:
An Apostolic Faith Mission Case Study
in the Bulwer Rural Area

By

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2022
Pietermaritzburg

Abstract

The way in which adults learn the Bible depends on the approach that the church uses when it comes to Bible teachings. This study explored what keeps adults coming to Bible study group meetings, and what and how they learn from their involvement in the group. The study focused on the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of Southern Africa in the Bulwer rural area within the Harry Gwala region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

This study was located within the interpretative paradigm and used a qualitative approach. The data of the study was collected through the telephonic interviews with five participants who are active members of the AFM Bible study group in Bulwer. The study adopted Schugurensky's (2000) conceptual framework regarding the forms of informal learning and Wenger's (1998) communities of practice as its theoretical framework.

The findings of the study indicate that adults joined the Bible study group to learn about God, because they are hungry for God's Word. Members of the group believe that they learn to develop their spiritual being and to dwell in God's Word. The data showed that the group assists its members to share information with each other, and that members believe that you cannot learn the Bible well by yourself – learning the Bible is better when you do it within a group of people. This is particularly so for the members who cannot read. Additionally, it was revealed that the leader of the group plays an important role in the group, particularly because he is responsible for reading the Bible to the group. The members feel happy come to the Bible study meetings because they are all treated equally. The major recommendations arising from the study are that the AFM in Bulwer needs to carefully consider the scheduling of Bible study group meetings, as well as look at ways in which it can better support adults who are not literate.

Keywords: Bible study group; Adult learning; Informal learning; Community of practice;

Adult learner motivation

Declaration

I, Nondumiso Heather Zaca, declare that

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank God the Father for the protection and the wisdom he offered me throughout this journey.

Futhermore, I would like to extend my grateful to:

- a) Dr. Anne Harley, my supervisor, and Dr. Lulama Mbatha, my co-supervisor, for their support and motivation. I have so enjoyed this journey with you as my guides. Thanks for believing in me and my ability to accomplish this degree. Your insights and experience in this journey have been treasures in shaping my thesis.
- b) The participants of this study - it would have been impossible to comple this dissertation without you.
- c) Msawande, my husband, who supported me through the journey with generous support. Thanks, my dear husband, for your endless love and substantial support throughout my studies. Getting to this point in my life would not have been possible without your generosity.
- d) A special dedication to my mother Thembani, my sister Nontuthuko, my late brother Nkosiyethu and my late father Jabulani for their devotion to a good education.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all members of the Apostolic Faith Mission.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	2
1.2.1 The Apostolic Faith Mission	2
1.2.2 Bible study groups.....	3
1.2.3 The Bulwer Apostolic Faith Mission Bible study group.....	4
1.3 Rationale.....	6
1.4 Research questions	7
1.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework.....	7
1.6 Research design.....	7
1.7 Outline of the dissertation	8
1.8 Chapter summary	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.....	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Bible study groups.....	9
2.2.1 Women’s Bible study groups	10
2.2.2 Men’s Bible study groups	10
2.2.3 Youth Bible study groups.....	10
2.2.4 Adult Bible study groups	11
2.3 Bible study group approaches	11
2.3.1 The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa’s approach to Bible study	15
2.4 Adult learning in Bible study groups	16
2.5 Theoretical and conceptual framework.....	19
2.5.1 Community of practice theory.....	20
2.5.2 Nonformal and informal learning.....	27

2.6 Chapter summary	29
Chapter 3: Research Design And Methodology	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Research paradigm	30
3.3 Research approach.....	31
3.4 Research style.....	31
3.5 Reseach context.....	32
3.6 Sampling	33
3.7 Data generation methods.....	34
3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	35
3.7.2 Telephonic interviews	35
3.8 Data analysis	36
3.9 Ethical issues.....	37
3.10 Trustworthiness	37
3.11 Limitations	39
3.12 Chapter summary	39
Chapter 4: Presentation of Data	40
4.1 Introduction	40
4.2. Description of participants	40
4.3 Interview data.....	41
4.3.1 Fikile	41
4.3.2 Mandla.....	45
4.3.3 Pastor Mduduzi Dladla.....	48
4.3.4 Makhosi.....	53
4.3.5 Sipho	55
4.4 Chapter summary	57
Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Discussion	58

5.1 Introduction	58
5.2 Research Question 1: What motivated participants to join the Bible study group, and why do they remain members?.....	58
5.2.1 Spiritual growth.....	58
5.2.2 Collective learning as a motivation to remain a member.....	59
5.2.3 Sense of belonging as a motivation to remain a member.....	60
5.2.4 Providing guidance for daily life as the motivation to remain a member	61
5.3 Research Question 2: What do participants believe they have learned through their participation in the group?	62
5.3.1 Bible study group as a place for learning more profound knowledge and understanding of God	62
5.3.2 Bible study is a place to learn communication skills	63
5.3.3 Learning to form a new or different viewpoint or belief.....	64
5.4 Research Question 3: How have the participants learned through their participation in the group?.....	65
5.4.1 Learning through structured informal learning	65
5.4.2 Learning through socialisation	66
5.4.3 Learning is not self-directed.....	67
5.4.4 How learning happens as a community of practice.....	67
5.5 Chapter summary	68
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	69
6.1 Introduction	69
6.2 Reviewing the focus of the study	69
6.3 Summary of findings.....	69
6.3.1 What motivated participants to join, and why they stay?.....	69
6.3.2 What do participants believe they have learned?	69
6.3.3 How have participants learned?	70
6.4 Recommendations arising from the study	70

6.5 Reflections on undertaking this study	71
6.6 Conclusion.....	72
References	74
Appendix 1: Interview schedule.....	78
Appendix 2: Informed consent letter.....	80
A. Church Pastor	80
B. Church Elder.....	83
C. Ordinary Church Member	86

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Bulwer village.....	1
Figure 2: AFM church in Bulwer.....	3

Table of Tables

Table 1: Participant categories	34
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Abbreviations

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
CoP	Community of Practice
COVID-19	Corona Virus 2019 (date pandemic emerged)
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
SACWG	St Anne’s Catholic Women’s Group

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in South Africa is a classical Pentecostal Christian church (Ellwood, 2008). Pentecostal means a Christian movement that emphasizes direct personal experience with God through baptism by the Holy Spirit (Ellwood, 2008). Some Pentecostals use the words Apostolic or full Gospel to describe their movement. It is missional, which means endeavouring to develop real and meaningful relationship with God (Ellwood, 2008).

This study focuses on adult learning in an AFM Bible study group in Bulwer, a small village in the Harry Gwala District of KwaZulu-Natal, close to the Amahwaqa mountains. The community members still believe in *Ubuntu* (humanism); as a community, we know each other and care for each other. It is a close-knit community, where ancestors still play an important role in most people's lives. In this village, we have a traditional leader (chief) who looks after the community members. It is a peaceful community; when you wake up in the morning you are able to hear the birds in the forest sing for you, and we still go to the forest to collect wood for making the fires we use for cooking.



Figure 1: Bulwer village

In Bulwer, there is a place called Xhoseyakhe. This place is in the middle of Bulwer, and it is where I was born and brought up. My father passed on when I was still young, and his passing changed everything in our lives; he was the only person who was working at that time. After my father passed on, there was no one to put the food on the table, and sometimes we would go to bed without food. My mother was forced to go to Pietermaritzburg to look for a job. As the firstborn, I became the mother of my siblings. It was at this time that I found Christ Jesus. He has become the pillar of strength in my life. Even as a child, I attended Bible study group every week. I joined the study group because I wanted to learn and know more about God's Word.

I have been a member of the Bulwer AFM adult Bible study group for many years. The group meets every week. Although Kent (2017) reports that Bible study groups sometimes fail, the Bulwer AFM adult Bible study group is still active after a long time. Why do the participants keep coming to the Bible study every Wednesday regardless of the walking distance and their health? In this rural area, many people cannot read, whilst others can read but they cannot read for meaning. Many of the adults in the Bible study group are in this position. This study questions how people learn in the Bible study group and what they believe they have learned from attending the Bible study group.

This chapter begins with some background about the AFM and the Bible study group, which is the focus of the study, and describes the context in which the study is conducted. It then explains the purpose and rationale of the study, before presenting the research questions that formed its basis. Then it gives a brief review of the conceptual and theoretical framework and the research methodology. The chapter concludes with an outline of the rest of the thesis.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The Apostolic Faith Mission

The AFM was founded in South Africa in 1908 by two American missionaries, John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch (Kgatle, 2017). It is one of the oldest Pentecostal movements, and is the largest Pentecostal church in South Africa. The mission of AFM is to make Christ known to people through prayer, preaching, and the printed and spoken word. An AFM pastor is generally not formally trained, but is chosen by the church members, believing that they have been called by God to minister to them. The AFM in South Africa is a growing church that prioritises church planting and growth, and has spread to all urban and rural areas.

The Bulwer AFM is a Holiness Pentecostal church in the Bulwer rural area at a place called Enkelabantwana tribal, where it moved in 1991. It was originally formed in 1988 in the tribal area known as Sharp. At that time, there was no church building and the pastor's home was used as the place of worship.



Figure 2: AFM church in Bulwer

1.2.2 Bible study groups

Bible study groups have a long history in South Africa (Bediako, 1994), and have impacted people living in the country. This study explores how adults learn in the Bible study group of the AFM church in the Bulwer rural area of KwaZulu-Natal.

A Bible study group is usually a relatively small group of adults who generally meet regularly, often in each other's homes, over a reasonably long period of time. Bible study groups in South Africa are also called "cell groups" and they are increasing in Christian churches and homes throughout the globe as a way for Christians to make the connections they need with fellow believers. Small group fellowships, whether focused on Bible studies or a wide variety of other activities, have a tremendous impact on those who participate (Day, 2011). Bible study groups are generally intended to teach the Bible (Kent, 2017). Small group members encourage and strengthen each other in their faith using the Bible (Clark, 2005).

As Chapter 2 will show in detail, different denominations within the Christian tradition approach Bible study in different ways. However, in general, Bible study helps participants to gain more knowledge of God's Word and who God is in their lives. Participants can then apply that knowledge appropriately in their everyday lives (McAuley, 2000).

1.2.3 The Bulwer Apostolic Faith Mission Bible study group

The Bulwer AFM was formed in 1988. At that time, it did not have a church building and was using the pastor's home as the place of worship. It started in the tribal area known as Sharp, but moved to Enkelabantwana, where it currently is situated, in 1991. The first pastor to lead the Bulwer AFM was Mr Sibiya. It was felt that there was a need for a church that emphasized the Holy Spirit in the Bulwer community, and that is how the Bulwer AFM was started. Services take place every Sunday morning and during the week there are different Bible study group meetings.

The Bulwer AFM adult Bible study group started decades ago. The adults who join the Bible study are from the community and are AFM members. Usually, they have dedicated their life to Jesus. In most cases, the people who want to join the Bible study group never attended church as a child. There are also groups for the youth.

Although the AFM Bible study groups aim to develop mainly those who attend the AFM church, and church members are encouraged by the pastor to be part of Bible study groups that are within the church, if a person wants to join and is not a member of the AFM, they are still welcome to attend a Bible study group. Therefore, anyone is welcome to become a new member of the group. The people who are already members are allowed to invite their friends and relatives to join. However, many people who are invited never come; coming to the Bible study group every Wednesday does not make one a member. It takes some time to become a member. Before a person can attend the group, they need to ask permission from the elders of the group, and then the elders ask them a few questions, and give out the group rules. A new person who wants to join the group needs to attend for at least six months. During these months the elders of the church observe to see if the new member is following the rules that they were given. Therefore, elders play an important role when it comes to joining the Bible study group. They decide who can join; only if they approve, can someone become part of the group.

I chose to use the adult Bible study group for this study, one of the groups that takes place in AFM, and therefore have a personal experience of the group. It takes place outside the church, in members' homes, meeting every Wednesday at 18:00. Every member within the group has a chance to host it in their home. Each meeting I attend runs in the same way. It begins with two or three worship songs, to invite the Holy Spirit to be part of the lesson. As AFM members, it is very important to invite the Holy Spirit, because the church is rooted in the belief that everyone can be filled with the Holy Spirit, who can help them understand and interpret the Bible. After the worship songs, everyone prays to God. This gives a chance for everyone to talk to God, to thank God for protecting them, to ask God for help, to tell God about their life. When you are a born-again Christian, everything you do needs to start with a prayer, it is the way of acknowledging God in your life.

Then the group leader stands up and greets the members, welcomes all visitors to the Bible study, and gives a special greeting to the household where the meeting is taking place, asking its members to welcome the group. The family then welcomes the group. The leader again sings the worship song, and prays for the Word that will be open that day.

The group leader then reads the Bible verses for that meeting. The Word is read aloud for everyone to hear. The leader reads the Word very slowly. He reads the verse three times. This is done to make sure everyone is on the same page and those who cannot read can listen to the Word and understand. This is followed by various activities which cannot happen during the church service, such as role playing or group activities. In role playing, the leader asks members to act out the Scripture that was read. In group activities, the leader asks the members to form groups and gives each group a different topic to discuss. This allows the members to share their thoughts. After discussing the topic, each group is given time to present the topic to the wider group. During the presentation, other groups listen and ask questions. Members are encouraged to ask each other questions. This means that the Word is always discussed by the group, with everyone getting an opportunity to share their view with the group.

When the discussion time is over, the leader gives a summary of the lesson, and asks people what they have learned in the lesson, and what this will help them with. Some members bring a notebook to the Bible study to make their own notes. Then the leader asks everyone to stand and pray. This is done to thank the Word that was read that day. The leader then chooses any member to close the study with prayer. Then we all go home.

When a group of people meet over time, there are a lot of differences that emerge within the group, which can cause conflict. In the time that I have been part of the group, some new people have come to join, and some people have left. Some of the people that were there when this group began are still members, others have left, and some have passed on. The nature of the group has also changed. It was created for prayer at a time when the members felt the need to balance prayer with the Word of God, but the focus has shifted from prayer to learning God's Word through the Holy Spirit.

1.3 Rationale

The rationale for this study arises from my experience as a member of the Bible study group. I believe that the heartbeat of the church is adults. In the Bible, Jesus called on adults to be the salt and light in a dying world (Clark, 2005). Children and youth get more attention in the church than adults do, and yet Jesus called on adults to become his disciples. He clearly did not want children only. There are also many stories of adults teaching in the Bible. This tells us of the importance of adult education within Christianity. Adult Christian education should be a dynamic, interactive process where both teacher and learners have a meaningful and ongoing relationship with Biblical truth (Clark, 2005). I wanted to remind myself and my church of the importance of adult education within the church, especially Bible study.

Bible study is widely practised in South Africa and has a long history. However, there is little literature about how adults learn in Bible study groups (Spooner, 2012). There is also a lack of research in the field of Bible study in the context of rural areas specifically. In my area in Bulwer, many adults missed Sunday school when they were young. They do not have reading skills to understand the Bible. Through my study, I hoped to contribute new knowledge to contribute to this field of scholarship.

According to Kent (2017), sometimes Bible study groups fail. This might be because of an unclear purpose. Some groups are designed for outreach with a member inviting others to join, so new members may not understand the primary purpose of the Bible study. However, the Bulwer AFM adult Bible study group is still active after a long time. It is not clear why the participants keep coming to the Bible study every Wednesday regardless of the walking distance and their health.

As a member of AFM, I undertook this study with a great sense of excitement at what I might find in this study. I was particularly interested in how a Bible study group works in the

context of high adult illiteracy. In this rural area, many people cannot read; whilst others can read, they cannot read for meaning. I wanted to find out how learning occurred in the group and what kept the participants returning to the Bible study group.

1.4 Research questions

Given the purpose of the research, the research questions are as follows:

1. What motivated participants to join the Bible study group, and why do they remain members?
2. What do participants believe they have learned through their participation in the study group?
3. How have the participants learned through their participation in the study group?

1.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework

In this study, I used Schugurensky's (2000) conceptual framework of non-formal and informal learning. The reason for choosing it is that Bible study tends to be non-formal and/or informal in nature. I also used the community of practice theory developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). This study focused on participants who meet every week, sharing the same goal of learning about God in a group. This conceptual and theoretical frame serves as the structure and supports the rationale for this study, the problem statement, and the research questions. The theoretical framework helps the findings to be more meaningful and acceptable in the research field. I give more detail about this framework in Chapter 2.

1.6 Research design

This study is based within the interpretive paradigm; it looks at learning in a Bible study group from the subjective experiences of individuals. The research approach of this study is based on a qualitative approach, which, according to observations by Grimwade et al. (2004), is based on the idea that reality is a social construction by different individuals or groups who derive or ascribe meaning to specific entities, such as events, persons, processes, and objects.

The research study uses a qualitative case study research style. I chose case study because it enables me to focus on the case in question (Cohen et al., 2018). It enabled me to get information in as much depth as possible (Terre Blanche, 2008) about why participants joined the Bible study group and remained group members, and what and how they learned. Since

my research was a case study, I needed to be particular and selective about my participants, making sure I had a good and relevant choice of respondents. I used semi-structured individual interviews to gather in-depth data, and inductive and deductive thematic analysis.

1.7 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The dissertation is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1: Provided the purpose, background and rationale for the study, and introduced the theoretical and conceptual framework and research design.
- Chapter 2: I review the literature review relevant to this study. I also give details about the theoretical framework used to analyse the data.
- Chapter 3: I provide the research design and methodology of the study.
- Chapter 4: I present the data collected.
- Chapter 5: I present my analysis and interpretation of the data.
- Chapter 6: In this last chapter, I present the conclusion and recommendations for the study.

1.8 Chapter summary

This introductory chapter provided the background to this study, and outlined the rationale for engaging in this study. I presented the research questions that guided the research and summarised the study's conceptual and theoretical framework, and research design. Finally, I gave an outline of the chapters to follow. The next chapter presents the literature review and explains the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an introduction and background to this study. This was followed by the rationale of the study, and the research questions I hoped to answer. In this chapter, I first review literature related to Bible study and Bible study groups, and how adults learn in them. The primary purpose of reviewing this literature was to explore what has been done in this area to better understand the selected topic. A review of the literature helps a researcher find out what is already known about the topic and gives an overview of gaps in current knowledge so they can bring something new (Kumar, 2015).

I start the literature review by discussing what a Bible study group is, and different kinds of Bible study groups. I then explore different approaches to Bible study that are used in different churches before focusing on the AFM in South Africa. Finally, I consider other studies that have been done on adult learning in Bible study groups. After discussing the literature, I present my theoretical and conceptual framework, and review some of the studies that have used a similar framework that are in some way relevant to my own study.

2.2 Bible study groups

According to Plazy et al. (2016), a study group is a small group of people who regularly meet to discuss shared fields of study. Each group is unique and uses a different method of learning. Hammett (2019) defines a Bible study group as a space where the Bible is analysed by the group members. Reichel (2014) defines Bible study as the study of the Bible by people as a religious or spiritual practice. According to Murai and Tokosumi (2005), Bible study is the formal term for something many followers of Jesus do naturally. Bible study groups are effective groups that generate positive energy, encourage active participation, instil discipline, and require members' commitment (Legg, 2002). People come regularly to the Bible study to share their ideas and information based on the Bible (Jespers et al., 2014). According to the literature, the membership of Bible study groups might differ according to gender and age. Although there is a difference in how bible study is viewed by different scholars, in this study, I have adopted the definition by Reichel (2014) because the AFM Bible study group is focused on spiritual growth.

2.2.1 Women's Bible study groups

Women's Bible study groups are created for women to learn. Young and old women are encouraged to join the group (West, 2000). These groups give women's ministry an opportunity to share and to grow with other women (West, 2000). The purpose of these women's groups is to develop women to become disciples of Jesus Christ through group prayer and reading the Bible: "There is something powerful and life-changing when a group of women come together and share the word of God and begin to pray and study" (Nadar, 2009, p. 24).

Women's Bible study groups tend to focus on providing women with in-depth discussion of Bible stories that look at the life of women in the Bible. These stories help women to overcome life's challenges, and helps them to grow in God's Word (West & Zondi-Mabizela, 2004). Women's Bible study groups also give an opportunity for women to spend time with each other, sharing and teaching each other the word of God and the importance of being a women (Nadar, 2009). Women are able to ask questions of each other as women (West & Zondi-Mabizela, 2004).

2.2.2 Men's Bible study groups

Men's Bible study groups are places where men come to together to study the Bible so that they will gain God's wisdom. They mainly look at things that affect men (Bielo, 2011). Their study focuses on sexual purity and other issues that affect men (Nxumalo & Mchunu, 2020). The argument is that when you are a man and you attend Bible study for men you get a better and clearer understanding of the Bible than you would from another type of Bible study (Nxumalo & Mchunu, 2020). The goal is to equip men in small groups to experience change in their lives through reading the Bible and to know God through his son Jesus (Bielo, 2011).

2.2.3 Youth Bible study groups

Youth Bible study groups are for young boys and girls. Youth Bible study focuses on the "role of faith" (Richardson et al., 2019, p. 14). The lessons that are taught in youth Bible study groups introduces faith as a battle, and helps the youth to grow in knowing the Lord (Richardson et al., 2019). The goal is to equip them to become grounded in their faith as they follow Jesus (O'Connor et al., 2002). Joining a group helps the youth trust more in Jesus and put their faith in him in times of hardship and struggle (Dockrey, 1999). It is a where the

youth grow their relationship with Jesus Christ. They learn to take care of their emotions and live a Godly life. They are encouraged to find God's truth rather than taking things at face value (O'Connor et al., 2002). They also learn to love and serve each other, and to share the love that they have by exploring the character of Jesus. Youth Bible study lessons are considered as needed inside both churches and homes (Dockrey, 1999).

2.2.4 Adult Bible study groups

Adult Bible study groups include both men and women. They are places where adults are given the opportunity to learn the Bible in small groups. Adult learning is very important in the Church. In the Bible, when Jesus called people to become his disciples, he called adults; he did not call for children. This tells us the importance of adult Bible study groups. Some adults did not get a chance to attend Sunday school when they were young, and adult Bible study helps to fill that gap (Richardson & Pardun, 2015). The aim of adult Bible study is to equip adult learners with Biblical knowledge. The main focus of this study is the learning that takes place in an adult Bible study group.

2.3 Bible study group approaches

When it come to teachings in Bible study groups, different Bible study groups use different methods to teach members. Some groups follow a curriculum. They might use devotional books which have dates on them, making it clear what should be studied when, and some use their own textbooks which are designed for Bible study groups. Other groups allow the Holy Spirit to guide them when they are teaching the Bible (Legg, 2002). There are thus different approaches in Bible study groups, and a variety of different methods are used and approaches are different in different churches (Wilhoit & Ryken, 2012).

Jagerson (2013) identifies four approaches used by Bible study groups: the book survey approach, the thematic approach, the character analysis approach, and the verse-by-verse analysis approach. The **book survey approach** is a type of Bible study that focuses on surveying the whole Bible by reading each verse several times. This is to get general view of the Scripture. The participants make notes of the content. In the **thematic approach** participants choose a specific theme to study. This kind of approach involves asking questions, and giving time for participants to ask questions to each other. They are encouraged to find their own themes. The **character analysis approach** focuses on analysing Bible characters. This is done by selecting a Bible character and researching all the verses

about that character in order to study his or her life. The participants make notes on his or her attitudes and show how truths illustrated the character's life. The **verse-by-verse analysis approach** focuses on choosing one passage of Scripture and examining it in detail.

Throop's (2008) approach is different in that learning methods in Bible study groups are looked at in relation to different kinds of intelligences, using three different approaches: the factual presentation of the verses, the logic model, and the small group discussion. The **factual presentation of the verses of the Bible** is the typical method used. Throop says this style is similar to the classroom teaching approach of a generation or two earlier. It is used in many traditional or typical Bible study and Christian education settings. The **logic model** focuses on themes and links passages in the Bible to these themes. In the **small group discussion approach**, facts and feelings are balanced in the discussion (Throop, 2008).

Throop argues that these three approaches favour people who are strong on logical-mathematical intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. Those who are strong in logical-mathematical intelligence thrive on learning through logical thinking and deductive reasoning, investigating issues scientifically and logically. Interpersonal intelligence focuses on relationships and the intentions and motivations of other people, something which is drawn on in discussion, especially about how people personally apply the things being discussed. There are another six intelligences: bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and natural intelligence; these are not accommodated by the common approaches (Gardner, 1987).

Throop argues that the common kinds of Bible study learning leaves a lot of people out of the study, because not everyone will be capable of studying in the traditional framework. He suggests that the approach that needs to be used in Bible study groups is one where everyone can participate, drawing on their dominant intelligence (Gardner, 1987). This is because Bible engagement experiences work best when all participants can call on their personal gifts and strengths to understand the text and consider its meaning in their lives (Throop, 2008). Moreover, Throop argues that different methods help Bible study groups to design learning experiences that will reach more people. The methods used should help people to fully engage in the group. So groups need to find different ways to accommodate every kind of intelligence, and thus all people. Throop (2008) gives examples of how this could be done; for example, spatial intelligence as learning through observation and creating patterns;

bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is accommodated through learning by doing; and activities like role playing can help people with this kind of intelligence to learn.

Schmidt (2017), in his article *Scripture Beyond Common Sense: Sentimental Bible Study and the Evangelical Practice of “the Bible Reading”*, examines the Bible reading method which became popular among evangelicals in the late nineteenth century and has its basis in the common sense tradition. The common sense approach is described as simple – a student needs to pick a word from the Bible that might carry meaning and mark its every occurrence throughout the Bible (Schmidt, 2017). The student then studies each of the passages where the word occurs, and reflects on the revealed meaning about God’s truth. This is because God is understood to have guided the thought of the Biblical authors in their writings to express God’s truth. The common sense reading thus accepted the supernatural element of Scripture (Schmidt, 2017), but argued that any person can use their mind to reason when it comes to understanding the Scripture. This approach allows students to use their natural ability to make their own judgements (Schmidt, 2017). Understanding God’s truth could allow the student to continue living in the ways of the Lord, without needing theological training or guidance.

However, Schmidt (2017) says that the Bible reading method is best understood as a devotional exercise. It employs additional strategies that combine this common sense tradition with holiness theology. Bible reading is thus shaped by the characteristics of holiness theology and the revivals which characterised this. The prominent voices in the revival movement were largely uneducated men and women who were responding to their calling. Bible reading started as a devotional exercise arising out of this revival context (Schmidt, 2017).

According to Schmidt (2017), the word of God is adapted to the heart in the form of emotion, and thus the primary target for the Bible reading was not the intellect but the heart. During the practice, the leader selects a topic that is practical in its application and is exalting Christ. The leader in the Bible reading is not only gathering the Scripture passages using the common sense approach, but also needs to move past the plain meaning of the text to its spiritual application in daily life (Schmidt, 2017). In this way, Bible reading cultivated a personal holiness by connecting a common sense reading of Scripture with common place events (Schmidt, 2017). People need to trust the Spirit as their teacher where “Our moral and spiritual attitude and aptitude constitute a lens through which God is seen ... and if the lens is

not clear, true and colourless, it distorts and discolours all conception of God” (Schmidt, 2017, p. 77).

In yet another method, Lai (1995), in her article *The Andragogy of the Oppressed: Emancipatory Education for Christian Adults*, focuses on an emancipatory approach to Christian adult education, drawing on the principles of andragogy. Andragogy is the science of adult learning, based on the belief that adults learn differently from children. Lai (1995) focuses on five ways that adults differ from children in their approach to learning: self-concept, life experience, readiness to learn, time perspective, and orientation to learning.

An emancipatory model of Christian adult education aims to take into consideration what is known about how adults learn. Lai (1995) states that andragogy is a well-received philosophy of adult education. It first emerged in Europe and was championed in the United States by Knowles (2018). Knowles' (2018) original conception of andragogy was as a sharp contrast to pedagogy, the education of children. However, as Lai (1995) points out, the theory has evolved into more of a contingency perspective, where pedagogy and andragogy form opposite poles on a continuum ranging from teacher-directed to student directed learning modalities. Either may be appropriate for both adults and children, depending on the situation (Lai, 1995). The emancipatory model of Christian education put the learners at the centre of learning.

Therefore, Lai (1995) argues that if a major change in the landscape of adults' abilities to grasp and assimilate modern biblical scholarship in respectable depth is going to happen, it will happen only when we shift the focus from the activity of the teacher, however qualified and gifted, and begin to refocus attention on the learners, and what goes on when real learning happens in adults. Lai (1995) suggests using a praxis cycle approach. This kind of approach focuses on using dialogue to help members develop the competencies necessary to become biblically literate, critically conscious, and actively involved Christian citizens. The praxis cycle was developed based on principals proposed by Ong, Knowles, and Freire (Knowles, 2018). Praxis provides “the linkage between ontology and epistemology” or the connection between reality and knowledge (Lai, 1995, p. 15).

Lai (1995) argues that traditional approaches to adult Christian education stem from assumptions which are more consistent with unregenerate human nature than with the born-again nature of the Christian. From a theological perspective, these traditional methods might actually be termed “legalistic” because they treat adults as children. Some of Lai's (1995)

findings are that the praxis cycle approach requires dialogue, and dialogue encourages participation. Dialogue among fellow disciples also acts as a sort of reality check which keeps the development of so-called fringe ideas to a minimum (Lai, 1995). The group functions of the praxis cycle in the community thus fits the needs of the evolving Church by being adaptable to virtually any organizational setting or venue, with the exception of the lecture hall and the cathedral (Lai, 1995).

2.3.1 The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa's approach to Bible study

The approach to learning that the AFM uses in the Bible study group fits into the common sense Bible reading approach discussed by Schmidt (2017). Bible reading is shaped by the characteristic of holiness theology (Schmidt, 2017), an approach based on the idea that the Holy Spirit assists individuals to connect to God. The Holy Spirit controls the learning within the participant. Therefore, the approach to learning that the AFM uses in teaching the Bible is based on the Holy Spirit; its teaching is rooted in the Holy Spirit. The members believe that when God speaks with humans, he uses the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit helps the members to communicate with God. This teaching emphasises using the Holy Spirit and when praying, they call on the Holy Spirit. The congregants' different spiritual gifts such as singing, prophecy, the word of wisdom are all inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the AFM, a person does not have to study to get a degree in order to become a pastor; God, the Holy Spirit is the one responsible for choosing church leaders.

Learning in the adult AFM is transformative, in that the learners are transformed by the learning they get from Bible study; learners expand their existing knowledge (Erasmus, 1996). Moreover, the learning that members experience in the AFM adult Bible study helps them to face the challenges and radically change in their existing knowledge (Erasmus, 1996). The aim of adult Bible study groups is for adults to collectively grasp God through His Word. The adult participants use their gifts and talents to minister to each other and encourage each other in their faith (Erasmus, 1996). The Bible study is intended to help adult participants to increase our biblical knowledge. The groups are generally intended to teach the Bible and personalize Christian fellowship (Clark, 2007). The Bible studies provide an enlivening arena that helps to carry members from Sunday to Sunday and a safe place to work out the challenges all face. This is a place where many people begin to identify and express spiritual gifts (Marshall, 2018). Thus, adult participants learn the Bible and deepen their relationship with God.

2.4 Adult learning in Bible study groups

Adult learning in a Bible study group is where adult participants can understand their fears and work through challenging issues with a mature biblical perspective (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Adult Bible study was primarily created for adults to answer adult questions, to deal with adult problems. It is vital to the church because it opens the Word of God, the church's textbook, to the people to whom it is ultimately addressed. Kent (2017) states that adult Bible study learning has deep roots in the educational tradition of Western Civilization and is presented in the deeply Christian tradition. It is a continuous process of adults getting skills, new ideas, and competence through Scripture in the Bible (Kent, 2017). However, the literature on adult learning in Bible study groups is very scarce.

Ndlela (2019) did a study focused on a group of married Catholic women in Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. It aimed to explore how the members of the St Anne's Catholic Women's Group (SACWG) learned in the group. The Catholic church uses the SACWG as one of its pillars to mobilize taking the Gospel to the church as well as to the community (Ndlela, 2019). The women's group is comprised of married women only. Ndlela's study was guided by the following three main questions: What is the nature and process of learning that takes place in the SACWG?; How does learning impact the lives of the SACWG members?; What are the perceptions of the women in the SACWG regarding their learning experiences?

Ndlela (2019) used a case study research style to gather data. She found this useful since she was doing a social sciences study which focused on understanding human beings in a social context. She focused on one phenomenon and was able to employ different methods for data collection. She collected the data as an observing participant in order to get first-hand data, then used a focus group discussion and ended with qualitative semi-structured interviews. By allowing individual time with participants, she was able to probe where there was insufficient information received. Ndlela (2019) also used communities of practice theory to unpack the learning in SACWG, which is the theory of adult learning that I have used in my study. This makes Ndlela's study particularly relevant to mine, although her focus was on a Catholic women's group. She found that in order to affiliate to the women's group, the women need to learn and understand the principles and the motto of the domain (Ndlela, 2019). The principal and the motto assist the group to build a strong, positive missing bond that will last for years. The women need to develop a life-long friendship that is built on trust, love and understanding.

In her study, Ndlela (2019) speaks about the importance of learning in a women's group as a women. She wanted to explore the relationship between what was learnt within the group and the impact of that learning on women's daily lives with a view to contributing to the theorization of adult formal, non-formal and informal learning. The study was also intended to look at how women were engaging in the wider community as Christians. The findings reveal that four learning opportunities take place in the SACWG: the annual retreats and conventions, Tuesday and Thursday gatherings, monthly meetings and the Heritage Day celebration. Active participation of the SACWG members in these different types of learning is fundamental for knowledge creation and sharing. Additionally, the SACWG members are commissioned to serve in community outreach projects according to its motto, 'Serve the Family, Serve the Church, Serve the Community' (Ndlela, 2019).

Ndlela's study is similar to my study in that both focus on exploring how adults learn in a group; both use the theoretical framework, communities of practice, to analyse and understand the data. The differences between these two studies are that Ndlela (2019) focused only on married women, while mine focused on mixed genders, and each of our studies also focus on a different denomination of the Christian church.

Spooner (2012) also did a study on a South African Christian group exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group, focusing on nonformal learning by adults in a Johannesburg-based Methodist Bible study home group. Her study specifically focuses on the nonformal learning of adult couples within the group. She uses two theories: social learning within a community of practice, and holistic learning. Her research questions were: What motivates participation in Bible study?; What are the nature and processes of learning which occur in Bible study?; How does learning in Bible study relate to personal development, family life, work life and societal needs?

Some of Spooner's (2012) findings were that the whole person learning described by Davis-Manigaulte et al. (2006, cited in Spooner, 2012) had taken place so naturally that the participants themselves were not able to name the phenomenon and to fully apprehend the multi-dimensionality, depth and complexity of their learning. Moreover, participants in the Bible study home group were not able to specifically recall how they come to participate. The nature of learning as perceived by the participants of the group pointed to their being content with doubt and not knowing all the answers.

The focus of my study was very similar to Spooner's: exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group. We both used the concepts of nonformal and informal learning, but my study differed in its use of community of practice theory, it was done in a very different context, the Bulwer rural area, and in a different denomination of Christian church.

A study by Lawson (2006) entitled *The impact of long-term small group participation: Forty years in a women's prayer and Bible study group*, was done in New York in the United States of America. It focused only on women participating in a Bible study group, who came from different denominational backgrounds, Catholic, Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Lawson (2006) was interested in the factors contributing to the group's longevity and vitality over time, how the group changed over the years, and its impact on the lives of the women who participated. Early on in the group's existence, there were some changes of format and purpose and what started out as a prayer group quickly became both a prayer and book discussion group. The women read selected Christian books and met to discuss them and to pray for one another. After a few years, they changed their approach again and became a Bible study and prayer group, focusing their reading and discussion on books of the Bible. At times they supplemented this with additional readings and discussion, such as reading aloud from a book on prayer, or on living out the Christian life, but the primary focus of Lawson's study was on prayer and Bible study.

Some of Lawson's (2006) findings were that many of the women expressed how important the group was to them, and how much it meant to them to attend each Tuesday afternoon. Not only did they share a common purpose, but they also saw real results from their time together, results that encouraged them in the midst of difficulties and that helped them grow in their relationship with God. Some of the group members identified an ongoing openness to new members as one quality that helped the group over the years. The group members helped the new person feel welcome, encouraging her to continue to come. This basic format did not change in over 30 years, even with the change of leadership a few years prior to the study due to the death of the long-time Bible study leader.

The similarities between Spooner's and Lawson's studies is that they are both case studies, focusing on adult participants in a Bible study group, both used groups with a long history, with some members participating over many decades, both used these small groups to explore adult learning and their studies sought to find out how adults learn in the Bible study group.

The similarity between all three of the studies discussed, by Spooner (2012), Lawson (2006) and Ndlela (2019), is that they all used a qualitative approach located in the interpretative paradigm, all used a case study research style to collect data and all used community of practice as a lens to explore the adult learning. Despite these similarities, their findings are different. Ndlela (2019) found four spaces of learning that take place in the SACWG: the annual retreats and conventions, Tuesday and Thursday gatherings, monthly meetings and the Heritage Day celebration; Spooner (2012) found that when participants were asked how they became involved in the Bible study group, most of the members were not able to specifically recall how they came to participate in the practice, nor their entry into this particular home group; Lawson (2006) found that early on in the group's existence, there were some changes of format and purpose and what started out as a prayer group quickly became both a prayer and book discussion group. The women read selected Christian books and met to discuss them and to pray for one another. After a few years, they changed their approach again and became a Bible study and prayer group, focusing their reading and discussion on books of the Bible. At times they supplemented this with additional readings and discussion, such as reading aloud from a book "on prayer, or on living out the Christian life, but the primary focus of Lawson's study was on prayer and Bible study.

Differences between Spooner (2012) and Lawson (2006) are that, whereas Spooner focused on an adult group that was comprised of five men and seven women, of whom nine were white, one was black and two of mixed race, Lawson focused only on adult women. Spooner's study took place in South Africa in 2012 and Lawson did her study in New York some ten years earlier. In Lawson's study the participants came from different church backgrounds, while Spooner looked at only the Methodist base in Johannesburg.

2.5 Theoretical and conceptual framework

According to Smith et al. (2017), a theoretical framework is a review of existing theories that could potentially be used to develop the arguments used in a research study. Different theories are thus relevant to each particular study. A theoretical framework consists of concepts or theories that frame how the writer understands and investigates the research problem. A conceptual framework is a tool used by the researcher to explain key concepts.

This study uses theoretical and conceptual frameworks as lenses to understand adult learning in a Bible study group. The chosen theoretical framework helped in analysing and

interpreting the data. The conceptual framework helped in developing logical findings and focusing on the concepts, which informed an understanding of the study. The theoretical framework that this study uses is the community of practice (CoP) theory, first developed by Lave and Wenger (1990). Schugurensky's nonformal and informal learning model is used as this study's conceptual framework.

The theoretical and conceptual framework both assisted in understanding the study's research problem and guided the development of an analysis of what motivated the participants to join the Bible study group and what and how they learned in the group. The two frameworks worked hand in hand. Informal learning together with community of practice helped to show the relationship between individual learning and participation in an informal group of adults who share the love of learning the Bible in a group.

2.5.1 Community of practice theory

What is a community of practice?

A community of practice refers to a group of people who come together in sharing common goals or interests and activities (Kimble, 2006). These people share a passion for something, and they learn how to do it better by meeting and interacting with each other (John, 2006) – in other words, through mutual engagement (Cox, 2005). Some groups might meet face-to-face, but others might connect online to conduct community activities. The group members may meet regularly, and decide where and when they will meet. The word 'community' refers to the people who are engaging themselves in joint activity and discussions, and sharing information with each other. It is a community that acts as a living curriculum (Cox, 2005). 'Practice' refers to the fact that people develop a shared repertoire of resources, with all members being committed to being both learners and teachers together (Cox, 2005; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2003).

The development of community of practice theory

Community of practice theory was first developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in the late 1980s (Kimble, 2006). Lave and Wenger wanted to explore an alternative theory of learning to that of the dominant behaviourist model of that time. They believed that learning can also occur as a social process within a cultural context.

The theory emerged from the experience of a technology group in the Institute for Research on Learning, Palo Alto, in the United States of America (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). This group consisted of researchers such as Lucy Suchman, Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger and many more, who came together from different disciplines and occupational backgrounds. They were concerned about the process of transmission of knowledge from teacher to learner. The book by Lave and Wenger, *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, focuses on informal learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The authors were concerned about situated learning and the notion of a community of practice closely related to this (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In their book, they argue that learning takes place in many different ways, and it is not only about receiving information, but also about increased participation in a community of practice. A community of practice is seen as a mechanism for reproducing existing knowledge through active engagement with others in some form of practice. Their idea of community of practice is based on Orr's ethnographic studies of service technicians at Xerox (Kimble, 2006). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the learning in a community of practice takes place through participation in a group. They looked at how different people become a member of the group and propose that people learn better through joint activities. These attributes make CoP members different from other communities (Lave & Wenger, 1990).

In 1998, Wenger published *Community of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*, which focuses on a theory of practice as the social production of meaning (Wenger, 1998b). This second work focused largely on organizational learning and community of practice. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), communities of practice can be found in any organization, such as within businesses, across business units, and across company boundaries. One of the functions of communities of practice is to exchange and interpret information, as members share useful information with each other. They can also retain knowledge in a living way, which may involve initiating newcomers into practice. They may steward competence, which means that the members of the group are able to discuss novel ideas and work as a group to solve problems (Wenger, 2011). Communities of practice can also act as homes for identities, as the group assists the members to develop their identity. Identity plays an important role and members of the group are assisted in having a sense of identity in an organization (Wenger, 2011). Thus Wenger (1998) enlarged on the idea of community of practice as shaping people's learning and professional identity. He stressed

that members of the group need to practise the ways of the group. According to Wenger (1998), a community of practice can be created in any domain of human endeavour.

Wenger (1998) discusses three dimensions in relation to learning in a community of practice: mutual engagement (interactive learning), joint enterprise (engaged and shared learning), and repertoires (common learning resources). He states that in a community of practice, the group does not focus only on doing. There needs to be learning that takes place, and this will create meaning (Wenger, 1998). According to Wenger (1998), the group makes meaning together, and this has memory. All the people who come to the group want to achieve something – so this not about the individual who wants to achieve, but about what the group that wants to achieve. The meaning of what people are doing is what holds them together in a community of practice. Therefore, a community of practice is also about identity. We become who we are, and our identity is created, though all the activity that shapes us (Wenger, 1998). In 2002, *Cultivating Communities of Practice* was published by Wenger et al. (2002). This work was intended as an inspirational, practical handbook. Some have argued that it is a popularisation, a simplification, but also a commodification of the idea of a community of practice.

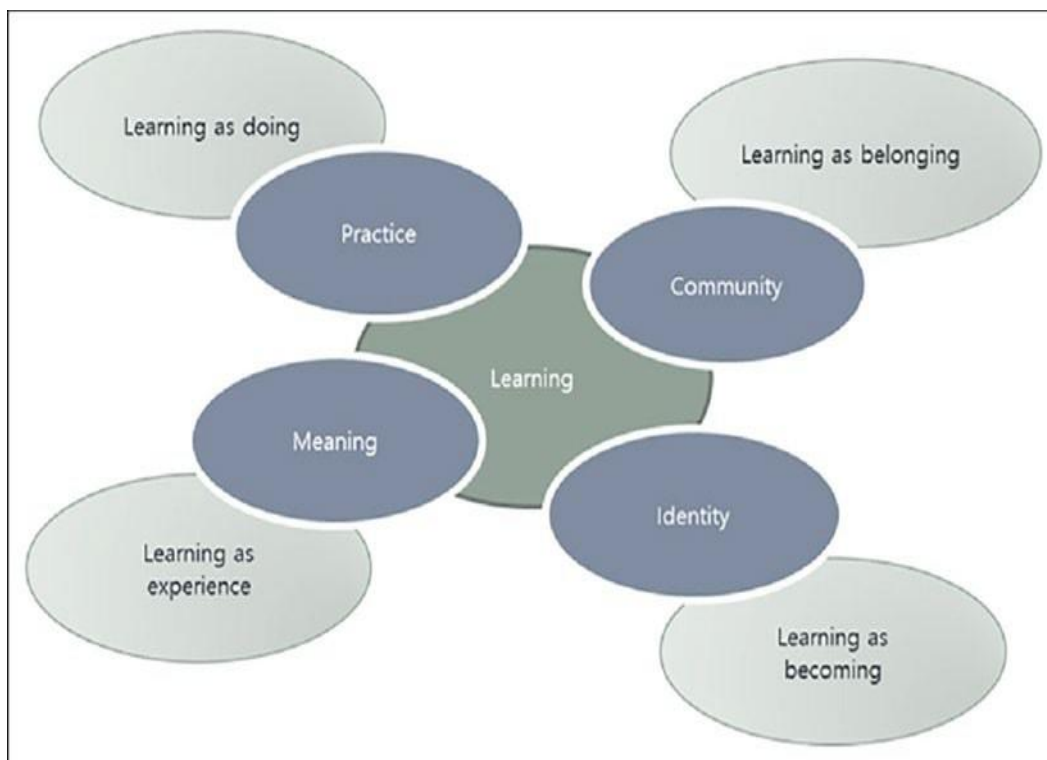


Figure 3: Components of learning in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998, p. 5)

According to community of practice theory, then, there are four components of learning: practice, community, identity and meaning:

Community involves learning as belonging. This is when members of a specific domain interact and engage in shared activities to help each other (Lave & Wenger, 1991). When it comes to learning, they create relationships that help them to learn from each other. The members of the group share their experiences, they contract learning, and feel that they are accepted by the group and they are part of the group (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Community involves the creation of a strong social group which encourages joint activities that might include discussion, information sharing, and caring for each other (Wenger, 2011).

Practice refers to the fact that members of the group learn by doing. People who have an interest in learning something and practise it together develop a shared repertoire of resources. The learning takes place in a group whereby members are practising together so that they are able to master what they are learning together. Practice learning can take time and it is a kind of learning that happens when people share and develop a set of stories that can become a shared repertoire for their practice. It involves the shared specific focus and shared joint activities of the group in which the members help each other. Moreover, these people create relationships that allow them to learn from each other. Thus the type of interaction that they build is essential (Wenger, 2011). The sometimes informal interaction that happens among the people who have joined develops the set of stories shared in a group (Wenger, 2011). These people come together to learn, and they believe that they learn better when the learning is done together and involves practice.

Meaning is the component of learning that is about our ability to experience the world as meaningful. Through practice, we make meaning of our experience, so it is learning as experience.

Identity relates to talking about how learning changes a person. Identity is shaped as individual members of a group negotiate meaning out of experience in the social community (the community of practice). According to Lave (1998), a person's identity is a negotiated experience, a reconciliation of multiple identities that result from their participation in various communities of practice. It is learning as becoming.

How learning happens in a community of practice

Smith et al. (2017) view communities of practice as a way of learning that people use to learn from each other about any domain, using their prior knowledge as a resource. The learning process starts with legitimate peripheral participation (Floding & Swier, 2012). This process begins when a new person ('newcomer') is allowed to join the group to practise within the

group along with those who have been members for a long time ('old-timers'). Wenger's concept of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) explains how a newcomer can become an old-timer (Cox, 2005). At first, there are many things that the newcomer needs to know about the group, which the old-timer knows. Then the newcomer needs to learn the language of the group and needs to build memories. The old timer is usually responsible for teaching the newcomer. There is much observation that happens between the two. After much practice, the newcomer becomes the old-timer. Thus LPP is about how a person moves from the periphery into the centre – and this, according to Wenger, constitutes learning. Usually, the newcomer on the periphery of the practice can take some time to move towards the centre of the group because of the level of competency that has to be obtained through practice and reflection (Floding & Swier, 2012). Changes in involvement develops through LLP, and identity changes.

Critiques of community of practice theory

Community of practice theory has developed a lot over time and it has continued to grow. However, writers have raised some concerns about the theory. Davenport and Hall (2001) state that one of the problems with the concept of community of practice is that it produces a complex description of an entity which is quite difficult to identify; although in this critique Wenger's own indicators have been strangely neglected. Another observation is that there is no way in the theory to explain why a community of practice forms rather than colleagues simply co-operating to bend the rules in order to get work done (Gourlay, 1999). This kind of collegial cooperation has a purpose, whereas communities are usually seen as non-purposive (Gourlay, 1999). Cox (2005) also argues that whilst Lave and Wenger's work continues to give theoretical insight and inspiration for research into learning at work, it has significant limitations. Related to this issue, is that there are limitations to the applying the theory in workplaces (Hughes et al., 2006).

In addition, Wenger (1998) has been critiqued by Cox (2005) for suggesting that newcomers are socialised into a relatively static practice community through legitimate peripheral participation. Cox (2005) argues that community of practice theory does not look at the relationship between communities as a potential driver for change. The central message of communities of practice theory is that even in routine or unskilled work, there is a large amount of interaction and sense-making involved in getting the job done (Cox, 2005). However, in individualised work, there is no collective engagement, only relations between

an individual and their supervisor. Cox suggests that what began as more voluntary co-operation between individuals has become a process whereby communities of practice are deliberately created by companies (or others) for their own benefit. Wenger also ignores the conflict and power dynamics within groups. For example, the old-timer has the power to confer with the new member and this means that the person who has the longer service controls the group.

Relevant studies that have used community of practice theory

In addition to the studies by Cox (2005), Gourlay (1999), and Davenport and Hall (2001) on learning in adult Bible study groups discussed earlier, I use three other studies to discuss how community of practice theory has been used similarly to this study. All of the studies observe how people learn in group and what kind of learning takes place.

In their study, *Teungku Identity Development: The Role of the Dayah Community of Practice*, Usman et al. (2021) attempted to delve into teungku identity development within the traditional dayah institution to examine how four teungku negotiated their participation. The dayah institution is a traditional Islamic boarding school, and teungku are religious teachers. Usman et al. (2021) specifically selected dayah in Aceh Province in Indonesia which focus on Islamic studies and use formal Arabic as the language of instruction. They focused on junior students, collecting data through interviewing four teungku graduates from four different dayah institutions in Aceh. Usman et al. (2021) see a community of practice as a group of members who learn better together in a group, also stating that the framework helps an understanding of identity development. This is done by observing how a newcomer integrates within the group. Although people are shaped in many ways by the community of practice, it especially influences their identity in various disciplines. The learning in these communities is central. In their study, it was mandatory for students to attend a wide range of community services, and every student had to dedicate his or her time to teaching in the dayah, which is an integral part of the students' activities. They were thus all participating in community activities and teaching and preaching as dayah students. Through these activities, the group members learned what they needed to know and came to practise as group members. Usman et al. also found that the identity of the teungku was shaped and reshaped through several models within the dayah community of practice.

The much earlier study by Merriam et al. (2003) focused on a group of witches in the southeastern United States. The aim of the study was to investigate learning in marginalized

communities of practice. Their study included twenty witches belonging to different covens. Their findings showed a trajectory of participants representing movement from the periphery to the centre of the group. They also found learning in practice that was experiential, that combined formal and intuitive knowledge, that was spread across the group and an identifiable process of identity development in becoming a witch. To some extent, it was the the marginality of the community that shaped the group's learning and practice.

In a recent South African study, Armstrong and Kraemer-Mbula (2022) explored the features of collective action in support of socioeconomic inclusion identified in maker communities. The data were collected using interviews. Seven participants were interviewed about the value that they experienced through being part of these communities. Value creation was assessed in terms of the five overlapping value cycles (immediate value, potential value, reframing value, realized value, and applied value) (Armstrong & Kraemer-Mbula, 2022). The study found that all five value cycles were present in the experiences expressed by the seven South African maker community participants.

Although the studies discussed above by Usman et al. (2021) and Merriam et al. (2003) were conducted in different countries, they are useful to my study, as is the study by Armstrong and Kraemer-Mbula (2022). They are similar to it in that we all use community of practice as a theoretical lens, we all use a qualitative approach, and we all use interviews to collect the data. All of the studies focus on members that join a group having one goal, which is the joint activity that takes place in the group. Two focus on a religious/spiritual/faith-based group, such as the one in my study, and used community of practice theory to explore adult learning in this kind of group. The third exception to this focused on poverty, inequality and social exclusion, which all remain central and persistent challenges in South Africa, and is the context in which my study is based. Qualitative research is used these studies because of their concern with process and understanding it, an essential aspect of my study.

In order for a community of practice to occur, there needs to be people in a group who share one goal. When the group is active, learning takes place. The group starts to share ideas with each other in the form of informal learning. For instance, the members of the Bible study group share a common purpose, and support, encourage and share challenges with each other. They meet regularly, and are thus active. It is thus likely that the Bible study group is a community of practice, actively engaged in informal learning. Therefore, I expected that in

this study, community of practice theory and informal learning would assist me in answering my research question about how adults learn in the Bible study group.

2.5.2 Nonformal and informal learning

Adult learning can occur in three different domains of formal, non-formal, and informal education (Schugurensky, 2000).

Formal learning takes place in an education or training institute, and formal education refers to the institutional ladder that goes from preschool to university. It generally includes basic education, which is often compulsory. It is a learning system that is organised as a top-down system (Schugurensky, 2000). Formal learning/education uses a pre-determined set curriculum (Baatjes & Baatjes, 2008), and is usually formally assessed.

Non-formal education is an organised learning programme that takes place outside the formal education system (Schugurensky, 2000). It includes a wide variety of different kinds of programme such as workshops, driving lessons, cooking classes. A teacher is not always needed for non-formal learning to take place. It could take the form of a study group that meets regularly to achieve a particular learning goal, and responsibilities for preparation and presentation could be rotated (Baatjes, 2004). Non-formal learning is usually directed at adults, but children often learn in this manner too.

The term ‘informal learning’ is more generally used than ‘informal education’. According to Schugurensky (2000, p. 2), the general understanding of **informal learning** is that it is “any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the courses or workshops offered by educational or social agencies”. It is thus a style of learning in which the learner sets their own goals and objectives (Baatjes, 2004), and can involve a group or individual (Davenport & Hall, 2001; Schugurensky, 2000). It might come in many forms, including viewing videos, self-study, reading articles, participating in forums and chat rooms, performance support, coaching sessions, and games. Informal learning might occur throughout life (Schugurensky, 2000). No formal assessment takes place, and there is no entry requirement. As informal learning occurs independently of formal education, the learning that you receive from it is often not recognised by formal education. Thus, “informal learning becomes a residual category of a residual category” (Schugurensky, 2000, p. 164). Although informal learning can complement and reinforce the learnings acquired in formal and non-formal education, it can

also contradict it (Schugurensky, 2000). It can be seen as additive and transformative (i.e. something that creates change in peoples lives) because the learning that takes place can be described as an addition to knowledge, the improvement of skills, and the development of values that expand and strengthen existing knowledge, skills and values (Schugurensky, 2000). Using this understanding, the learning in this study is clearly informal learning because the participants aim to understand the word of God through reading the Bible scriptures.

However, Schurgurensky (2000) argues that whilst this general concept of informal learning is useful, it is still too broad, as it encompasses different types of learnings which are usually conflated. He thus further breaks down informal learning into three different forms: self-directed learning, incidental learning, and socialisation.

Self-directed learning, according to Schugurensky (2000), focuses on a learning project in the form of individual or group learning. In this kind of informal learning, there is an individual purpose of learning even before the learning takes place. In other words, you plan to learn something; you intend to understand. Afterwards, you can assess whether or not you learned it. This kind of informal learning does not need an educator or facilitator. Still, it often requires a resource person who does not regard themselves as an educator.

Incidental learning is experiential learning that happens when the learner does not begin with the intention to learn something out of the experience. Rather, the learning just happens, and then the person starts to recognise that some learning has taken place (Schugurensky, 2000). In other words, they do not plan to learn something, but only realise that they did afterwards. This learning could be the result of either a good or bad experience.

Socialisation is learning that involves the internalisation of attitudes, values, or skills. It is the kind of learning that happens as part of everyday life (Schugurensky, 2000).

Schugurensky talks about this learning as occurring where you did not plan to learn something and are unaware that you have. An example might be that one has been taught that only women fetch water and never question why and do not realise that this is something that has been learned.

In the Bible study group in this study, it seems likely that most people who come to the group intend to learn (i.e. self-directed learning). However, it is also possible that not all the people who come to the group have a specific intention of learning. Sometimes people might come to visit the group, but end up learning something from the Bible study (incidental learning).

Some might come to the group to be closer to the Holy Spirit, or simply for the company, and not necessarily feel that they had actually learned something. Schugurensky's conceptual framework was intended to assist in exploring this further in this study. Its chosen conceptual and theoretical frameworks work hand in hand: community of practice theory allows the investigation of learning in a group of people engaged in a joint activity, while Schugurensky's concept of informal learning allows a closer examination of the kind of learning in the group (Schugurensky, 2000).

2.6 Chapter summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter focused on adult learning in Bible study groups. The discussion showed that there are different approaches to these groups. It also showed that there is a need for researchers to focus more on adult learning within Bible study groups as there are very few studies have been done on adult learning within these groups. The chapter then discussed the theoretical and conceptual framework put together as suitable for this study. Community of practice theory was discussed, the three different types of adult learning (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal) were described, with a focus on the three different types of informal learning in particular. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology used in this study are presented.

Chapter 3: Research Design And Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed literature relevant to adult learning in a Bible study group, and also presented the theoretical and conceptual framework. In this chapter, I discuss the research design and methodology used to collect and interpret my data. The first part of this chapter describes the overall research design that was used; the second focuses on the data collection method; whilst the third describes the data analysis methods used. I end by discussing how I tried to ensure the study was ethical and trustworthy.

In exploring adult learning in the AFM Bible study group in Bulwer, Enkelabantwana, the research questions for the study were formulated as follows:

1. What motivated participants to join the Bible study group, and why do they remain members?
2. What do participants believe they have learned through their participation in the study group?
3. How have the participants learned through their participation in the study group?

The study aimed to generate knowledge about adult learning within the informal learning context of adults in a Bible study group. It draws on the conceptual framework of nonformal and informal learning, and the theoretical framework of community of practice theory.

3.2 Research paradigm

This study is underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. Creswell (2009) describes a paradigm as action guided by a set of beliefs. Thus, a research paradigm is “the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Bull & Kuhn, 1970, p. 7). The interpretivist paradigm was developed as a critique of positivism in the social sciences, and sees reality as constructed through society. Maseko (2017) points out that the interpretivist paradigm observes how people interpret the contexts in which they live, how they understand their world, and includes things like attitudes, perceptions, behaviour, and motivation. Its goal is to understand why and how people do things. In this view, there are thus multiple truths (Merriam &

Bierema, 2013), and this type of research cannot be easily generalized. As a researcher, I wanted to find out how the adults in the Bible study group make sense of their learning and how they make meaning of their participation. Merriam and Bierema (2013) state that interpretivism goes hand in hand with a qualitative approach, whilst Maseko (2017) argues that the interpretivist paradigm works well with qualitative case studies.

3.3 Research approach

The research approach of this study is qualitative, one which, according to Cohen et al. (2018), is underpinned by the understanding that human beings are individuals who make their own meaning. Qualitative research is designed to focus on understanding a given social context. It seeks to understand social phenomena from the participants' viewpoints (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Merriam (2009) makes it clear that in this approach, participants are allowed to interpret questions and respond accordingly. This study used this approach to collect and analyse the data and to gather in-depth insight into the problem. I chose to use qualitative research because it is appropriate for this type of project and its purpose to explore how adults learn in the Bible study group, what participants believe they have learned within the group, and how this has affected their daily lives. The qualitative method allowed me to understand participants' lives while exploring the impact of learning on their lives, the nature and process of their learning, and their perceptions regarding their learning experiences. In observing how adults learn in the Bible study group, the data that I collected from the individual members was subjective.

3.4 Research style

This research study was conducted using a qualitative case study research style. I chose a case study because it enabled me to focus on the case in question (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018) and to get as much in-depth information as possible about the problem I wanted to explore, that is, how adults learn in an AFM Bible study group, the kind of learning that takes place, and why participants joined the Bible study group and remain members. The particular case in this study is the adult Bible study group of the AFM church in Bulwer, a small village in the Harry Gwala District of KwaZulu-Natal.

A case study design is helpful in social science-related studies aiming to understand human beings in a social context. According to Merriam and Baumgartner (2020), using a case study design allows the application of a variety of methods and relies on a variety of sources in

investigating a research problem. The choice of methods to gather or generate data depends on research intent and methodological purpose (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). The aim of using a case study strategy is to explore a single case, as in this case, adult learning in a Bible study group.

Case study research also seeks to understand the phenomenon comprehensively and, potentially, to develop a theory about social structures and processes (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). I have selected the case study methodology for this research because of its fitness for purpose. Participants attend the group voluntarily, intending to study the Bible and engage in dialogue. They are responsible to themselves and each other for creating shared meaning and no subject expert necessarily leads them to a deeper understanding of meaning. The case study approach presents the opportunity to richly describe this particular instance of learning.

The strength of using a case study is that they are “down-to-earth and attention-holding, in harmony with the reader's own experience” (Cohen et al., 2018, p.379). Close attention is paid and on the uniqueness of the case is focused on without necessarily comparing it to any other case that is different. Doing a case study allowed me to get in-depth information. Finally, the findings of a case study can be easily analysed and used for participants’ personal development (Cohen et al., 2018). However, one of the weaknesses of a case study is that it battles to demonstrate transferability and trustworthiness because each case is unique and cannot be compared to others (Cohen et al., 2018). This makes it harder to compare this study to other studies.

3.5 Research context

As discussed in Chapter 1, the AFM Bible study group is based in the middle of Bulwer village in KwaZulu-Natal, in the place called Enkelabatwana. The group was created for adults who wish to learn the Bible in a group, and focuses on AFM church members and the members of the community. The Bible study is for both men and women within the church. The AFM church consists of fifty members, including male and female adults, youth, and children. The medium of interaction in the church and the Bible study group is the IsiZulu home language. The group was started a long time ago, and things have changed within the Bible study group over time.

3.6 Sampling

(Kothari, 2004) refers to sampling as a process that researchers use to choose participants for their study. This study used five participants who were purposively chosen. In qualitative research, the sampling strategy is usually chosen based on the methodology and topic, and not on the need for generalizability of the findings (Higginbotham et al., 2004). There are different types of qualitative sampling: convenience, purposive, theoretical, selective, within-case, and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2009; Higginbotham et al., 2004; Polit & Beck, 2012). However, the sample must be appropriate and comprise participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic.

The most commonly used method in content analysis studies is purposive sampling (Kyngäs et al., 2011). Purposive sampling refers to non-probability sampling whereby the researcher uses their expertise to select a sample that is most useful to the purpose of their research (Kothari, 2004). It is suitable for qualitative studies where the researcher is interested in informants who have the best knowledge concerning the research topic. Cohen et al. (2018) describe purposive sampling as a process whereby the researcher chooses the particular participants for the study based on certain characteristics and these are certain things that the researcher looks for before choosing a participant for the study to make sure they best represent or have knowledge of the research topic.

The population of the Bulwer AFM Bible study group is about twenty members. From this population, I purposively sampled five members. The adults that attend the Bible study group are different in age, employment, and level of education. They also play different roles within the church. Some have been members of the group for a very long time, but others are newer. For this study, I needed people who had a long history within the Bible study group, as well as newer members. Participants were also chosen according to their gender, age, and employment, to get the information from the range of people who attend the study group. I selected an elderly person to assist my understanding of how an older person learns in an informal learning setting, how she participates within the group and contributes, and why she continues to attend the group although she has learning difficulties. I also wanted to find out how she exercises what she learns from the study. Gender plays an important role within a church, so I needed to consider this in the study. I needed to get both male and female views, because different genders might view things differently. There are more men attending the study group than females. I also chose to use participants who are unemployed and those who

are employed to get the different views of participants with different status. Participants were also chosen because of the role that they play within the church. I selected people according to different categories in the church - Pastor, elder, secretary, ordinary members. I also needed to make sure that I had good people to work with, and that I knew the type of people I needed for the study. So I purposively chose members who would be able to give me helpful information that could provide in-depth answers to my research questions because of their experience.

This sampling process helped me to recruit my participants based on who was the most useful person for the study. The size of the sample is valid as long as it satisfies the researcher’s needs (Cohen et al., 2018).

Table 1: Participant categories

Status within AFM	Length of membership of Bible study group	Age	Sex	Marital status	Level of education	Type of employment
Pastor	24 years	52	Male	Married	Matric	Pastor
Elder	5 years	45	Male	Single	High school	Employed
Secretary	19 years	68	Female	Widow	Lower primary	Pensioner
Ordinary member	5 years	37	Female	Single	Tertiary	Unemployed with a child support grant
Ordinary member	22 years	40	Male	Married	Matric	Employed

Table 1 shows the number of people per AFM category and describes each person. As can be seen, the participants in this study are AFM members ranging from thirty-five to nearly seventy years old. They are all residents of the Bulwer rural area, and all are isiZulu mother-tongue speakers. They hold different positions within the AFM, have different levels of education, and include both sexes.

3.7 Data generation methods

Research data can be generated in many different ways. The data generation method that was used in this study is semi-structured telephonic interviews with each participant. The purpose of conducting interviews was to get first-hand data from the participants. Interviews allow the researcher to get specific information that resides in the respondent's mind (Merriam, 1998). To quote Bertram and Christiansen, “an interview is a conversation between the researcher and the respondent. It is different from an everyday conversation. The researcher sets the agenda and asks the questions” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 6). The interviewer

controls the interview, and the interviewee responds according to the question asked. It allows the researcher to use closed or open-ended questions and offers the chance to explore matters that arise unexpectedly (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

3.7.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

A semi-structured interview is a data collection method that is based on asking questions that may not be set in order or phrasing (Yin, 2009). This type of interview assisted me to ask open-ended questions of my participants which allowed them to be flexible and also assisted me to get more detail and richness. Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, participants were able to clarify or rephrase their answers during the interview.

I started this study in 2020, the year in which the COVID-19 pandemic first began, with strict regulations about gathering in groups. My intention before COVID-19 was to use face-to-face interviews and group observation. This was going to help me to get first hand information, and enable me to look my participants in the face when answering the questions. Because body language often speaks louder than words, the face-to-face interview can provide additional data. When COVID-19 came, because of the South African government regulations, I was forced to find a new data generation method to use and decided on the telephonic interview.

3.7.2 *Telephonic interviews*

The data collected through telephonic interviews were conducted in isiZulu. Abhishek et al. (2018) define a telephonic interview as a kind that takes place at a pre-scheduled time over a telephone (in this case, cell phones). One party is still interviewing the second party (Nandi & Platt, 2017). I used the same semi-structured interview schedule as I had originally planned (see Appendix 1). The interview schedule was sent by WhatsApp to the participants to give them time to look at the interview questions beforehand. The participants were given four weeks to look at the questions, then I asked each participant when they would be available for the telephonic interview. On the date of the interview, I called the participant, and reminded them of who I was and my reasons for doing this study in order to gain trust from them. The participants were asked fairly open-ended questions. This allowed for a discussion with the interviewee rather than a straightforward question-and-answer format. I asked questions such as what had motivated them to join the Bible study group and what they believed they had learned. Each interview lasted about three hours, although I often had to make more than one

telephone call, depending on the availability of the participant. The interview took a long time because of probing answers to questions, and sometimes the participant would ask for a break. This meant we sometimes had to reschedule the rest of the interview for another day. On occasion, when I called back, a participant would say that they were not ready to continue. There were also some network problems which meant that I was not able to make calls as scheduled. The first thing that I did when we continued with the interview was read their answers to my previous questions, to check for accuracy and to see if the participant still agreed with what they had said. I found that participants sometimes left out a lot of information in answering a particular question.

Even though I ended up using telephonic rather than face-to-face interviews, this did not interfere too much with my data quality. Although I did not see them face-to-face during the telephonic interview, I could pick up verbal changes when they were answering questions. Some of the participants were also able to express their emotions during the interview.

The interviews happened between July 2021 and November 2021. They were audio-recorded to ensure the quality and reliability of the data, and then transcribed and translated into English.

3.8 Data analysis

Since a qualitative approach was used, I used thematic analysis to help me identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meaning within the data. Szto et al. (2005) state that qualitative research generates a lot of data, so it needs to be organised and reduced. Xu and Zammit (2020) mention six steps that should be taken when analysing qualitative data: 1. know your data, 2. code your data, 3. create themes, 4. review themes, 5. name themes, and 6. produce the research report.

In this study, after generating the data I started by reading the interview transcripts to familiarise myself with the data. After getting a general impression of the interview, I then coded the data line by line. This included both inductive and deductive analyses. Inductive analysis is data analysis that comes purely from the data and includes creating codes and themes from it. Levitt et al. (2018) describe deductive analyses as a process that comes from theory where the researcher organises the data based on a theoretical foundation. The analysis of a telephonic interview is different from a face-to-face one, because in the face-to-face interview the interviewer can see the facial expression when the person is answering the

question, which adds additional data. After the analysis, I created my themes, which were guided by the key research questions. I thus organised the data using coding, analysed the data by using the different themes, and then interpreted the data. Doing data handling and analysis in this way helped me to make it a lot simpler to work with and also assisted me to not leave out any data that may be important to the study. The analysis of a telephonic interview is different from a face-to-face one, because in the face-to-face interview the interviewer can see the facial expression when the person is answering the question, which adds additional data.

3.9 Ethical issues

Vanclay et al. (2013, p. 117) define ethics as a “matter of principle, sensitivity to the rights of other”. According to Sobočan et al. (2019), research ethics are moral principals that guide the researcher in conducting research, whilst Allmark (2002, p. 22) defines research ethics as a “moral obligation and responsibility toward participant”.

Letters of permission to conduct the study were obtained from the church pastor and Chairperson of the AFM. Participants gave informed consent to be included in the study (see Appendix 2). They were aware that participation in the study was voluntary. Each was notified about the nature and purpose of the study, they were told about their rights to withdraw from the study should they need to do so and told that their names would not be made public. It was hoped that the study would be beneficial to the participants and the church as a whole, since it could reveal aspects that the adult study group was unaware of, and they would be able to administer changes accordingly.

3.10 Trustworthiness

The term trustworthiness is mostly used in qualitative research. Trustworthiness plays an important role in research. Its purpose in a qualitative study is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are “worth paying attention to” (Elo et al., 2014). Schwandt et al. (2007) have proposed four criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability.

Credibility means having confidence in the ‘truth’ of the findings (Rule & John, 2011). Ensuring credibility is making sure that the findings of the study are accurate and the information that was found shows the point of view of the participants. Guba (1981) suggests

that qualitative researchers use measures such as prolonged engagement with the research site, peer debriefing, triangulation and member checks, and consciously look for internal conflicts and contradictions in the data. Guba (1981, p.84) adds that prolonged engagement is “to overcome, so far as possible, distortions produced by the presence of researchers and to provide researchers the opportunity to test their own biases and perceptions, as well as those of their respondents”. As discussed in Chapter 1, I have been a member of the Bible study group for some time, and therefore know the context and members well. The participants treated me as a group member rather than a researcher (often expressing frustration that I was asking questions that they felt I already knew the answers to). I thus have prolonged engagement; but this can lead to researcher bias. I thus also used member checks, that is, testing the data with members. When a researcher is done with the research, they need to take the findings back to the participants for reflection. To increase the credibility of this study, I checked the accuracy of the transcriptions and interpretations with the participants. As discussed previously, most of my interviews needed more than one session to complete, so before I started the second part of the interview, I read the transcript of the previous part of the interview to the participant to check for accuracy, before we continued with the interview. Credibility can also be increased by using different data collection techniques (triangulation). As mentioned, I only used telephonic interviews to generate data. This study thus only used one method of data generation, which also poses a problem with trustworthiness because no triangulation took place. However, in asking the interview questions, I used probing ones. This gave me an opportunity to ask questions in different ways to see if the answers remained the same. I also engaged with my supervisors on the data and analysis.

Confirmability refers to whether the findings of the research are supported by the data that were collected from the research process (Sobočan et al., 2019), and that the data accurately represents the information that the participants provided (Cope, 2014). A qualitative researcher can ensure confirmability by using triangulation and reflexivity, and providing sufficient evidence to allow the findings to be checked against the data (Guba, 1981). In this study, I tried to ensure reflexivity by probing. I have also presented all the data collected.

Dependability focuses on the quality of collecting and analysing data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure dependability, a researcher needs to provide enough information about both how they collected the data and the context in which they collected it. This is often called providing a ‘data trail’ or an ‘audit trail’ (Guba, 1981). To do this I checked with the

participants about the accuracy of the transcriptions and interpretations and also gave feedback on my findings to the Pastor to read and, in turn, give feedback to the group.

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), **transferability** is about whether the findings are applicable to other contexts and also shows the potential for extrapolation. To increase transferability, a qualitative researcher should use purposively sample, collect ‘thick’ data, and provide a rich description of the context (Guba, 1981). To ensure this, I used these measures in my research.

3.11 Limitations

The major limitation of this study was COVID-19. Direct contact with a participant during COVID-19 was not allowed, so I was only allowed to do telephonic interviews. When doing a telephonic interview it is not possible to see the facial expression when asking a question. Communicating by using voice calls and video calls makes research harder, compared to face-to-face contact. Since I stay in a rural area, getting access to an internet connection to carry out voice calls was difficult because of network problems. As a result, levels of contact with participants were not satisfactory.

In addition, although my choice of case study design allowed me to get in-depth information, there are limits to the generalisability of the study (although I did try to ensure transferability). I also only used one method of data generation, which meant there was no triangulation, and therefore I used other ways of trying to ensure trustworthiness.

3.12 Chapter summary

The focus of this chapter was on the methodology and the qualitative approach within the interpretivist paradigm this study used. A discussion justified the case study as a research style that fits well with the interpretivist paradigm and with the aim of getting in-depth data for the study. The research site was given as the AFM Bible study group in Enkelabantwana tribal authority area in Bulwer, KwaZulu-Natal. Then the sampling method and the sample of five adult members within this group were described. The data generation, methods using only telephonic interviews and the inductive and deductive and thematic data analysis were described in the chapter, before concluding with the issues of trustworthiness, ethics and limitations. Chapter 4 will present the data collected as part of this study.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter having discussed the research design and the methodology used in this study, this chapter is a detailed presentation of the data collected. This study sought to understand how and what adults learn in the Bulwer AFM Bible study group, and to explore the relationship between what was learned within the group and how the learning impacted the members' lives. The collected data enabled answers to the three research questions: What motivated participants to join the Bible study group, and why do they remain members? What do participants believe they have learned through their participation in the group? How have the participants learned through their participation in the group?

As discussed in Chapter 3, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the data were collected using telephonic semi-structured interviews rather than face-to-face interviews as was initially planned.

4.2. Description of participants

Table 2 indicates the demographics of the research participants. The participants are AFM members ranging from age 37 to nearly 70. They are all residents of the Bulwer rural area, and all are isiZulu mother-tongue speakers. The members all play an important role in keeping this group alive and active, working as a team regardless of the age difference.

Table 2: Demographic information of participants

Participant	Age	Sex	Marital status	Seniority in the AFM	Date joined the Bible study group	Employment status	Highest level of education
Fikile	37	Female	Single	Ordinary member	2017	Unemployed with a child support grant	Tertiary
Mduduzi	52	Male	Married	Pastor	1998	Pastor	Matric
Makhosi	68	Female	Widow	Secretary	2003	Pensioner	Lower Primary
Mandla	45	Male	Married	Ordinary member	2000	Employed	Matric
Sipho	40	Male	Single	Elder	2015	Employed	Matric

4.3 Interview data

Below I present my translation of the actual answers given by the participants in my interviews with them. I have rearranged these to provide a more coherent narrative.

4.3.1 Fikile

My name is Fikile Ndlovu and I am a single mother. I'm a God-fearing person. I like learning something new in life especially when it comes to the Word of God, I love people and love working with people. I went to UNISA and I did a B.Ed. At the current moment I'm unemployed. I receive a child support grant. I live in the Enkelabantwana location with my family.

Joining the group

I am a full member of AFM, and an executive member of the AFM branch. I am a group leader of this Bible study group, and I speak isiZulu. I joined the Bible study group in 1999. I oversee the executive and the entire membership as well as the smooth running of the sodality. I am an active community member, engaged in informal counselling. I support young women and children emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

I attend the Bible study group at AFM every Wednesday from 18:00 to 19:00. The Bible study rotates each week, and we get to visit different homes, where the study will take place. Bible study for us is a place for learning, we get to learn about God's Word, learning God's Word every week makes me grow in knowing God in my life and the purpose of God in my life. The Bible group that I attend is a group of adult people who are hungry for God's Word. I believe that we learn God's Word better when we are in a group because we get to share our different views when it comes to Bible verses. In the Bible study, we are a group of adult members who share the love of God through reading the Bible verses. We learn to read the Bible better in the group. We do this better when we are in the group, this is because everyone shares the Bible Scripture.

The knowledge of God's Word that we share in this group, makes each person open his/her eyes. Once you start to apply the teaching that you get from the study as an individual, you start to change your life completely. We come to Bible study group every week because we focus on the behaviour we want to change. I believe that if my behaviour changes it will

influence my environment and the way that I see the world. I believe learning the Bible as a group is better than as an individual.

It has been 22 years of grace since I started attending the Bible study group. It was not easy because the journey of going and learning of God in the group is not easy but you have to keep one thing in mind – why you joined the group in the first place. This helps me to overcome many obstacles that come along in my life. I believe that God was with us from the first day. In his Word, he promised that he will make us meet the right people at the right time, and I believed that has happened in this group. The hunger and thirst for God kept me in this group for so long. As a Christian, I believe that you need to be hungry for God's Word for you to grow physically and mentally in knowing God.

The key thing that motivates me as a rural adult learner to attend the Bible study group is that it is a group of people who are thirsty for biblical truth. We are a small group, but we all share a thirst for sharing God's Word among us, as a group who practise the Bible verses together to help each other to become better Christians. As an adult, I'm thirsty to learn, to hear about God. Attending the Bible study group every week keeps me busy because you find that in rural areas there are not a lot of activities that adult people can do to keep them busy. The love of Christ in this group has made me come to Bible study every week. The Bible teaching that takes place in the Bible study helps me to grow in knowing the Lord.

We as a group we share a passion for learning of God and there is no place where we can do it better than attending the Bible study group. The thing that makes me remain a member is that I get to understand the Bible more when I'm in the group than when I'm alone. This is because, in the Bible study group, we are given the time to discuss the Bible Scripture, and every member shares their thought, and these discussions are eye-opening. You learn better in a group than when you are alone because one verse can have a different meaning to different people. Adult Bible study also helps to build better relationships among us, which enables every adult from the rural area to learn from each other. In the Bible study group, we support each other by prayer, and we encourage each other in tough times. As we share the Bible Scripture as a group, this deepens our knowledge of God.

I have benefitted from the Bible study by getting God's knowledge, communicating skills, and reading the Bible skills. I am now able to communicate with God better by reading the Bible every day. I also benefit from the transformation which encouraged my life to change.

The Bible study group

In the Bible study, we firstly worship the Lord; secondly, we pray; and then the group leader reads the Word of God for us. We are advised to bring notebooks to the Bible study group. This will help an individual to write notes according to his or her understanding. You write in that notebook what you think was important during the teachings. The leader only talks, he/she doesn't write formal notes. As an individual, you write the Bible Scripture that was open that day and why you feel it was important.

The Bible study is always in the same order. It is very important as a church of God to worship the Lord. The Bible tells us that God can do anything, but He cannot worship Himself. He needs us as His people to worship Him.

By praying, we ask God to start the Bible study with us, we are inviting his presence to be with us as we are about to read the Word. We cannot do anything without God being present.

We do have a group leader. The group leader acts as a director, he tells us what will take place in the Bible study. He is responsible for reading the Bible and chooses any person in the group to help him read the Bible, and he welcomes new members. The leader prays for our spiritual growth and encourages us to come to Bible study each week.

Attending the Bible study for me as a person is important. This is because you get to understand Bible verses better. The hard concepts get to be analysed as a group, we get to break down the concept as we discuss it in the group. This is done to find the meaning of the concept. Bible study groups are important for Christians because it opens our understanding of who God is. Bible study deepens our knowledge of God.

Learning in the Bible study group

Bible study groups are a place where we learn about God's Word. In the Bible study group, I grow in the Lord as I learn about God's Word and God's purpose for my life. In the Bible study, we learn how to care, love, and encourage each other. In the Bible study, group learning is encouraging. This is because as an adult we learn better when learning in a group.

Learning in a Bible study group, that is informal learning. There are no exams that are written. We are taught different ways to worship God, sing, pray, and interact with other group members. I don't think I would attend the Bible study group if there were exams. As much as I love God's news, I hate written exams. Having exams would mean stress because I

was not good in school, which is why I dropped out. As much as I like learning about God, I don't want to write exams. Coming to Bible study is another way of learning for me because I listen to what the leader is reading to us.

In the Bible study group, I have learned God's truth about himself. God's truth will help us to dwell on him.

By attending the Bible study group, I believe that I have learned to remember the information better and to relate it to different situations. I have learned to increase my engagement in a group. As an adult, I learn to build trust in God using his Word and also that learning in a group is better than learning on your own. In a group, hard concepts are analysed to get a better understanding of God's Word. I believe that group learning has an impact on an individual life which causes a change in the way they behave in the outside world. Adult participants in the Bible study group believe that when you come regularly to the Bible study, it helps you to grow emotionally, and spiritually, and this creates a good relationship with God. Bible study helps participants to be able to communicate with God with or without a pastor. Sharing the Bible verses as a community plays an important role in our society. Together we can change our society if we share one goal of transforming society.

Through participation in the group, I have learned to serve God, and to be used by God. I have learned to apply God's Word in my life with the help of a group of people who share the love of God. I have learned to connect myself to other people in a safe environment. I have learned to listen to other people's views, be encouraged to share, and if someone says something you know is wrong you are allowed to correct that person. I have learned to apply God's Word in my life.

Attending the Bible study group makes me realize that the more you are praying for each other, the more you'll be able to love one another with the love of Christ. I have learned that group learning plays an important role in shaping an individual life.

In the Bible study, the teaching is based on God's knowledge. It is important to know God as a group who practises God's Word in the group and practises to do it better in the group. The Bible tells us that "many people are dying because they lack knowledge". This refers to Bible knowledge. Attending the Bible study, you get to share increasing in God's knowledge. This is part of maturity as a Christian. We as Christians grow in grace and knowledge of God. God gives us knowledge as a gift.

I think that the way we learn in the group is an African way of learning. In African culture, most of the learning is done in a group. For example, going to the reed dance, where girls who share the passion of their life come together in a group to learn more about life. Again, in Christianity, we also find that people who share God's love form Bible study groups.

Changing the Bible study group

If the Bible study group can move from Wednesday to Saturday morning, when our mind is still fresh, this can accommodate many people. You find that other people knock off late at work, they want to come to the Bible study but because their body is tired, they cannot make it to the Bible study. Others do come to the Bible study, but you find that they are sleeping. It is not that the lesson is boring, but because they are coming from work, they are tired, they just want to sleep. Also, as we live in rural areas you find there are no street lights, so attending Bible study in winter is difficult since we live in unsafe communities.

4.3.2 Mandla

My name is Mandla, I was born in Bulwer in the place called Xosheyakhe. I grew up in a family of ten people. I had never attended church before.

Joining the Bible study group

One of my friends told me about a friend whose name is Jesus who sticks closer than a friend. She told me about the importance of knowing God. She invited me to the AFM church in Bulwer. The pastor ministered and he told us that if you want to have eternal life you need to receive Jesus in your life. He said if they were anyone who would like to receive Jesus, they must put their hands up, and I did put my hand up to receive Jesus. So, after that they told me that I need to attend the Bible study that takes place every Wednesday from 18:00 to 19:00. The Bible study takes place outside the church. The leader is responsible to choose the house where the Bible study will take place. The Bible study will help me to grow in God's knowledge. I was told that the people who attend the Bible study share one goal, and this goal is to grow in the knowledge of God's Word.

The thing that motivated me to join the Bible study is a group of people who share the love of God. The people in the Bible study group are passionate about learning about God. I am not good with analyzing the Bible verses sometimes, I find it so hard to understand the Bible on my own, but in the Bible study the leader facilitates the Bible verses to us and we all get

involved with the verses. By joining the Bible study, I get to learn about God through his son Jesus Christ. We get to share our views based on the Scripture that was read that day. Bible study is the place where you get to learn about the Bible. Bible study is a supportive environment, to develop more biblical understanding, to grow as a Christian.

My motivation comes from within me. In the Bible study group, we are encouraged to interact with each other because we will learn something from the interaction, we are encouraged to help one another in the group to find solutions. Learning in a Bible study group is learning that focuses on interacting with the environment and making a permanent change in God's knowledge.

In the Bible study group, we as learners are allowed to learn in our way. By joining the Bible study group, I feel encouraged because we are open to different perspectives. The group leader acknowledges us, adults, in the group and makes an environment that is conveying respect. There are different activities that take place in Bible study which get us as adults involved, activities such as small group discussion, sharing, role-playing, drawing, and writing. These activities help us to be more involved in the lesson and help us to get to know each other

It has been twelve years since I joined the Bible study group and I don't see myself not attending the Bible study. This is because I want to grow in God's Word. Every time I go to the Bible study, I gain new knowledge from the discussion that we have.

I stay in the group because of the love for Christ and the love that I get within the group, I love God so much, that I'm connected to him. I have committed to him, I have laid my trust in him, and I trust God with my life. This is because he gave his only son Jesus so I can have eternal life.

I have benefited from the Bible study group by learning Bible teachings, and God's Word.

The Bible study group

We open each Bible study with prayer, worship, and Bible teachings. In the Bible study, the leader reads the Bible and then we all get to discuss the Bible verses according to our understanding. We all get a chance to speak in the Bible study, it is a place where we get to communicate with each other about God. The leader asks questions and we are also allowed to ask a question of the leader and each other.

The role of the leader of the group is to facilitate the discussion and to make sure that Bible learning takes place every week. The leader is in charge of organizing the Bible study and setting a good example in the group because we as members observe his behaviour.

I think it is important to come to the Bible study group to get to grow in knowing God. This is the place of learning about God and his purpose in our lives.

Learning in the Bible study group

I learn the biblical text. The teaching is based on life, the leader starts with a topic that is relevant to us and sees what the Bible says about that life. There is more discussion and sharing of stories from real life. We learn to communicate with God, learning to worship God.

I get God-knowledge from the group, because when you read the Bible, you as a child of God get to know God more. God created us so that we can represent him on earth, God created us to worship him, and Bible study teaches us how God needs to be praised. Knowledge of God's Word is very important as a Christian, after having God's knowledge you need to apply that knowledge in your daily life.

Learning in the adult Bible study in Bulwer AFM for me is meaningful and eye-opening. Learning in the Bible study encouraged me as an adult to interact with each other peer-to-peer while we are learning. This helps each participant to relate to develop critical thinking skills.

The challenge I face with learning in the Bible study group is that I get easily tired, I can take very little from the lesson.

By attending the Bible study my behaviour started to change, I started coming to church more often, and I started trusting in God whom I did not trust before. I now live a holy life which means that I obey the Lord and live according to his wishes, I no longer control my life but Christ Jesus who lives inside of me controls my life now. I live for Christ Jesus.

No, I do not think that the Bible study group represents the African way of learning. I say this because African culture promotes ancestors. In the Bible study, we only talk about who God is and what he has done to our lives.

Changing the Bible study group

I don't want to change anything about Bible study.

4.3.3 Pastor Mduduzi Dladla

I'm Mduduzi Dladla and I was born and bred in Bulwer, in a place called Sharp. I'm 52 years of age, married, and have one son and a daughter. I was born again in 1982 and joined as a member of the AFM in 1989. I was called to the ministry in 1991 and was ordained as a pastor in Enkelabantwana AFM in Bulwer. After a long period of service as a pastor, I was elected to the high leadership position of Vice-Moderator of the AFM Church in the Bulwer district.

Joining the Bible study group

As a pastor of the church, I feel that Bible study is very important, it is where all the learning of the Bible needs to take place. As a Christian, your emotional and spiritual being needs to grow and this can only happen only if you attend the Bible study group, because all the Scripture is explained and discussed not only by the leader or the pastor, but all the members are involved in the discussion. The Bible study is attended by all people who share and are passionate about learning God's Word. These members learn better when they are in a group. This is because different people have different ways of learning and understanding things, so learning in a group makes learning much easier for everyone in the group. It allows people to interact and learn from each other. In the Bible study, adults can express their knowledge about the topic because when you teach adults about something, they do have a little background on the topic and they can relate to their own life. Adult learners like to learn about things that will help them in the future. It is very important to tell adult learners the reason why they need to learn about that specific topic, this enables them to relate better to a lesson.

Members can communicate with each other, they can learn from one another. There are different activities that take place in the Bible study that do not happen in the Sunday service. Bible study is the place where members can share their ideas, share the love of God. The main purpose of the Bible studies is to help members learn the Word of God from each other. After learning about the Word of God you need now to start applying that Word of God in your life, to put the Word into practice, to observe if the Word does work for you as a person. If you still have a problem you are always welcome to come back and we look at the problem as a group and see what we can do, because by attending these studies you need to see changes in your life, you need to start looking at things differently, think differently and try to

have a solution for each problem. This can be done when you listen and do God's Word. You know and you live.

According to the Word of God, if you attend Bible study regularly your behaviour will start to change. Once your behaviour changes it will influence the environment that you live in. I believe that group study is very important because it is a platform where members express their feelings about a particular situation. For me Bible studies are like the potter's house where you go and get built, it is a place where God can build, and shape his church in a group using his Word. In the Bible study, I can identify the gift that God gave me, everyone in the kingdom of God has his gift. Gift refers to five-fold ministry – some of us are called to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and some to be teachers. When we come to Bible study these gifts help us to understand the Word of God much better, because each one of us has a different gift. These gifts help us to connect to God.

Jesus, when he was still on earth, had a Bible study group, which is known as Jesus's disciples. He was teaching these disciples the Word of God. Even today we still use those teachings that he was teaching his disciples, about God, knowing the power that each person has, love of God, and many more of Jesus's teachings.

Bible study is a place where members can observe each other's behaviour. Observation in the Bible study plays its part, it is another way of learning that the members use when they are learning. As the child of God, you need to observe group members' behaviour. This will help a child of God to walk better with God. In the Bible study we as members help each other in the journey of finding the truth about God, new members are helped by an older member to bring them close to God. Then we as members share the Bible practice by reading different verses every week. Bible study is joined by a member who has a love for Christ and is hungry for God's Word.

I cannot remember the exact date I joined the Bible Study group because it is a long time ago, I was very young, and after receiving Christ I was advised to join the Bible study group so I can grow in God's knowledge and God's purpose for my life.

The thing that motivates me to come to the Bible study is the group of people who love God, are hungry for Bible teaching since they want to be made new every week by God's Word. The Bible study group members care for each other. Meeting with the people who share the

same passion for hearing God's teaching makes me attend the group every Wednesday. These members become a part of my life, because of the love of learning about God that we share.

In this group, we don't only share God's Word but also other matters that are happening in the surroundings, we try to find a solution for each problem. Learning in a group can shape you as a person to become a better being. Because we meet once a week, we are all happy to meet each other again. This break allows us to discover a thing that we need to learn about and what the outside world has for us and what we need to face in the outside world. Since we live on earth there are a lot of challenges. I need to put the teachings into practice, to put what I have learned into practice. And also, my mind is always prepared for something new that I may learn in the Bible study.

The different activities that take place in the Bible study encourage me to stay in the Bible study. I found that learning in the Bible study accommodated everyone in the group. These activities help me to grow in God's Word and they also deepen God's knowledge within me. The discussion that we have every week makes us better people each day. Meeting with people in a group that practises Bible study makes my journey with God walkable. The teachings in the Bible study are eye-opening because everyone in the group has an input on the lesson.

The main thing that kept me in the Bible study is learning about God's Word, every week the teachings are in-depth, and members are dedicated in their attendance. The bond that we have created with each other over the years has made us family. We love one another with God's love, we care for each other.

A group of members who have the same vision and mission motivates us to attend the Bible study. Bible study encourages a person to join a team that best reflects the individual's spiritual gifts and desires. As an adult attending the Bible study in Bulwer rural area, I'm hungry to know God more by sharing the Bible Scriptures and what God can do in their lives. In the Bible study group, we share a passion for learning the Bible verses as a group, and we learn to interact with one another as we meet once a week. Bible study allows us to ask questions of each other.

In the Bible study group, I have learned God's knowledge, skills for reading the Bible, communication skills. The love of God which is growing within us, God's purpose in our lives. An eternal life. Know who God is, God's love for my life.

The Bible study group

The Bible study takes place every Wednesday of each week, we normally choose a house where the Bible study will take place. During the Bible study there is no seating arrangement. We first start by singing a worship song, we do this to call and tell God to be with us as we are about to learn about his Word, then we pray, then the leader or the pastor reads the Bible verses, explains the verses to the members, and then opens the discussion. When all the members have reflected on the verses, shared their thoughts based on the verses that were opened, a different activity takes place. Members get to interact with each other. Then after that the leader selects the house for the next Wednesday's Bible study. Adult participants are provided with a mini-lecture that sets the biblical background for the session. The mini lecture happens at the end of the Bible study session; this gives us a little background of what will happen in the next Bible study session.

The group leader is chosen by the church committee, this happens after they observe the behaviour of a person. In the Bible study, the leader needs to create a climate that makes adults thirsty for the Word of God, which will make the adults want to come to the Bible study every week. A leader shares the Word of God by teaching them from Scripture. This inspires others to delve into the depths of Scripture for a fresh Word from God. The group leader gives participants time to think and reflect on the discussion that happens on that day. The leader makes sure that the group meets every week to learn about God. If there is a conflict within the group, his role is to solve the problem. The leader is in charge of the Bible study. His responsibility is also to visit the members in their home to check on them and see the challenges that they come across, he needs to work hand in hand with the members of the church and the community in which they live. This is because members don't live in the church, they live in the community. He needs to know the members in the group and also outside the group. This will help the leader to know the cause of different behaviour in each member because the person's behaviour can be caused by the environment they live in. This can have an impact on personal factors.

Learning in the Bible study group

Group learning benefits every member. We learn how to worship, praise, read the Bible verses, we learn to work in a group, learn to interact with each other, learn to observe other members. To share activities among ourselves. The learning that takes place in the Bible

study is informal. There are no exams. From the group, I have learned God's knowledge and how to apply that knowledge in my daily life.

As an adult learner from a rural area, I learn better when I actively participate in my learning, rather than passively listening. The group discussion that takes place in the Bible study is linked to society and the broader environment, and this helps me to participate more in the group to improve my learning as an adult and enable me to improve my communication skills.

Learning in a group has a lot of impact on my life. It helps me to understand the Bible better, and I learn to communicate with people better. I have learned to understand and listen to people of different ages. I am now able to read people's minds. I have learned that group discussion is important, it made me closer to God. I have learned to care, respect, and love people.

Bible study taught me to pray, meditate using the Word of God, worship God, understand Scripture much better, value other members in the group, to change the way I look at people and my environment. To appreciate my community.

I believe that I gain my knowledge from the Bible study group, and this knowledge enables me to apply it in my daily life, this knowledge that I gain from the Bible study helps me to face the world. I also believe that learning in a group is important because everyone contributes with their knowledge. Attending the Bible study group for me helps me to learn about God and what God wants to do with my life. As an adult learner, I believe that mental state is important to learning when you are in a Bible study, this change will able a person to change the environment they live in.

Since we grew up in the rural areas some of our members never went to school, and they find it so difficult to read the Scripture in the Bible, that is why the leader reads the Scripture aloud to accommodate everyone in the group. Members find it difficult to come to the study in winter because it becomes darker earlier and others don't come back to the study group in winter, and they feel that they have been left out. Other members don't grow spiritually, they remain as children in the Lord because they don't attend Bible study. Bible study helps members to grow spiritually.

I think that the learning in the Bible study group represents an African way of learning, because in African culture we are taught the importance of learning in groups and sharing. In Christianity we are also practicing group work and sharing.

Changing the Bible study group

I would change nothing about the Bible study group, but my wish is to have a tea station before the lesson.

4.3.4 Makhosi

My name is Makhosi and I'm a widow. I have six children and ten grandchildren. My grandchildren also attend church. I'm a pensioner. I speak isiZulu. I have lower primary education.

Joining the Bible study group

I joined the AFM in 1990. I joined the Bible study group because members are grown-up adults who have conquered many challenges in their lives.

I have been a member of the group for more than twenty years, it has been twenty years of grace. The teachings in the Bible study keep me strong as a Christian. People that attend the Bible study share the same passion for loving God. In the Bible study, they call me Gogo because of my age and my walk with God.

The thing that motivates me to be part of the Bible study group is the adult members that are in the Bible study. We all share the love of learning and growing in God's Word using the Bible. Attending the Bible study motivates me, especially as an adult who cannot read the Bible because I never went to school, but the good thing is that I'm a good listener. For me, by coming to the Bible study I get people to read the Bible. As much as I want to know more about God, it all depends on me coming to the Bible study.

Joining the Bible study group in a rural area helps me to learn, to listen intensively to the Bible verses and to know God more. In the Bible study, we are allowed to ask questions to each other, there are no formalities. We come to the Bible study to help each other by sharing the Word of God with each other. These participants share the same interest in studying and learning the Word of God. Bible study groups are another way that adults get together as a group to learn reading by reading the Bible.

Bible study allows me to position myself as a Christian, Bible study is a place where I get all the power to walk with God. Bible study is my second home. I get to benefit from God's Word and the Holy Spirit because I cannot do anything without the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the God Spirit that lives within us as Christians. By attending the Bible study our spirits are activated by the Word of God. I get to know who the actual God is.

The Bible study group

In the Bible study, we begin by worshiping God, then we all pray together to invite God to this Bible study because we cannot do anything without God present. We ask God to be present while we read his Word, and after the leader reads the Bible Scripture to us, the leader analyses the Scripture for us. We all discuss the Scripture. After we have discussed, if the leader feels that now that we are on the same page, he concludes the session and looks forward to the next session on the following Wednesday. If we didn't complete the session because of time we continue with some session on the following Wednesday. We pray to thank God and acknowledge his presence during the Bible study session, we hug each other, and then we go home

Yes, we do have a leader, the leader organises the Bible study meeting, reads and analyses the Bible verses, and the leader acts as a teacher because he teaches us the Bible.

Joining Bible study is very important because we get a chance to discuss the Bible as a group. In the Bible study group, we share the passion of loving Christ. Some of us never went to school, so a Bible study group is a place for learning and we ask questions of each other. We come from different backgrounds but when we are in the Bible study you won't see that because we are united.

Learning in the Bible study group

We learn to praise, worship God, and share God's Word among us. The importance of learning the Bible as a group is to love one another as God loves us, to take care of each other, to uplift each other's spirits.

I learned God knowledge from the Bible study group. This knowledge helps to change my behaviour internally and externally, to live a holy life and understand other members.

As an adult learner I believe that behaviour is learned through observation. By attending Bible study, I have to learn to observe group members, this helps me to create new behaviour.

Participant learning can also occur by observing the actions of others while they interact in the Bible study. I learn to process the information that I receive every week.

I have learned that you learn better when you are in a group, a group that shares the same passion, and goal about God's Word. I learn to work in a group, learn to respect other group members in the group.

My challenge with learning in the Bible study group is that I'm an adult learner. I find it difficult to read the Bible because I never went to school.

I have learned knowledge of the Bible verses, communication skills, sharing a skill.

Receiving God and attending the Bible study was part of my transformation. My transformation was also based on my behaviour, by observing everyone in the Bible study, my behaviour started to change.

I do not think that the Bible study group represents the African way of learning.

Changing the Bible study group

There is nothing that I want to change in the adult Bible study group.

4.3.5 Sipho

I'm Sipho. I'm a single man of God. I have no children. I stay with my extended family member. I joined the AFM in 2003. I am an elder who knows almost everything about the AFM, such as the prayers, rules and regulations or doctrines, and procedures. I am also an elder in the community who helps with providing advice.

Joining the Bible study group

I have been attending the adult Bible study group for 18 years.

I get motivated by learning about God in a group. Bible study is a place where we learn from each other. We are engaged in joint activities. In the Bible study group, we all share a goal of reading, learning, and loving God's Word. The discussions that take place are eye-opening. It is a place where we get to connect with God. Learning the Word from others, to hear what God wants with my life. Bible study is a place where we get to be built with the Word of God as a group. The topics that gets to be discussed in the study are empowering me as a Christian to appreciate the power of the Holy Spirit. I learn better when I'm in a group with whom I

share learning about God. Bible study group encourages exchanging and social interaction with each other. As an adult, this helps me feel accepted and comfortable within the group.

I get to benefit from the wisdom and unconditional love of Christ.

The Bible study group

We sing and pray and the group leader reads the Bible to us. The leader asks a question that will help us to engage with each other. The group leader motivates the group member to think deeply about the meaning of a Bible Scripture.

The group leader gives us guidelines, reads the Bible for us. The leader prepares a question that will focus the group on one key aspect of the passage. The leader motivates the group members to achieve a common goal and also motivates the group to attend the Bible study group.

Learning in the Bible study group

The learning in the Bible study group is informal, we learn to work in groups, learn to communicate with each other, and we are given activities that help us to interact with each other better. We learn the different ways as a group that can help us to communicate better.

I believe that I have learned that you need other people to study the Bible, and also that discussion and sharing ideas takes advantage of interaction in a group. As an adult learner, you learn that observing plays an important part when reading Bible passages and interpreting them correctly. I believe that I learn that you need others to help you as a person see what is true in the Bible. The importance of contact with others of different ages and life situations is to appreciate God's faithful. I believe that once you start attending the Bible study your behaviour starts to change.

I have learned that when you pray you need to pray for each other. This helps you as a person to grow in prayer. In your prayer, when you pray you need to quote phrases from the Bible. There are different group activities that takes place in Bible study, these group activities help us to interact with each other, and enable us to know each other better. The group activities can bring the Bible to real life, so that we can easily relate it to our daily life.

I have learned the importance of asking a question of the group so that you can get people's different views on the topic. Attending the Bible study created the hunger for God in my life. I get a chance to interact with other members. In a group you get to know God's role in your

life. Bible study group allows me to get connected to other people in a safe, small environment sharing the Word of God. I learn that when you are attending the Bible study group it is important for me to bring notebooks where I will write.

I have no challenges that I face as an adult learning in the Bible study group.

I have God's knowledge. This God's knowledge helps me to grow my spirituality. Bible study gives me Bible reading skills and knowledge of sharing information among ourselves.

My transformation was when I received Jesus Christ in my life; this experience changed my life completely.

I do think that the Bible study group represents an African way of learning, because African culture encourages group work when it comes to learning.

Changing the Bible study group

For now, I don't wish to change anything about the Bible study group.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the data collected during the study related to the nature of adult learning in the AFM Bulwer Bible study group. The next chapter will focus on the interpretation, analysis, and discussion of this data.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

I undertook this study to investigate how and what adults learn in the Bulwer AFM Bible study group and to explore the relationship between what was learned within the group and how members' lives were impacted by this learning. Five members of the Bible study group were interviewed. In the previous chapter, presented the data collected from the five participants in the interviews. This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the data collected and a discussion of the findings. The data analysis is qualitative, and the participants' exact words are quoted whenever possible. The results are presented using the research questions.

The findings are linked to the literature review and theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2.

5.2 Research Question 1: What motivated participants to join the Bible study group, and why do they remain members?

In its investigation of what motivated participants to join the AFM Bible study group and why they remain members, the study uncovered spiritual growth as the main reason participants joined the Bible study group. However, spiritual growth is not the only thing that motivates them to remain members of the Bible study group. Reasons why they stay range from the Bible study group allowing them to be involved in joint activities, the support they get from dealing with personal or emotional problems and their passion for learning within a group.

5.2.1 Spiritual growth

The data analysis shows that spiritual growth is one of the primary reasons for participants to join the Bible study group. Spiritual growth and a grounding in faith are significant for all the participants. They all share a concern about learning the Bible. This did not come as a surprise, as it related to the aim of the Bible study group. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the Bible study group is intended to teach the Bible. All five participants stated that spiritual growth was their reason for joining the Bible study group and why they stayed, as these quotes from them show:

“By joining a Bible study, I learn about God through his son Jesus Christ.” (Mandla)

“The teachings in the Bible study keep me strong as a Christian.” (Makhosi)

These results fit what other scholars have stated: for example, Richardson and Pardun (2015) state that Bible study aims to equip adult learners with the Bible fields, and (Jespers et al., 2014) state that Bible study is where people come and study the Bible as a personal spiritual religious practice. Bible studies are for those who want to grow in the knowledge of God. They do this by joining a Bible study group. They also believe that they learn the Bible better when sharing the Scriptures.

Interestingly, spiritual growth as a reason for joining the Bible study seems not to be dependent on age and gender. In Chapter 2, I examined the aims of from male, female, and youth Bible study groups. Scholars all confirm that the different groups aimed to help the participant become grounded in their faith, contributing to their spiritual growth and grounding in the Word of God. O’Connor et al. (2002) assert in their piece on youth Bible study groups, that youth join the Bible study to become grounded in their faith.

5.2.2 Collective learning as a motivation to remain a member

When asked what motivates participants to remain members of the Bible study group, they mentioned that they learn best in a group. This suggests that Bible study members find it hard to grow in their Christianity independently, so joining a Bible study group makes their growth meaningful. This is supported by the fact that one participant has been a member of the group for 24 years, whilst the shortest membership is seven years. Staying in a group for so long shows that they are motivated and committed to staying. This is evident from the interviews, as all participants have indicated the importance of being part of the group in their journey of spiritual growth:

“The key thing that motivates me as a rural adult learner to attend the Bible study is that it is a group of people thirsty for biblical truth.” (Fikile)

“These members learn better when they are in a group.” (Mandla)

“I learn better when I am in a group.” (Sipho)

Kimble (2006) talks about groups of people who share a set of problems and create a group to achieve individual and group goals. This is what the AFM Bible study does. As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of Lawson’s (2006) findings was how important the group is and how much it

means to women to attend. He mentions that it helped them grow in their relationship with God. Other authors, like Richardson and Pardun (2015) and Nader (2009), argue that Bible study groups allow adults to learn the Bible in groups. Learning in a group makes it much more accessible. Members of the group support each other, and uplift each other in everything they do (Wenger, 2011).

5.2.3 Sense of belonging as a motivation to remain a member

Linked to group learning is a sharing component. Learning in groups allows the members to be involved in different activities. These activities enable them to interact and learn from each other. This seems to create a bond among members, who begin to care for, love and rely on each other. The members of the Bible study group share their experiences. They contract to learn together. They feel that the group accepts them and that they are a part of it. This gives them a sense of belonging.

“Learning in the Bible study encouraged me as an adult peer-to-peer to interact with each other while we are learning. This helps each participant to relate to the development of critical thinking skills.” (Mandla)

“The group activities can bring the Bible to real life so that we can easily relate it to our daily life.” (Sipho)

Learning in a group is compelling. West (2000) argues that if women come together to form a group, something powerful will happen. The members believe that learning occurs not only in the individual but also in a group of people. This fits with what Lave and Wenger (1991) say, that knowledge does not come only in the individual but also in the social process.

Members mentioned some of the things about their belief in group learning:

“I believe that we learn God’s words better when we are in a group because we get to share our different views when it comes to Bible verses.” (Fikile)

“In the Bible study, we are encouraged to interact with each other because we will learn something from the interaction. We are encouraged to help one another in the group to find solutions.” (Mandla)

“I learn that you learn better when you are in a group, the group that shares the same passion, and goal about God's Word.” (Makhosi)

Bible study members believe that coming to learn in the Bible study shapes them as a group. In the discussion of the literature, Wenger (1998) mentions the idea of a community of practice as shaping the people learning and their professional identity.

5.2.4 Providing guidance for daily life as the motivation to remain a member

Two of the five participants mentioned that Bible study groups are not only for spiritual and religious practice, but also a place that guides them through their daily life and keeps them occupied. The participants say they are motivated to remain a member because they can share ideas that assist them in getting knowledge that they can use in the outside world, related to issues that affect their daily lives:

“We support each other by prayers, and we encourage each other through hard times.”
(Fikile)

“The group activities can bring the Bible to real life so that we can easily relate it to our daily life.” (Sipho)

In Bulwer village, there are few activities that adults can do to socialise, so Bible study is a place where they can meet and share information with each other. Adults sometimes feel lonely, so by coming to the Bible study and spending time with a group member who shares a common goal of learning, the loneliness disappears.

“Attending the Bible study group every week keeps me busy because you find that in rural areas, there are not many activities that adult people can do to keep them busy.”
(Fikile)

The group activities assist the group member in dealing with their personal problems. These activities are based on members' daily life, which then helps the members to relate better with the Scripture.

Spooner (2012) and Ndlela (2019) agree with this finding in their studies that focused on what motivated participants to remain in the groups. Ndlela's (2019) study showed that members stayed in the group because of what they were learning, which is how to live in the real world. This has an impact on the participant's daily life. They are inspired by the group activities done in the Bible study, sharing and discussing information with each other that guides their daily lives, the practice that the group is doing and the memories these participants may have.

5.3 Research Question 2: What do participants believe they have learned through their participation in the group?

The second question in this research study is concerned with what participants believe they learn through their group participation. It can be deduced that all participants in this study have learnt from participating in the AFM Bible study group. Some participants seem to have learnt more than others, but it may also mean that others cannot articulate what they have learnt in detail. Participants' learning falls into three categories: skills, knowledge, and attitudes. These three categories of learning are discussed in more detail.

5.3.1 Bible study group as a place for learning more profound knowledge and understanding of God

In the previous section, I discussed why participants joined the Bible study group and what motivated them to remain members of the group. One of the participants mentioned that the AFM Bible study group is a group of adult people who are 'hungry' for God's Words. Another one said it is a group of people who are 'thirsty' for biblical truth. Both these statements show that the participants came with a thirst for God's knowledge, which is what they learnt.

All participants have stated that they have acquired a more profound knowledge and understanding of God's Word and biblical truth through participating in the AFM Bible study group. Participants learned to worship, pray and serve God. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning takes place in many different ways, and learning is not only receiving information. In the words of several the participants:

"I benefit God's Word and the Holy Spirit because I cannot do anything without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit that lives within us as Christians."
(Makhosi)

"I have benefited from the Bible study by getting God's knowledge." (Fikile)

"In the Bible study group, I have learned God's knowledge. Knowledge of God's Word is significant." (Mandla)

"I have learned knowledge of the Bible verses." (Makhosi).

It is clear and worth noting that there is a correlation between what the participants have learnt and what they expect to learn. This is supported by Erasmus (1996), who argues that

adult learners believe that by coming to Bible study, they get to expand their existing knowledge. Bible study groups are believed to be a critical place to practise or further a relationship with God (Conradie & Jonker, 2001). Put in another way, it is stated that the purpose of Bible study is to teach the Word of God and to grow in God's knowledge and wisdom (Freeburg, 2011).

5.3.2 Bible study is a place to learn communication skills

Members believe that they learned communication skills from attending Bible study. These skills include reading and listening. These are sentiments reiterated by participants:

“I never went to school, but the good thing is that I am a good listener. For me, by coming to the Bible study, I get people to read the Bible for me.” (Makhosi)

“I have benefitted from the Bible study by getting communicating skills, and reading the Bible skills.” (Fikile)

“In the Bible study group, I have learned skills for reading the Bible and communication skills.” (Mandla)

“I have learned communication skills, sharing a skill.” (Makhosi).

They argue that the skills they learnt are because of the way the Bible study group is designed, as each session starts with a prayer, a reading of the Scripture, and a Scripture discussion. This process ensures that the group members practise reading the Bible every week. Kent (2017) argues that Bible study is a continuous process of adults getting skills and competence through Scripture in the Bible. Reading aloud from a prayer book and discussion are the primary focuses of Bible study (Lawson, 2006).

Another issue is writing skills learned in the Bible study group. The one participant who mentioned writing, did so in the context of examination. This participant said:

“Learning in a Bible study group is informal learning. There are no exams that are written. We are taught different ways to worship God, sing, pray, and interact with other group members. I do not think I would attend the Bible study group if there were exams. As much as I love God’s news, I hate written exams. Having exams would mean stress because I was not good in school, which is why I dropped out. As much as I like learning about God, I do not want to write exams.” (Fikile).

This is the only participant who mentioned that she dislikes writing. This may not be so for all, since none of them said it. She further stated that she comes to Bible study to listen to what the leader is reading. Interestingly, the participants are encouraged to bring notebooks to write notes. The emphasis that the leader does not write notes makes the participants view this as a non-essential skill. It is also evident that this skill is not part of the AFM Bible group, as it is also not mentioned in the procedure.

5.3.3 Learning to form a new or different viewpoint or belief

Learning in the adult AFM-SA is transformative in that members influence one another to change in their behaviour and to become disciplined. This happens through observing other members of the group. This supports Kent's (2017) statement that discipline is moulded in Bible study. In the AFM Bible study group, there are newcomers and old-timers. The newcomers believe that observing the old-timers can help them to learn things within the group. Wenger (1998) mentions that new members need to learn the older member's language. The participants expressed several ways to view this:

“I believe that I gain my knowledge from the Bible study, this knowledge enables me to apply in my daily life's, this knowledge that I gain from the Bible study it helps me to face the world.” (Pastor)

“Knowledge of God's Word is significant as a Christian; after having God's knowledge, you need to apply that knowledge in your daily life.” (Mandla)

“I have to learn to observe group members. This helps me to create new behaviour.” (Makhosi)

“I have learned the importance of asking a question of the group so that you can get people's different views on the topic.” (Sipho)

“I have learned to listen to other people's views, encouraged to share. If someone says something you know is wrong, you can correct that person.” (Fikile)

“My transformation was when I received Jesus Christ in my life; this experience changed my life completely.” (Sipho)

“God knowledge, this knowledge helps to change my behaviour internal and external to live a holy life and understand other members.” (Makhosi)

“The topic that gets to be discussed in the study made me grow as a person, change my behaviour able to understand that as the Bible, we are different.” (Mandla)

All participants agree that the transformation is positive and has changed how they view life and their behaviour and learn to deal with life challenges. Theoretically, Schugurensky (2000) mentions that informal learning is transformative. The Bible’s teachings cause the shift.

5.4 Research Question 3: How have the participants learned through their participation in the group?

The third and last research question focused on how the participants learnt in the Bible study group. The data shows that participants learned through active participation and some informal learning.

Chapter 2 discussed three different types of learning as informal learning, self-directed learning, and incidental learning. It was earlier mentioned that participants came with one goal of spiritual growth but learned other skills. This is evidence that some of the learning was incidental. Incidental learning happens when the learner does not intend to learn something from the experience.

5.4.1 Learning through structured informal learning

Schugurensky (2000) describes informal learning as any learning activity outside the education institution's curricula. In this study, it is evident that learning within this AFM study group is informal because it occurs outside an educational institution, and there is no formal curriculum. However, there is an agreed order of how the sessions are arranged. One participant explained this process as follows:

“In the Bible study, we firstly worship the Lord; secondly, we pray; and then the group leader reads the Word of God for us. We are advised to bring notebooks to the Bible study group. This will help an individual to write notes according to their understanding. You write in that notebook what you think was important during the teachings. The leader only talks; they do not write formal notes.” (Fikile).

Informal learning includes a resource person who does not consider themselves an educator. However, a resource person is called a group leader in the AFM Bible study, whose

responsibility is to lead and motivate the group and ensure that the sessions follow the agreed sequence:

“We do have a group leader. The group leader act as a director. He tells us what will take place in Bible study. He is responsible for reading the Bible and chooses any person in the group to help him read the Bible, and he welcomes new members. The leader prays for our spiritual growth and encourages us to come to Bible study each week.” (Fikile)

“Yes, we have a leader; the leader organises the Bible study meeting, reads and analyses the Bible verses, and acts as a teacher because he teaches us the Bible.” (Makhosi)

“We sing and pray, and the group leader reads the Bible to us. The leader asks a question that will help us to engage with each other. The group leader motivates the group member to think deeply about the meaning of a Bible Scripture.” (Sipho)

“The church committee chooses the group leader. This happens after they observe the behaviour of a person.” (Mandla)

The above quotes clearly show that there is some form of informal learning where members decide what needs to be taught, but this is guided by the elders.

5.4.2 Learning through socialisation

As with any other group, AFM adult Bible study has rules that must be followed. Group members believe that if the newcomer follows these rules, they can become part of the group. So they become socialised, and this socialisation process includes waiting for the group to welcome you to be part of the group. The waiting period allows the newcomers to decide if they want to join the group. The important part about becoming a group member is that the learning begins with the older members choosing who is allowed to be part of the group. They play a vital role in deciding who is allowed to enter the group, which suggests that the old members control the group. For a newcomer, rules must be followed before becoming a full member. Wenger (1998) describes this process as legitimate peripheral participation (LLP). LLP is defined by Cox (200) as a process of how a newcomer can become an old-timer. Wenger (1998) explains that LLP is about observing how a member moves from

outside to inside the group. The evidence shows that all participants learn through socialisation in that it refers to adherence to daily values, attitudes, behaviours, and skills.

5.4.3 Learning is not self-directed

As discussed in the literature review, Legg (2002) says that adult Bible study was designed for adults to assist them in answering the questions they have as adults. Adults direct their learning, and they are in charge of their learning. As adults get older, they learn to believe in their experiences. Baatjes (2004) describes this as learning that occurs throughout life. Theoretically, Schugurensky (2000) argues that self-directed learning does not require an educator or facilitator to take place. All of the participants disagreed with this:

“The leader of the group is to facilitate the discussion and make sure that the Bible learning takes place every week. The leader is in charge of organising the Bible study.” (Mandla)

“The leader prepares a question which will focus the group on one key aspect of the passage.” (Sipho)

“The leader organises the Bible study meeting. He reads and analyses the Bible verses. The leader acts as a teacher because he teaches us the Bible.” (Makhosi)

These comments clearly show that the leader is assuming the role of an educator, and it can be argued that the learning is not self-directed.

5.4.4 How learning happens as a community of practice

This study used a community of practice as a theoretical framework because the study considered how learning happens in a group of people whose aim is to learn the Bible Scriptures together.

Chapter 2 mentioned that the community of practice has three concepts: domain, practice and community. A domain is sharing a concern or a passion for doing and learning something (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this study, the data showed that this group of adults share the passion for God and the desire to grow spiritually through being members of the AFM Bible study group. The data also showed that the members interact weekly and are willing to share ideas. They feel that the group accepts each other as part of the group or community. The group members share the specific focus of the Word, and they constantly share their

experiences and make improvements. This also demonstrates the practice and the community concepts of the theory.

One primary focus of a community of practice is learning as social participation. That is, an individual must be an active participant in the practices of social communities and thus construct their identity through these communities. Data from this study has shown that the Bible study group members of the community attend every Wednesday, and they come to share the Bible Scripture among themselves. Part of the procedure followed in the study group is that each participant is actively involved either by volunteering their homes for the session or by discussing after the leader has read the Scripture:

“I attend the Bible study group at AFM every Wednesday from 18:00 to 19:00.”
(Fikile)

“the leader reads the Bible Scripture to us. He analyses the Scripture for us, and then we all discuss the Scripture.” (Mandla)

“We are the members of the AFM Bible study group; we all come from the same community. We share the love of learning the Bible in the group.” (Sipho).

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter analysed the data presented in Chapter 4, which was gathered from five participants who attend the Bulwer AFM adult Bible study group. In the final chapter, these findings are summarised, the study is reflected on as a whole, and all the implications of the study for the AFM are considered.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the key findings of this study using literature and concepts from the theory that informed the study. In this final chapter, I revisit the key research questions which underpin the study. I also review how the theoretical frame provided some in-depth findings. Finally, I present the limitations and reflect on how this research journey has capacitated me in understanding adult learning in a Bible study group.

6.2 Reviewing the focus of the study

In its aim to explore how an adult learns in the Bible study group in the rural area of Bulwer, this study used a sample of the AFM church at Enkelabantwana circuit. The focus was on adult learning in an informal group using the Bible as a way of learning.

6.3 Summary of findings

The findings are summarised in relation to each of the three research question topics.

6.3.1 What motivated participants to join, and why they stay?

It has been clear from the participants in this research study that they come to Bible study to learn about God and they believe it transforms members who attend. They stated that although attending Bible study every week is not an easy journey, it is the sacrifice that comes with being a member of the group, and they are committed to it. They stated further that they initially came to the Bible study group for different reasons. Some came as visitors, and the learning that took place that day made them change their thinking and decide to join the group; others came because someone told them to, and they felt at home and decided to stay and join. The hunger for God's Word and the sharing of God's Word is what motivates the participants to keep coming to the Bible study each week. The members who attend have a passion for learning about God and become rich in the knowledge of God.

6.3.2 What do participants believe they have learned?

In the AFM Bible study group, the members learn about God's Word. They learn to dwell on God's Word, believing that through this they have learned to develop their spiritual being,

and have also learned to take care of each other. Other things that the people think they have learned from the Bible study group is working on joint activities, like reading the Bible with understanding and learning different ways of transforming their lives. The members of this group have learned the importance of sharing and solving problems as a group. They learn to build trust among themselves and are given a chance to share real life stories and to ask questions of each other. They also develop listening skills They have learned to care and love each other. When they attend the Bible study, the members of the group learn about how to pray and worship the Lord. They have learned to serve and obey the Lord..

The knowledge that the members get from attending the Bible study is eye-opening to them. As adults in the AFM, they learn things that will help them to grow as Christians. They also learn to change their behaviour through the Bible practice and are able to overcome obstacles. The Bible study teaching assists the participants to grow in knowing God and the teaching that takes place can change an individual's life. Moreover, members also learn communication skills so they learn things that they can use in the future.

6.3.3 How have participants learned?

The group members believe that the Bible learning that takes place through the group, because everyone gets a chance to share their feelings and views on the Bible Scripture. Members are able to express their feelings. These interactions in the Bible study keep the members together as one. The learning that takes place in the AFM church is informal because the learning takes place outside the classroom. Learning in groups is much more fruitful than individual learning. When someone has just joined the Bible study group, they need to observe the people that came before them, and this will help them grow.

6.4 Recommendations arising from the study

The recommendations revolve around two main issues – that of the schedule and timing of the Bible study meetings; and that of literacy levels among the community. To address the first issue, I recommend that the AFM church in Bulwer relooks at the Bible study timetable. The current Bible study time does not allow all church members to attend AFM Bible study group meetings. The Bible study starts at 18:00 and ends at 19:00. The AFM members who work like to attend the Bible study every week, but because the meetings are on weekdays only, and some of them work till late, they have difficulty making it to the study meetings. Another problem related to this is that people live in unsafe communities, where they cannot

leave children at home alone, and cannot walk alone in the dark to attend Bible study. Although people want to learn the Bible, the problem is that Bible study starts too late. People come from work tired, and they want to rest. Therefore, members need to revise the timetable and create a schedule that will suit every member to allow them to easily attend the Bible study meetings.

To address the second issue, of literacy levels, I recommend that the AFM church should assess the levels of literacy within the church and find a way to deal with it. The church needs to ensure that it caters for members who are not literate by planning activities suitable for them. Moreover, it should consider developing a programme that speaks to the illiterate members to help adults to learn to read independently. Bible study is part of the AFM, so the church should investigate various ways to teach adult learners. This includes providing the learners with booklets and providing members with handouts that they can refer to and read at home.

6.5 Reflections on undertaking this study

As a member of the AFM living in a rural area, this study taught me a lot about the importance of coming together as a community to form a group. This group was created because the members shared the common goal of learning the Bible in a group. Through this study, I have learned how people communicate and solve their problems together. These people create new knowledge every week when they come together and learn.

The interaction these people have does not end inside the group, but continues when they are outside – they still interact since they live in the same community. These people genuinely love and care for each other, and they share a bond. The activities they practise in the adult Bible study helps them build their relationship as a group. I learned that, it is essential for the group to have a leader, someone in charge of it. In this case, the leader encourages the group members to share ideas. It is also evident that the group members maintain the collective knowledge they get from the Bible study group. The AFM adult members are willing to learn from each other regardless of their literacy level and nothing can stop these people from learning because of their love for understanding God's Word.

I discovered from the research methodology I used in this study, that telephonic interviews are problematic. Sometimes when calling a participant, they would tell me that they were not ready to continue with the interview. My experience of using telephonic interviews was that

more time is needed. To really get the in-depth answers required from the questions, more than one day is needed to do the interview. Adding to this problem is the network difficulty in rural areas, which meant that sometimes I was unable to make a call because the network was down.

6.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study to explore adult learning in a Bible study group focused on an adult group connected to the AFM in the Bulwer rural area. In examining how these adults learn in the Bible study group, what motivated them to leave their homes and attend the group, and what they feel they have learned in the group, the study reveals that all the members share a passion for learning the Bible, as a group. The study also reveals that the members do not only learn about the Bible, but also get a chance to share their personal information, and this assists them to learn from each other. This is in line with Wenger's (1998) description of a community of practice as group of people who share a passion for something they do together, and learn to do it better as they meet regularly.

The findings show that spiritual growth is the primary reason for participants to join the Bible study group. The study showed that the adult learners come to Bible study to learn and grow their spirit through the Bible, using the group, and that the group is a place for profound knowledge and understanding. The participants in the study group learn different ways to serve God, including worship and prayer. This links to Wenger's (1998) community of practice theory that learning takes place in many different ways. The adults in the Bible study learned communication skills, so they are able to read, listen and interpret the Bible. In addition, Bible study aims to equip adult learners to read the Bible with understanding.

The study also shows that participants find it hard to learn independently, so joining the Bible study group assists the members to grow in their Christianity. Some of the participants experience the Bible study group as a place of belonging. The participants learn through structured informal learning, which Schugurensky (2000) defines as a kind of informal learning in which learners direct their own learning.

Finally, this study shows that it is important as a group to have one vision in learning. This prevents conflict. The method of learning the Bible that this study group uses encourages the adult learners to keep on coming to the Bible study every week. The love, the caring, and the sharing of information is also what keeps this group together. These adults understand each

other. The learning within the group allows adults who are often excluded from learning – such as adults who struggle with reading – to be included, and to learn. The motivation to belong to the group is clearly expressed by one of the participants:

The thing that motivated me to join the Bible study group is the adult members that are in the Bible study, we all share the love of learning and growing in God's Word using the Bible. Attending the Bible study motivates me, especially as an adult who cannot read the Bible on my own because I never went to school, but the good thing is that I'm a good listener. By coming to the Bible study group, I get people to read the Bible for me. As much as I like to know more about God's Word, I cannot read. By coming to the Bible study group, I get an opportunity to listen while others read.
(Makhosi)

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Appendix 1: Interview schedule

1. It would be helpful if you would give me a bit more information about yourself and the Bible study that you are attending

IsiZulu: kungaba usizo olukhulu uma unganginika ulwazi olwengeziwe ngawe nangezifundo zebhayibheli enizethamelayo ebandleni.

2. For how long have you been attending the adult Bible study group?

IsiZulu: Usunesikhati esingakanani uza kwizifundo zebhayibheli zeqembhu abadala?

3. Please give details on what exactly takes place in the Bible study

IsiZulu: Awuke uchaze kabanzi ngokwenzeka kwizifundo zebhayibheli zabantu abadala

4. Do you have the group leader if yes, what is the responsibility of the leader?

IsiZulu: ngabe ninaye yini umholi emaqenjini enu, yin umsebenzi womholi?

5. What motivated you as a person to join the Bible study group, and why do you remain a member?

IsiZulu: Yini lena ekukhuthazayo ukuthi ujoyine izifundo zebhayibheli futhi yini eyenza uqhubeke nokuba yilunga leqembu?

6. What do you benefit from the Bible study?

IsiZulu: yini le oyizuzayo ezifundweni zebhayibheli?

7. What kind of learning take place in the Bible study?

IsiZulu: Hlobo luni lwemfundo olwenzeka kwi zifundo zebhayibheli?

8. Do you think it is important to come to the Bible study? If yes, why or if no why

IsiZulu: Ucabanga ukuthi kubalulekile ukuza kwi zifundo zebhayibheli? Uma impeduloyakho kungu-Yebo chaza, uma futhi kungu-Cha chaza futhi.

9. What knowledge do you get from the Bible study and how do you use that knowledge?

IsiZulu: Yiluphi ulwazi enilutholayo ezifundweni zebhayibheli kanti futhi nilusebenzisa kanjani lololwazi?

10. What do participants believe they have learned through their participation in the group?

IsiZulu: Yini lena enikholelwa ukuthi niyifundile ngokubamba iqhaza emaqenjini?

11. How have the you learned through participation in the Bible study group?

IsiZulu: Ngabe nifunda kanjani ngokubamba iqhaza ngezifundo zebhayibheli zamaqembu?

12. What are the challenges that you face in the Bible study as adult when it came to learning?

IsiZulu: Iziphi izingqinamba enibhekananazo ezifundweni zebhayihbeli njenganabantu abadala uma siya ekufundeni?

13. Explain what knowledge and skills do you get from the adult Bible study.

IsiZulu: Ake nichaze iluphi ulwazi kany namakhono eniwatholile ezifundweni zebhayibheli zabadala.

14. I know that you attend Bible study; explain your transformation that you experience.

IsiZulu: Ngiyazi niyafunda izifundo zebhayibheli. Ake nichaze ushitsho olwenzekile ezimpilweni zenu.

15. Does the adult Bible study present African way of learning if yes explain how is it done; if not, why do you think they are not doing it?

IsiZulu: Ngabe izifundo zebhayibheli ziyayimela indlela yekufunda yase Afrika uma kungu. Yebo chaza yenzeka kanjani, uma kungu; Cha kungani ucabanga ukuthi abazenzi?

16. If there is one thing that needs to be changed about the adult Bible study what it is and why they need to change it?

IsiZulu: Uma kukhona into eyodwa edingwa ukushitshwa ngemfundo yebhayibheli yabadala nabe ikuphi lokho kungani kudingwa ukushitshwa?

Appendix 2: Informed consent letter

A. Church Pastor

P. O Box 119
Bulwer
3244
2 June 2021

Dear Pastor

Request for participation in the research project

My name is Nondumiso Heather Zaca, I am registered student reading for Master of Education at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, School of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research project is: **Exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group: An Apostolic Faith Mission case study in Bulwer rural area.**

The broad focus of the research project is to explore how adult learn in the Bible study group of Apostolic Faith Mission in Bulwer rural area

You have been invited as a possible participant in an interview process to produce some data on factors that lead adult learning in the Bible study group of Apostolic Faith Mission. However, ethical research practices require that you are aware of the study and give your consent to participate.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion. The interview is once off and would take approximately 30 minutes.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of the research only. Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such action. This interview will be recorded for the convenience of the Research during the data analysis process. Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at:

- ï Email: 220101254@stu.ukzn.ac.za
- ï Cellular phone number: 0792664432

or contact my supervisor:

- ï Dr. J.S. Mkhize
- ï Cellular phone number: 084 353 9590

You can also contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Kind Regards

Ms. N.H Zaca

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... (Full names of Church pastor),

have been informed about the study, “Exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group: an Apostolic Faith Mission case study in Bulwer rural area” by Nondumiso Heather Zaca

1. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
2. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
3. I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
4. If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher on Email: 220101254@stu.ukzn.ac.za or Cellular phone number: 0792664432.
5. If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

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Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby consent to (circle the correct response):

Be interviewed telephonically: YES / NO

Interview to be audio-recorded: YES / NO

Signature of Pastor

Date

B. Church Elder

P. O Box 119
Bulwer
3244
2 June 2021

Dear Church Elder

Request for participation in the research project

My name is Nondumiso Heather Zaca, I am registered student reading for Master of Education at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, School of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research project is: *Exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group: An Apostolic Faith Mission case study in Bulwer rural area.*

The broad focus of the research project is to explore how adult learn in a Bible study group of Apostolic Faith Mission in Bulwer rural area

You have been invited as a possible participant in an interview process to produce some data on factors that lead to adult learning in the Bible study group of Apostolic Faith Mission. However, ethical research practices require that you are aware of the study and give your consent to participate.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion. The interview is once off and would take approximately 30 minutes.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of the research only. Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will be not penalized for taking such action. This interview will be recorded for the convenience of the Research during the data analysis process. Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at:

- ï Email: 220101254@stu.ukzn.ac.za
- ï Cellular phone number: 060 831 7876

or contact my supervisor:

- ï Dr. J.S. Mkhize
- ï Cellular phone number: 084 353 9590

You can also contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

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Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Kind Regards

Ms N.H Zaca

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... (Full names of church elder),
have been informed about the study, “Exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group: An
Apostolic Faith Mission case study in Bulwer rural area ” by Nondumiso Heather Zaca

- 1. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
- 2. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- 3. I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
- 4. If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher on Email: 220101254@stu.ukzn.ac.za or Cellular phone number: 0792664432.
- 5. If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

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Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby consent to (circle the correct response):

Be interviewed telephonically: YES / NO

Interview to be audio-recorded: YES / NO

Signature of The Church Elder

Date

C. Ordinary Church Member

P. O Box 119
Bulwer
3244
2 June 2021

Dear Church Member

Request for participation in the research project

My name is Nondumiso Heather Zaca, I am registered student reading for Master of Education at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, School of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research project is: **Exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group: An Apostolic Faith Mission case study in Bulwer rural area**

The broad focus of the research project is to explore how adult learn in the Bible study group of Bulwer Apostolic Faith Mission in Bulwer Rural area

You have been invited as a possible participant in an interview process to produce some data on factors that lead to adult learning in the Bible study group. However, ethical research practices require that you are aware of the study and give your consent to participate.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion. The interview is once off and would take approximately 30 minutes.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of the research only. Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will be not penalized for taking such action. This interview will be recorded for the convenience of the Research during the data analysis process. Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at:

- ï Email: 220101254@stu.ukzn.ac.za
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or contact my supervisor:

- ï Dr. J.S. Mkhize
- ï Cellular phone number: 084 353 9590

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Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Kind Regards

Ms N.H Zaca

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

1..... (Full names of The Ordinary Church Member), have been informed about the study, “Exploring how adults learn in a Bible study group: an Apostolic Faith Mission case study in Bulwer rural area ” by Nondumiso Heather Zaca.

- 1. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
- 2. I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- 3. I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
- 4. If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher on Email: 220101254@stu.ukzn.ac.za or Cellular phone number: 060 831 7876.
- 5. If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

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Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby consent to (circle the correct response):

Be interviewed telephonically:	YES / NO
Interview to be audio-recorded:	YES / NO

Signature of the Church Member

Date